



## MINNESOTA HEAD START ASSOCIATION ESTABLISHED IN 1987



### What Will It Take to Fully Fund Minnesota Head Start's Waiting List?

Head Start<sup>1</sup> has been integral to Minnesota's early learning system since 1988 when state funding was first allocated to expand service to more Minnesota children growing up in poverty. Independent studies conducted in Minnesota clearly demonstrate that Head Start's comprehensive, two-generation approach offers high-quality early learning experiences that boost school readiness outcomes for participating low-income children.<sup>2</sup> Evidence also indicates that Head Start's family engagement and culturally responsive teaching practices produce strong outcomes for Minnesota's racially diverse children.

Unfortunately, thousands of Minnesota children under age five – 5,463 in October 2015 alone – are languishing on Head Start waiting lists. With growing legislative support for funding these waiting lists, policymakers understand that Minnesota's poorest children must not be forced to wait for Head Start if we are going to close the State's academic achievement gap. Achieving our goal of offering every income-eligible family access to Head Start is well within our reach. As we contemplate this tremendous opportunity, it is imperative we consider how best to adequately fund the infrastructure required to support these expansions, ensure programs are able to nimbly meet the unique needs of the children they serve, and ensure the quality of the Head Start experience is not diminished for any child. To effectively support the expansion of Head Start within Minnesota's diverse early learning delivery system will require the following:

- Dedicated and sustained State Head Start funding to serve additional children.  
*\*Current State appropriation of \$25 million supports 2,489 income-eligible children (920 EHS & 1,569 HS).*
- State bonding funds or general fund appropriations to build 80-100 new classrooms and/or multi-purpose Birth to Five facilities in communities across the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota.
- A 25% quality set-aside to meet new Minnesota Early Learning System expectations to:
  - ✓ Pay comparable wages to fully qualified teachers similar to school districts to retain our skilled workforce.
  - ✓ Extend program service hours and days to meet new federal expectations for state preschool funding.
  - ✓ Sustain transportation services and/or build partnerships to provide transportation opportunities for families to ensure strong attendance and outcomes.
  - ✓ Support the credentialing of new, culturally diverse staff to build a qualified early childhood workforce by offering reimbursement for college credits for working students.

Investing in Head Start's comprehensive, high-quality, early learning model yields a solid return.<sup>3</sup> By laying the foundation for a positive academic, social and emotional experience in Kindergarten, Head Start is setting the course for Minnesota's most vulnerable children to embrace an equally positive, productive and engaging lifetime of learning.

<sup>1</sup> Refers to Head Start and Early Head Start throughout

<sup>2</sup> [https://s3.amazonaws.com/Omnera/VerV/s3finder/38/pdf/Parent%20Aware%20Validation%20Report\\_Final.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/Omnera/VerV/s3finder/38/pdf/Parent%20Aware%20Validation%20Report_Final.pdf);  
<http://www.mnheadstart.org/PDF/Demonstrating%20Results%20III%20final.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~deming/papers/Deming\\_HeadStart.pdf](http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~deming/papers/Deming_HeadStart.pdf); [http://poverty.ucdavis.edu/sites/main/files/file-attachments/cpr-miller\\_head\\_start.pdf](http://poverty.ucdavis.edu/sites/main/files/file-attachments/cpr-miller_head_start.pdf)