



Contact: Jessica Rivera-Garcia
Executive Director, Arizona Head Start Association
Email: JRG@azheadstart.org

Press Release: Head Start Funding at Risk - Here's How You Can Help

Phoenix, April 28, 2025 – The Head Start community urgently requests that all Arizonans take immediate action regarding a potential threat to Head Start funding. According to a recent article in [USA TODAY](#) published on April 11, the Trump administration is considering a budget proposal that would eliminate funding for Head Start. This development is not surprising for many, as Head Start has faced significant challenges since January. Initially, programs experienced a federal funding freeze, followed by a reduction in federal support staff for Head Start.

Head Start is a federally funded program that offers a range of social services, high-quality early childhood education, as well as health and nutrition services to low-income children and families. Each year, Head Start serves nearly 800,000 children across the nation, providing significant short- and long-term benefits to the families it assists. In Arizona, more than 17,000 children from birth to age five benefit from Head Start programs. Alumni of Head Start, including innovators, small business owners, police officers, military members, nurses, teachers, and even members of Congress, highlighting the program's significant impact and success since its inception six decades ago.

Head Start is being systematically dismantled

On April 1, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services closed the Administration for Children and Families, Region 9 Office of Head Start. This decision marks a significant reduction in federal support and oversight for Head Start programs in Arizona and throughout the Western United States. As a result, Arizona has lost direct access to the federal infrastructure that ensures accountability, responsiveness, and quality improvement. This change places over 17,000 children and families at immediate risk.

The proposed federal budget from the President threatens essential services for children and families in Arizona by calling for the complete elimination of Head Start funding. If this proposal is enacted, it would cut off approximately \$300 million in annual funding for Arizona's Head Start, Early Head Start, Tribal, and Migrant/Seasonal Head Start programs.

These funds are crucial for providing early learning and comprehensive support to vulnerable children. Additionally, they help sustain jobs and alleviate pressure on state health, mental health, and social service systems.

The dismantling of the Head Start infrastructure will have a cascading effect, displacing working families, overloading already strained public systems, and weakening Arizona's future educational outcomes. Without intervention, the state faces the collapse of a trusted and essential early childhood network that has served as a cornerstone of equity, resilience, and opportunity for decades.

Economic Impact

The potential elimination of Head Start funding would not only affect the children and families who rely on these services but also have significant economic repercussions. Head Start programs provide essential early childhood education, health, and nutrition services that prepare children for success in school and life. Without these programs, many families would struggle to find affordable childcare, which could lead to decreased workforce participation and increased financial strain on low-income families. "We're already in a childcare crisis in Arizona with the lack of state investment," stated Kyrstyn Paulat, Director of Early Learning and Education at Children's Action Alliance. She continued, "Because there is no sustainable state investment in the Department of Economic Security's Child Care Assistance Program, there is currently a waiting list of over 4,000 children. Families and children in Head Start would qualify for the state program, meaning that just over 20,000 young children and their families would be on the waiting list for childcare assistance in Arizona."

Additionally, Head Start programs employ thousands of staff members nationwide, and the loss of funding could result in widespread job losses, further impacting local economies.

A Call to Action

The potential elimination of Head Start funding would be devastating for children and families across the nation. It is crucial to remember that Congress ultimately determines the final budget, and now is the time for us to act. We urge everyone to contact their Congressional representatives and advocate for the full funding and protection of Head Start.

Taking action is simple and quick. In just two minutes, you can send a letter to your Congressional representatives using this [link](#). We encourage you to share this action alert across social media channels, reports, e-newsletters, and with everyone in your network.

Activate Your Network

We need everyone's voice, including colleagues, families, and community partners. It's essential that we continue to support our young children and families who are in greatest need. Our early care and education systems require more investment, not less.

Who We Are**Arizona Head Start Association (AZSHA)**

AZSHA provides a forum of empowerment and unification for the coalition of public and private organizations that administer Head Start programs and works to improve the lives of Arizona's children.

Children's Action Alliance (CAA)

CAA is an advocacy organization dedicated to eliminating challenges that impact the well-being of children and families in Arizona.