

Khari Garvin Celebrates Head Start Awareness Month 2023

Director Khari Garvin: Happy Head Start Awareness Month! I am Khari Garvin, the director of the Office of Head Start. Every October, we celebrate Head Start Awareness month. We take some time to spread the word about Head Start in many ways, highlighting our best practices throughout the community; connecting with the principals of our feeder elementary schools; and renewing our relationships with community partners.

Our Head Start programs are remarkable. I'm so proud of our comprehensive services and the way that we are culturally responsive in all sorts of diverse communities. I'm also proud of Head Start's commitments to children with special needs and families experiencing homelessness. And who can say enough about the groundswell of civic support provided by volunteers and agencies all over the country to help us reach our goals. We are tribal programs; we are migrant and seasonal programs; we are regional programs. And together, we have been serving children and families in all 50 States, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa for nearly 60 years.

As we elevate the things that have historically made Head Start unique – like, for example our 2-generational approach or our federal-to-local funding structure – I hope you also spend some time thinking about where the Head Start program is going. We are reimagining a Head Start program that is built for the 21st century, looking ahead and planning for where we need to be in 2025 or 2065 and beyond. Think about the fact that the 4-year-old child being served in Head Start right now will cross the threshold into adulthood and will be of age to possibly begin their own family around the year 2045. How is your program positively impacting that child's trajectory to adulthood today? In what specific ways is your program building on the promise of the families that you are serving? How are you equipping them and supporting their goals for personal and family sustainability? And how is equity, inclusion, and belonging reflected in your service-delivery?

Is your Head Start program built for the 21st century? Join us on this journey as we continue to build Head Start for the 21st century, and send me a message at OHSDirector@acf.hhs.gov to tell me about the innovative things your program is doing to create the Head Start program of the future. Thank you for the effort and thank you for your service to children and families. I'll talk to you again soon, so long.