Head Start
CALIFORNIA

2026-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN



July 2026



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Head Start California

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Overview

Head Start California envisions itself as the central, unifying force for Head Start and early childhood systems in California—widely recognized, highly trusted, and deeply influential. In the future, will be a household name among programs and a go-to resource for guidance, connection, and problem-solving. It will serve as the leading policy advocate at the state and federal levels, with a strong, collective voice that is actively sought out by legislators and decision-makers. By being consistently present early in policy conversations and strengthening partnerships with other state and national associations and human services organizations, it will expand its reach and impact, ensuring Head Start remains well-funded, protected, and positioned as a cornerstone of comprehensive services for children and families. Underpinning this vision is a commitment to remaining financially solvent, ensuring HSC has the stability and resources needed to sustain and grow its impact over time.

At the same time, HSC aspires to be a dynamic hub for professional growth, collaboration, and member-driven leadership. It will sustain and elevate high-quality professional development that builds and strengthens the workforce and reinforces standards of excellence across the field. Grounded in the needs of its membership, it will foster deeper engagement across all levels of staff, broaden collaboration with diverse program types—including tribal and migrant communities—and serve as a vital conduit connecting local programs to state and national networks. In doing so, it will not only amplify the importance of early childhood education but also set the standard for quality and innovation, ensuring resilience, relevance, and long-term sustainability in an evolving landscape.

The goals and objectives herein will drive Head Start California toward our envisioned future.

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STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL ONE	GOAL TWO	GOAL THREE
Unified Digital Engagement Hub	Member-Centered Service Culture	Strategic Partnerships & Alliances

GOAL ONE

HSC will serve as a mission-driven, dynamic hub that empowers members, donors, and volunteers through integrated digital platforms, leveraging data and engagement strategies to foster a unified and strengthened Head Start community.

Objectives & Tasks

- **1.1** Build an integrated program evaluation system to support continuous improvement
- **1.2** Foster meaningful participation and volunteerism
- **1.3** Expand outreach with members, donors, and partners
- **1.4** Increase meaningful connections among programs

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GOAL TWO

HSC will foster an adaptable, service-oriented culture focused on member satisfaction and continuous improvement that elevates their voice, is grounded in data and feedback, and meets the evolving needs of our Head Start community.

Objectives & Tasks

- **2.1** Strengthen Member Voice and Engagement
- **2.2** Advance Data-Driven Continuous Improvement
- **2.3** Develop and Sustain a Responsive, Service-Oriented Workforce
- **2.4** Support the Professional Development Efforts of Member Organizations

GOAL THREE

Expand the association's influence and reach through the development of mutually beneficial partnerships and alliances, fostering a collaborative landscape that supports the evolving needs of the Head Start California community.

Objectives & Tasks

- **3.1** Develop and Sustain High-Impact, Mutually Beneficial Alliances
- **3.2** Strengthen Collaborative Advocacy and Cross-Sector Engagement
- **3.3** Leverage Alliances to Expand Reach, Access, and Impact