

2019 State Advocacy Resources

Week of April 15, 2019

1. Schedule Legislator Visits

Copy the attached legislator invitation letter and customize to meet the needs of an on-site visit to your program. Ensure your legislator has a clear understanding of the children and families enrolled in your program, the comprehensive nature of your services, share a few of your many success stories, and explain what birth-to-five Head Start and Early Head Start would look like in your community with a well-coordinated universal early education system. Additional tools to prepare for your visit are found at the IHSA Website: <http://ilheadstart.org/portfolio/policyadvocacy/>. Click on “How to Conduct a Meeting and Build Relationships with your Elected Officials.” For more information regarding the Illinois General Assembly, go to www.ilga.gov.

2. Call Governor J.B. Pritzker

Use the attached sample script to call Governor Pritzker’s Office and ask for support to include Head Start and Early Head Start birth-to-five services in Illinois Universal Early Childhood Education. Please share this information and encourage calls from our Head Start/Early Head Start families, policy council, staff and partners next week so the Governor hears loud and clear, **“Strong Bright Futures Begin at Head Start!”**

SPRINGFIELD
(217) 782-6830
(217) 782-6831
(217) 782-0244

CHICAGO
(312) 814-2121

3. Chicago Delegates:

Call Mayor-Elect Lori Lightfoot

Take a five-minute break from the RFP and make a collective difference! Customize the attached sample script for Governor Pritzker’s Office to have your own voice and ongoing concerns expressed again to incoming Mayor Lightfoot. We know that **“Strong Bright Futures Begin at Head Start!”** A categorical change to the City’s early childhood system by removing four year olds is not in the best interest of children and families.

Mayor-Elect Lightfoot

Phone: (929) 356-4013

Email: info@lightfootforchicago.com

LEGISLATOR INVITATION LETTER

YOUR PROGRAM LETTERHEAD

Date

The Honorable [Senator or Representative's First & Last Name]

Street

City, Illinois Zip Code

Dear [Senator or Representative] [Last Name]:

The _____ [Head Start/Early Head Start Grantee Program] is pleased to extend an invitation for you to experience [Head Start / Early Head Start's] high-quality early childhood education in action. We invite you to visit our _____, [Specific Name / Location] Center located in our shared community, _____ [Location].

Decades of research have shown that high-quality early learning and development experiences provide individual and economic benefits for children, families, and communities. Head Start's comprehensive services improve early childhood education for the most vulnerable children in Illinois especially those experiencing trauma and other adverse childhood experiences.

Given your commitment to our community [Insert details how early childhood education aligns with the legislator's interests], we hope you will be able to visit and learn firsthand about _____ [Program Name], and the approximate 60 other Head Start Grantees across Illinois. We would welcome your visit during the following: _____ [Insert multiple dates with time span available for visit]. Please contact [Program or Executive Director Information] for more information and to discuss this invitation further.

We look forward to having you visit _____ [Head Start/Early Head Start Grantee Program] to engage with knowledgeable and skilled educators, staff, families and the children we serve, in order to advance our great state and ensure our community thrives.

Sincerely,

[Grantee Program Director or Executive Director]

SAMPLE PHONE CALL SCRIPT – GOVERNOR J.B. PRITZKER’S OFFICE

Please use one of the following to complete phone calls between **April 15 and 17, 2019**. If you are unable to reach a member of the Governor’s Staff, please record the below as a voice message. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our young children and to **Head Start Illinois!**

SPRINGFIELD
(217) 782-6830
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(217) 782-0244

CHICAGO
(312) 814-2121

- ⇒ **Hello, my name is (*your name*), and I live in (*town/city*), a constituent of Senator/Representative’s _____ District.**
- ⇒ **I am calling as a (*Head Start Parent, Grandparent, Advocate, Partner, Educator, Staff, Administrator, etc.*) to speak with Governor Pritzker about Head Start and Universal Pre-K in our community.**
- ⇒ **I ask that Governor Pritzker ensure Head Start is an active partner in the State’s approach to expanding early education and care for pre-school aged children.**
- ⇒ **With the Governor’s support, he can protect Head Start/Early Head Start funding and ensure state funds do not supplant federal Head Start funds.**
- ⇒ **With the Governor’s support, families whose income is at or below 100% of federal poverty will be ensured a Head Start/Early Head Start opportunity.**
- ⇒ **Head Start and Early Head Start provide high-quality school readiness and comprehensive services to the most vulnerable children in Illinois especially those experiencing trauma or adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).**
- ⇒ **I ask that Governor Pritzker broaden and encourage the use of Head Start and Early Head Start as the evidence based model for providing quality services to families most in crisis.**
- ⇒ **Thank you for your consideration.**