

# HHS Expands MAHA to Head Start Adding \$61.9 Million to Nutrition Services for Children and Families

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## Landmark federal funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services aims to transform healthy eating habits for the next generation of children

September 23, 2025

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), today announced over \$61 million in supplemental nutrition funding will go to over 290 Head Start programs around the nation to support nutrition services, promote healthy eating habits, and improve access to nutrient dense foods for more than 100,000 children and families.

“When children have access to fresh, nutritious food, we don’t just feed them for a day — we set them on a path to lifelong health,” said HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. “By putting nutrition at the center of health, we are restoring trust in our public health system and delivering on our promise to Make America Healthy Again.”

The supplemental nutrition awards will accelerate Head Start programs’ capacity to improve the health and wellbeing of children and families. In Michigan, one program will receive \$2,000 for interactive family education workshops on nutrition. In Puerto Rico, a \$3.4 million award will fund kitchen renovations and developing new farm-to-table partnerships. And in Florida, \$138,600 will establish a hydroponic garden and raised garden beds to give toddlers meaningful, hands-on agricultural and nutritional learning experiences.

“This investment marks a sea change to prioritize prevention over treatment by nourishing the minds and bodies of young children — tackling chronic disease at its roots and restoring the health of our nation’s most vulnerable,” said ACF Acting Assistant Secretary Andrew Gradison.

Additional analysis on the supplemental funding highlights how Head Start centers plan to invest in nutrition resources:

- **50% on materials, supplies and equipment**, including gardens or gardening supplies designed to foster farm-to-table strategies, cooking demonstration kits, and commercial grade appliances.
- **25% on food service upgrades**, including modernization of kitchen facilities to prepare fresh foods on-site, designated breastfeeding spaces, and procurement of locally sourced nutritious food items.
- **25% on nutrition education**, including workshops and community events for families, training for staff on nutrition best practices, and consultation with dietitians or nutritionists.

“The response to this nutrition funding opportunity was tremendous, demonstrating the deep commitment Head Start programs have to children's health and wellbeing,” said Dr. Laurie Todd-Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development. “The early years are the most powerful window to shape lifelong habits, and this funding allows us to Make America Health Again when it matters the most: during the foundational years of child development.”

The supplemental nutrition funding delivers on HHS's recently published MAHA strategy and Secretary Kennedy's commitment to addressing childhood nutrition challenges and promoting healthy development. Selected Head Start programs will receive funds to implement their nutrition initiatives over the next 12 months, with long-term impacts expected to benefit Head Start families and communities for years to come.

For a complete list of grant recipients and award amounts, visit <https://acf.gov/ohs/grant-funding/supplemental-funds-head-start-nutrition>.

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## Quotes

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— Dr. Laurie Todd-Smith Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development

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