

# California Legislature

February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
State Capitol, First Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

## **RE: 2022-23 Budget Request for Head Start Programs**

Dear Governor Newsom:

This letter is to update my request for a \$50 million appropriation in the 2022-23 budget to support local Head Start programs as they navigate the continued challenges of recruiting, retaining, and adequately compensating staff to serve California's most vulnerable young children and their families.

As longtime champions for early childhood programs, the members of the Legislature were happy to work with your administration to advance universal TK and additional supports for California state preschool and child care programs. As we look ahead to the 2022-23 budget process, we want to make sure local Head Start programs receive the resources they need to succeed in California's changing landscape of early education.

Head Start programs are a vital component of our state's mixed delivery system. They operate more than 1,700 sites across the state and serve 100,000 of the most at-risk children and their families with early learning and comprehensive, wrap-around services such as nutrition, health, and social services. Head Start programs are nationally recognized for their high quality, whole-child, whole-family approach and for their foundational principles of increasing racial and economic equity.

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 colleagues. 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.<sup>1</sup> Funding allocated to raise reimbursement rates in state-subsidized programs does 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 child care and without access to needed resources, including medical and dental care, parenting classes, employment support, and connections to housing and nutrition services.

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<sup>1</sup> National Head Start Association. (2019). *2019 California Head Start Profile*.  
<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/20402535-2019-for-2018>

Without additional funding that equals the support provided to local educational agencies and other segments of the mixed-delivery system, Head Start programs will face serious challenges maintaining their vital whole-child, whole-family services for some of California's most vulnerable children, including homeless families, migrant families, and families in deep poverty. Without a substantive investment to support staff salaries, California could face reductions in the \$1.3 billion in annual federal Head Start funding.

For these reasons, we request your strong consideration and inclusion of a \$50 million appropriation in the 2022-23 Budget to invest in the capacity of Head Start programs to recruit and retain high-quality staff. If you have any questions, please contact Shannon Flores, Legislative Aide in the Assembly Majority Leader's Office at [shannon.flores@asm.ca.gov](mailto:shannon.flores@asm.ca.gov) or (916) 319-2047.

Sincerely,



Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Gómez Reyes  
47<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Akilah Weber  
Assemblymember, 79<sup>th</sup> District



Bob Archuleta  
Senator, 32<sup>nd</sup> District



Ash Kalra  
Assemblymember, 27<sup>th</sup> District



Bob Wieckowski  
Senator, 10<sup>th</sup> District



Blanca Rubio  
Assemblymember, 48<sup>th</sup> District



Brian Maienschein  
Assemblymember, 77<sup>th</sup> District



Buffy Wicks  
Assemblymember, 15<sup>th</sup> District



Dave Cortese  
Senator, 15<sup>th</sup> District



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Assemblymember, 13<sup>th</sup> District



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Cecilia Aguiar-Curry  
Assemblymember, 4<sup>th</sup> District



Heath Flora  
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Connie Leyva  
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Laura Friedman  
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Lisa Calderon  
Assemblymember, 57<sup>th</sup> District



Mia Bonta  
Assemblymember, 18<sup>th</sup> District



Luz Rivas  
Assemblymember, 39<sup>th</sup> District



Miguel Santiago  
Assemblymember, 53<sup>rd</sup> District



Marc Berman  
Assemblymember, 24<sup>th</sup> District



Mike Gipson  
Assemblymember, 64<sup>th</sup> District



Marc Levine  
Assemblymember, 10<sup>th</sup> District



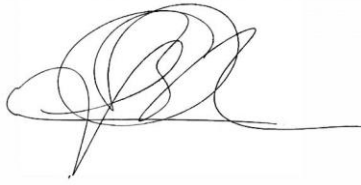
Monique Limón  
Senator, 19<sup>th</sup> District



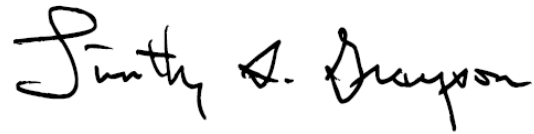
Maria Elena Durazo  
Senator, 24<sup>th</sup> District



Robert Rivas  
Assemblymember, 30<sup>th</sup> District



Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh  
Senator, 23<sup>rd</sup> District



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