

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia Office of the Chief Clerk Room 402, City Hall Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 250298)

RESOLUTION

Calling on the Trump Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to preserve funding and administrative support for Head Start, prevent program disruptions, and protect access to early childhood education for low-income families.

WHEREAS, Head Start is a federally funded early childhood education program that has served more than 38 million low-income children and families since 1965, providing critical educational, social, and nutritional support; and

WHEREAS, Head Start was established in 1965 as part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, initially launched as an eight-week summer program designed to break the cycle of poverty by addressing the emotional, social, health, nutritional, and psychological needs of disadvantaged preschool children. Head Start has since expanded to include full-day and full-year services, with a variety of program options tailored to meet community needs; and

WHEREAS, Head Start programs currently serve more than 1 million children and their families each year in urban, suburban, and rural areas in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Territories, helping families experiencing poverty or homelessness, and providing essential childcare services that enable parents to work or attend school; and

WHEREAS, Head Start programs prepare children ages 3 to 5 for school by supporting their mental, social, and emotional development, and providing health, nutrition, and other family support services. Early Head Start, established in 1994, expands these comprehensive services to low-income children under age 3, pregnant women, and their families; and

WHEREAS, Head Start serves nutritious meals and snacks at no cost to families, provides transportation services in some locations, and ensures automatic eligibility for families experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, and families receiving Supplemental Security

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Income (SSI) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits, offering critical support for some of the most vulnerable populations; and

WHEREAS, The Trump Administration announced a freeze on federal grants shortly after taking office, resulting in immediate funding disruptions that forced many Head Start centers to temporarily close, depriving children of early education and causing financial distress for working families. Additional federal cuts, including the layoff of thousands of Head Start staff and the closure of regional oversight offices, have exacerbated administrative delays, leaving providers uncertain about their funding and ability to continue operations; and

Whereas, Head Start already faced long-standing funding challenges, serving only a fraction of eligible children, and further reductions threaten to eliminate access for thousands of families. Additionally, proposed budget cuts to discretionary spending, including Medicaid and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), would disproportionately harm Head Start families, many of whom rely on these programs for basic needs; and

WHEREAS, Bipartisan support for Head Start has historically recognized the program's role in reducing educational disparities and promoting economic stability for low-income families; and

WHEREAS, Reducing or eliminating Head Start funding would force Philadelphia families to seek alternative, often unaffordable, childcare options, leaving many low-income children without access to early education, nutrition, and health services crucial for their development; and

WHEREAS, Head Start closures in Philadelphia would disproportionately impact historically underserved communities, increasing educational disparities, straining local social services, and limiting economic opportunities for parents who rely on the program to maintain employment or pursue education; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby call on the Trump Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to preserve funding and administrative support for head start, prevent program disruptions, and protect access to early childhood education for low-income families.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the tenth day of April, 2025.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Gilmore Richardson for Council President Johnson
Sponsored by: Council President Johnson, Councilmembers Gilmore Richardson, Phillips, Jones, Landau, Lozada, Young, Brooks, Harrity, O'Rourke, Driscoll, Bass and Ahmad