

Funding and Enrollment Cuts in Fiscal Year 2008

The fiscal year 2007 Continuing Resolution would increase Head Start and Early Head Start funding by \$103.7 million. Assuming that this Continuing Resolution is approved shortly by federal lawmakers, President George W. Bush's fiscal year 2008 funding proposal would result in a \$100 million cut in fiscal year 2008 funding for Head Start and Early Head Start programs. NHSA estimates that this cut would result in the equivalent of closing enrollment to 30,599 children in fiscal year 2008. This figure of 30,599 children takes into account a Congressional Budget Office estimated increase in the consumer price index for all urban consumers (CPI-U) of 1.9 percent for fiscal year 2008. The attached table shows the breakdown of these substantial cuts in funding and enrollment in Head Start and Early Head Start programs in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Outer Pacific areas.¹ The estimated cuts in the American Indian/Alaskan Native and the Migrant/Seasonal programs were calculated separately and were not included in the figures for the states or geographic regions within which these programs are located.

We believe that Head Start and Early Head Start programs should only cut enrollment as a *last resort*. The Head Start Program Performance Standards ensure that Head Start and Early Head Start programs provide high quality services to children and families. Research has demonstrated that a high quality early education program reaps the greatest benefits for the children and families served.

Unfortunately, Head Start and Early Head Start programs must make difficult financial decisions about supplying high quality services because they have faced severe financial constraints over the past few years. In fact, these constraints, when combined with the Bush administration's fiscal year 2008 budget proposal, mean that programs will have experienced an 13 percent real cut in federal funding since fiscal year 2002. These programs cannot cut back on critical services because that would lower the quality of their programs and put them out-of-compliance with the Head Start monitoring system. Consequently, many programs must reduce the number of children served in order that the remaining children receive a high quality early childhood education.

¹ These figures were estimated using Office of Head Start and Congressional Budget Office data. The state-by-state estimates were calculated using fiscal years 2006 and 2007 data from the Office of Head Start. These figures are based on the assumptions that programs will receive in fiscal year 2008 a cost of living increase of 1.9 percent and that the set-aside proportions for training and technical assistance, quality improvements, and Early Head Start will remain the same as they are today.