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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Shutdown Threatens Ohio Head Start Programs — 3,693 Children at Risk of Losing Services

OHIO — The ongoing federal government shutdown is putting thousands of Ohio children and families at risk, with seven Head Start providers exhausting their current federal funds by **November 1** if Congress fails to act.

According to the Ohio Head Start Association, Inc. (OHSAI), those seven programs serve **3,693** of Ohio's 27,000 children across the state. Without congressional action to pass a full FY26 budget or a short-term continuing resolution (CR) that the President can sign, programs could face imminent closure—forcing **940 staff members** off the job and leaving working parents without the child care they rely on.

“Every day the shutdown continues, Ohio children and families are paying the price,” said **Julie Stone, Executive Director of the Ohio Head Start Association, Inc.** “Head Start is not a political issue—it’s a lifeline. Congress must act now to restore funding, keep classrooms open, and protect the stability of families, the staff who serve them, and communities.”

“These aren’t abstract policy problems. They are a mother in Highland County who must decide between keeping her job and caring for her child, a teacher in Coshocton County who loves her students but can’t pay her bills, and a toddler in Scioto County missing critical days of brain-building experiences. Continuity of care matters; disruptions now have long-term consequences for children and communities.”

Head Start provides comprehensive early learning, nutrition, and family support services to low-income children ages birth to five. Program closures would disrupt care, learning, and access to vital supports such as meals and health screenings.

OHSAI is urging Congress to take immediate action to end the shutdown and protect Ohio’s most vulnerable children.

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