



NHSA'S HEAD START VOTER REGISTRATION PROJECT

The Head Start Act, as amended in December 2007, now contains a notable new provision allowing Head Start facilities to be made available “during hours of operation for the use of any non-partisan organization to increase the number of eligible citizens who register to vote in elections for Federal office.” Importantly, this new provision means that **nonpartisan organizations are welcome to conduct voter registration activities on-site** at Head Start facilities.

However, programs are still **prohibited from using Head Start funds** to conduct voter registration activities. In addition, the Head Start Act still contains longstanding prohibitions on political activity (campaigns for office), the use of federal funds for lobbying, and the use of Head Start buses to transport voters to the polls.

To help ensure that the Head Start community — a **10-million strong voting base** comprised of parents of Head Start children, other family members, teachers, and the many staff members that make Head Start possible — gets registered to vote, actually votes, and helps to make early childhood education a national policy priority, the National Head Start Association (“NHSA”) has taken a series of steps:

- NHSA asked for and received a Memorandum from Ted Waters at Feldesman Tucker Leifer Fidell LLP to explain clearly to local programs what can and cannot be done in terms of voter registration efforts under the new provision of the Head Start Act. [Click here](#) to read the memo on voter registration. If you have questions on its contents, please contact Luis Burguillo, Director of Government Affairs at NHSA at 703-739-0875 or lburguillo@nhsa.org. NHSA and Feldesman Tucker Leifer Fidell LLP can provide technical assistance in answering questions on voter registration.
- NHSA has teamed up with the League of Women Voters of the United States (the “League”) to coordinate efforts. The League has existed since 1920 to encourage citizens to become engaged in the democratic system; it currently has 900 affiliates nationwide.



- [Click here](#) for a list of resources links to key League materials on voter registration and outreach, including a link to an online registration form and another for a step-by-step guide to voting on election day.
- [Click here](#) to find a list of local League affiliates organized by State that may be able to come on-site to do voter registration efforts.
- [Click here](#) to link directly to the League’s website.

- NHTSA has also teamed up with Every Child Matters Education Fund ("ECM") to collaborate on increasing voter registration in the Head Start community. ECM is a non-profit, non-partisan organization working to make children, youth, and families a national political priority. ECM and NHTSA are working together to link State ECM staff with Head Start Executive Directors and State Association Presidents. ECM staff can also assist local programs in arranging for nonpartisan organizations doing voter registration to visit local program sites to conduct voter registration.
 - [Click here](#) to link to ECM's website that includes a link to an online registration form, State-specific voter registration activities and voter toolkits.

- NHTSA also wants to ensure that you have important information from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission ("EAC"), an independent, bipartisan commission charged with developing guidance to meet the requirements of the Help America Vote Act, adopting voluntary voting system guidelines, and serving as a national clearinghouse of information about election administration.
 - [Click here](#) to link to the EAC's voter information website with resources on State-specific registration and voting guidelines.

NHTSA is proud to provide the Head Start community with these resources and we look forward to your active role in helping to make the NHTSA's Head Start Voter Registration Project a success.