



Head Start Budget Request: \$50M in FY 22-23

Head Start California is seeking \$50 million for Head Start programs in the FY 22-23 state budget to support the state’s goal of expanding access to early childhood care and learning to more families, ensuring children reach Kindergarten healthy and ready to learn, and prepare children to become proficient readers by the end of 3rd grade.

Head Start programs serve approximately 100,000 children in California, or approximately one in five children in all subsidized early learning programs. Head Start is a high-quality two-generation poverty alleviation program that has demonstrated results over fifty years. Children who attend Head Start do better in school and are more likely to graduate and go to college. Head Start parents read to their children more, are more likely to increase their own education, and report higher levels of self-sufficiency.¹

Head Start programs are federally funded at the same rate across the nation, which poses challenges in a high-cost state such as California. Salaries for Head Start teachers are deeply inequitable compared to their TK-12 counterparts. In California, the typical Head Start teacher with a bachelor's degree makes only \$41,000, compared to a \$66,000 salary for a kindergarten teacher – a \$25,000 difference.² Funding allocated to raise reimbursement rates in state-subsidized programs do not support Head Start. As a result of inadequate salaries, positions can go unfilled for months, forcing programs to close classrooms - leaving families with no childcare and without access to needed resources, including medical and dental care, parenting classes, employment support and connections to housing and nutrition services.

Budget Request: \$50M in FY 2022-23 increasing to \$200M annually by FY 25-26.

Fiscal Year	Appropriation	% of total Head Start grant per agency
FY22-23	\$50M	5%
FY23-24	\$100M	10%
FY24-25	\$150M	15%
FY25-26 and after	\$200M	20%

Use of Funds

Head Start programs will be authorized to use the proposed funding to attract and retain qualified staff. *This is a core equity issue.* The vast majority (98%) of early educators in California are women, and the majority (66%) are women of color.³ They need and deserve compensation that is equitable to that of their peers in TK-3rd grade who have comparable education and qualifications.

Funding eligibility: Agencies with one or more Office of Head Start grants for Head Start or Early Head Start, including American Indian/Alaskan Native and Migrant and Seasonal programs grants.

Funding Oversight & Management: California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), in consultation with the California Head Start State Collaboration Office (CHSSCO), shall jointly manage funding oversight.

¹ Utah Head Start Association. (2022). *The Head Start Impact*. <https://www.uhsa.org/Why-Head-Start>

² National Head Start Association. (2019). *2019 California Head Start Profile*.

<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/20402535-2019-for-2018>

³ Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. (2022). *Demographics of the California ECE Workforce*. University of California, Berkeley. <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/demographics-of-the-california-ece-workforce/>



Alignment

This funding request is in alignment with recommendations proposed by three major recent reviews of the California early learning system.

Master Plan for Early Learning and Care: “California can advance equity for all young children by ensuring the early learning and care workforce has ... compensation that aligns to qualifications.” The Master Plan specifically identifies “compensation commensurate with [educators] level of competency and training...” as one of five structural supports that are necessary for early learning and care professionals.⁴

Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education: “For those participating in federal, state and local publicly funded programs, [educators’] salary should have parity with K-3rd grade for those with comparable education and experience...”⁵

Preschool Development Grant Needs Assessment: “The quality of early learning and care—and to a very real extent the availability— depends first and foremost on improving the compensation of early learning and care educators.”⁶

California Precedent

Investing state funds to expand federal programs is not new. The Home Visiting Initiative [Assembly Bill 1811 (Chapter 35, Statutes of 2018)] appropriated funds to increase home visiting services through CalWorks using evidence-based home visiting models, including Early Head Start.

Precedents in Other States

Oregon has built their well-regarded Oregon Prekindergarten (OPK) program on Head Start. The majority of grantees are federal Head Start programs and all grantees follow Head Start’s performance standards.⁷ Oregon’s 2019-21 budget invested just over \$200 million in OPK, with an additional \$24 million dedicated to Early Head Start.⁸

Other examples:

- Alaska and Massachusetts provide state investments to help fund the 20% local match requirement of Head Start grants.
- Nine other states invest in Head Start or Early Head Start to expand access and serve more children.

⁴ Alcalá et al. (2020). *Master Plan for Early Learning and Care: Making California for All Kids*. pp.17-19. Retrieved from: <https://cdn-west-prod-chhs-01.dsh.ca.gov/chhs/uploads/2020/12/01104743/Master-Plan-for-Early-Learning-and-Care-Making-California-For-All-Kids-FINAL.pdf>

⁵ California State Assembly. (2019). *California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education Final Report*. p. 17. <https://speaker.asmdc.org/sites/speaker.asmdc.org/files/pdf/BRC-Final-Report.pdf>

⁶ American Institutes for Research. (2019). *California Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Program Needs Assessment*. p. 116. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/pdgneedsassessment.pdf>

⁷ Friedman-Krauss, A. et al. (2021). *The State of Preschool 2020*. p. 149 Rutgers Graduate School of Education: National Institute for Early Education Research. https://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/YB2020_Full_Report_080521.pdf

⁸ State of Oregon Legislative Fiscal Office. (February 17, 2021). *Presentation to the Education Subcommittee Joint Committee on Ways and Means*. Slide 17. <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/231793>