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[www.headstartwest.org](http://www.headstartwest.org)

*"Since assuming my role within our agency, Head Start WEST has been instrumental in supporting me and providing amazing opportunities for learning"*

*Kindy Kelly  
Director of Early Childhood Services, Amador Tuolumne Community Action Agency*

LEARN MORE



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*"Collaborating with Head Start WEST has helped our staff grow professionally. They have creatively put on workshops that increase the knowledge and skill of staff. Thank you, HSW, for all that you do for the UCLA EHS program and for what you do for the entire community."*

*Delia Vicente  
Executive Director, UCLA Early Head Start*



# Horizon

WINTER 2025  
EDITION

*News and Resources for Head Start in the WEST*

Welcome to HORIZON!

For more than 60 years, Head Start has inspired pride in all of us who dedicate our work to uplifting this remarkable community. Most importantly, it has transformed the lives of children and families across the nation. Head Start has served as an economic engine—creating local jobs, nurturing future educators, business owners, and community leaders. It has been a trailblazer in early childhood innovation, saving millions in educational costs by identifying learning needs early and closing achievement gaps that might otherwise have gone unnoticed in traditional systems.

Head Start WEST sets out to serve Head Start programs across the WEST by creating excellent LEARNING opportunities, a sense of BELONGING in our community and ELEVATING stories, resources and more to be Head Start's biggest cheerleader.

In this newsletter, HORIZON, we set forth a tool for constituents to become more familiar with our products and services. We hope you will take a minute to let us know what looks good to you and how best we can serve you.

## LEARNING

At Head Start WEST, we believe professional learning should be dynamic and inclusive. We offer research-informed conferences, practical sessions, and peer exchanges tailored to every role. Through strong partnerships and participant feedback, we expand access to quality resources and drive innovation across the Head Start community.



## BELONGING

For over 60 years, Head Start—here in the WEST and nationwide—has been more than a program. It's a movement rooted in hope, education, justice, and equality, transforming communities and shaping futures. At Head Start WEST, we carry this spirit forward by creating spaces where connection and pride thrive—through professional networks, social engagement, and member support that foster true belonging.



## ELEVATING

At Head Start WEST, we elevate our members through programs and initiatives that strengthen staff and leadership. Through Heads Up, our weekly newsletter, the Legacy Scholarship, advocacy initiatives, financial literacy, and more, we continue building on Head Start's enduring legacy.





Head Start WEST is governed by the Region 9 Head Start Association Board of Directors. The Board maintains a number of committees and welcomes participation by non-board members to ensure our efforts reflect the needs of the field. If you are interested in Membership & Public Relations, Events, Advocacy, Governance or Finance – please contact Ed Condon today at [econdon@headstartwest.org](mailto:econdon@headstartwest.org) to set up a call and explore the best way to involve your expertise in the association.

### Arizona

Natalie Alvarez  
Patricia Kirkland  
Nadia McKernan  
Charity Russell

### Hawai'i/Outer Pacific

Stacy Brown  
Ben Naki  
Jolene Sablan  
Silvia Sharrar  
Suzie Uyeda

### California

Denyse Cardoza  
Alex Elliott  
Yolanda Gonzales  
Karen Griffith  
Michael Jenkins  
Mattie Mendez  
Wassy Tesfa

### Nevada

Tiffany Alston  
Patrice Gardner  
Tameka Henry  
Cheri Moring  
Jesee Myers  
Kelvin Thomas

### Friends

Joshua Alvarez  
Bill Donaldson  
Yvette Sanchez Fuentes  
Megan Nielsen

**132 Member Agencies**  
as of 11.1.25

**~10,000 Mailing List Contacts**

**\$34,000 in Scholarship Funds Awarded for 2025**

**Head Start WEST by the numbers**

## The Director's Exchange Network



The Directors Exchange brings together executive, program, and deputy directors to connect, collaborate, and strengthen their leadership. Facilitated by Cynthia Yao, these bi-monthly sessions offer a supportive space to share insights, build relationships, and explore strategies that drive high-impact, thriving organizations.

## Know Yourself, Grow Your Wealth

*A Financial Literacy Course*

Head Start WEST has partnered with OneAmerica Financial and The American College to provide their free financial literacy course to HSW community.

The course is no cost, fully online, and self-paced so you can fit it around your busy schedule. This course dives into topics including how to save for your future, set realistic financial goals, and much more. Register for the course in a matter of minutes, and you'll be on your way.



Four badges to earn towards a lifetime of financial wellness!

## A Place To Belong



Celebrating 60 years of Head Start excellence, A Place to Belong highlights the people and stories driving the program's success—

from Family Engagement to Community Partnerships to School Readiness and beyond. Each story concludes with five recommendations from Head Start leaders, offering a vision for the future and the generations we strive to uplift.



Interested in marketing opportunities with Head Start WEST? Contact [dtorp@headstartwest.org](mailto:dtorp@headstartwest.org) to learn more!

### New & Emerging Directors Community of Practice

02.19.26 - 06.08.26

### Innovate: Early Childhood STEM Institute

03.24.26-03.26.26

### The Leadership Challenge Workshop

05.12.26-05.13.26

### Site Directors Academy

05.12.26-05.13.26

### Celebrate: First 1,000 Days Conference

06.08.26 - 06.11.26

### Executive Leadership Council

07.13.26 - 07.14.26

### Elevate: Family Engagement Conference

10.12.26 - 10.16.26

### Winter Training Highlights!

**The Leadership Challenge** Starting 12.01.25  
A Wiley Brand

Grow the kind of leadership that lasts. Invest in yourself, empower others, and help shape a culture of excellence across Head Start.

**GOVERNANCE TRAINING FOR BOARD AND POLICY MEMBERS** Starting 12.18.25

Strong governance builds strong programs. When boards and councils lead with clarity and collaboration, they create the stability and vision Head Start needs to thrive.

**MANAGERS ACADEMY** Starting 01.20.26

Lead with purpose, manage with impact. Learn to navigate transitions, cultivate trust, and guide your organization toward sustainable success.

Visit [www.headstartwest.org](http://www.headstartwest.org) to learn more about all our offerings!



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Check out our latest collection of T-shirts, mugs, teacher gifts, and more—perfect for brightening your day or surprising a fellow Head Start hero.



Shop now and find your new favorite item!

[www.headstartgear.org](http://www.headstartgear.org)

Photos Featured in This Edition:  
Page 1: The Leadership Challenge (Left), Mealtime at KidZCommunity (Right)  
Page 2: Smiling face at MEO Head Start in Lahaina (Top), Family Engagement Conference Attendees (Middle), First 1,000 Days Attendee with keynote Luis Hernandez (Bottom)  
Page 3: HSW Board Members and Staff at Family Engagement Conference  
Page 4: Cynthia Yao