

### ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REMINDERS:

- \* ALL PARTICIPANTS ARE AUTOMATICALLY MUTED.
- \* PLEASE SHARE YOUR QUESTIONS FOR SPEAKERS IN THE CHAT BOX.
- \* THIS MEETING WILL BE RECORDED & AVAILABLE AT: <https://www.firstup.org/sepecc/>



# SEPECC Meeting

Tuesday, September 29, 2026



Meeting will begin at 12:30pm

## Agenda:

- 12:30 Welcome
- 12:40 Budget & Policy Updates
- 12:55 Special Presentation: Head Start NPRM:  
Why It Matters and How You Can Help
- 1:15 Advocacy in Action
- 1:35 OCDEL & ELRCs Updates
- 1:45 Wrap Up

# Language Justice Justicia del lenguaje



The right to communicate in the language you feel most connected with- the language of your heart.



El derecho a expresarse en el idioma con el que se sientan más cómodos y conectados: el idioma de su corazón.

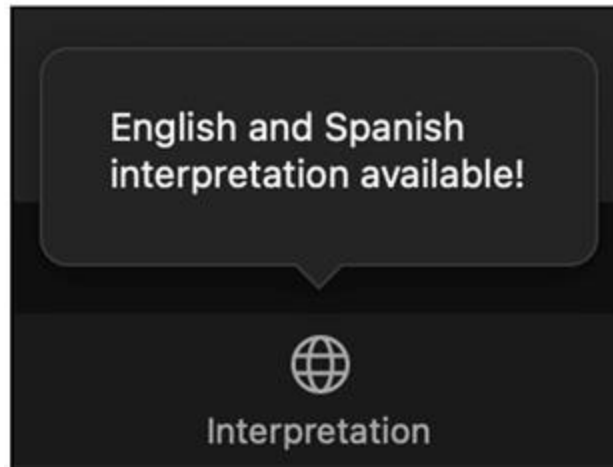
We will be using interpretation as a tool for opening communication



Usaremos la interpretación como una herramienta para expandir la comunicación.

# Zoom Interpretation/ Interpretacion por Zoom

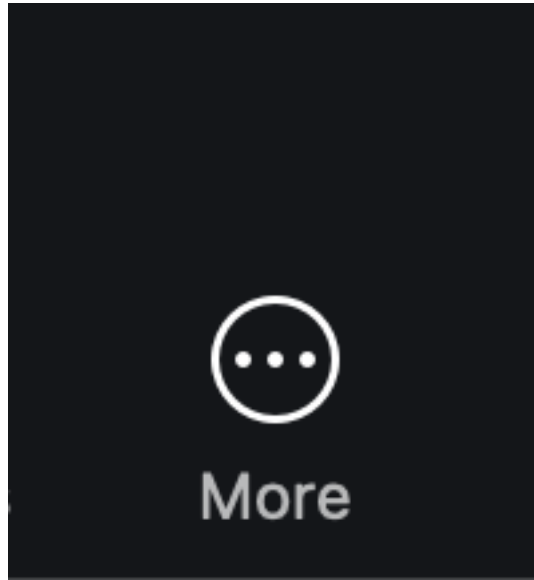
- Join the meeting using the Zoom app (not a web browser, if possible).
- In your meeting/webinar controls, click Interpretation.
- Click the language that you would like to hear.
- (Optional) To only hear the interpreted language, click Mute Original Audio



- Únase a la reunión usando la aplicación de Zoom (no desde un navegador web, si es posible).
- En los controles de la reunión o seminario web, haga clic en Interpretación. Haga clic en el idioma que desea escuchar.  
(Opcional) Para escuchar solo el idioma interpretado, haga clic en Silenciar audio original.

# Zoom Interpretation/ Interpretacion por Zoom

- If you don't see the globe icon, click the three dots labeled More. In the bottom right corner, tap More (three dots) and select Interpretation



- Si no ve el ícono del globo, haga clic en los tres puntos que dicen Más.
- En la esquina inferior derecha, toque Más (tres puntos) y seleccione Interpretación.

# SEPECC OBJECTIVES & PQAS

Sign in Sheet for SEPECC Meeting-  
PQAS Credit



Sign in Sheet for SEPECC Meeting- PQAS Credit

Thank you for joining the SEPECC Meeting. If you have attended the meeting and would like to receive PQAS credit, please fill out the information. Your credit will be on your PD Registry transcript. If you have any questions, please contact Nancy at [pdmanager@firstup.org](mailto:pdmanager@firstup.org). Please fill out this survey within 24 hours of the end of the meeting. If you do not need PQAS credit, please do not fill out this form.

\* Required

1. First and Last Name as it is on the PD Registry \*

Enter your answer

2. Email that links to your PD Registry account \*

Enter your answer

3. PD Registry Number

Enter your answer

4. Please comment if you have any questions or feedback.

## OBJECTIVES

- NAEYC standard 6a- Identify as a committed professional in the early childhood education field.
- NAEYC standard 8b- Describe supports and resources to develop highly effective staff.

Please complete sign in **within 24 hours** of the meeting end if you would like to receive PQAS credit.

Scan QR code or click on link:  
<https://forms.office.com/r/RfzSg97k7j>

# WELCOME NEW VOLUNTEERS!



Steering

**Andrea Sampson**  
Rose Tree Early  
Learning Center  
(Delaware)



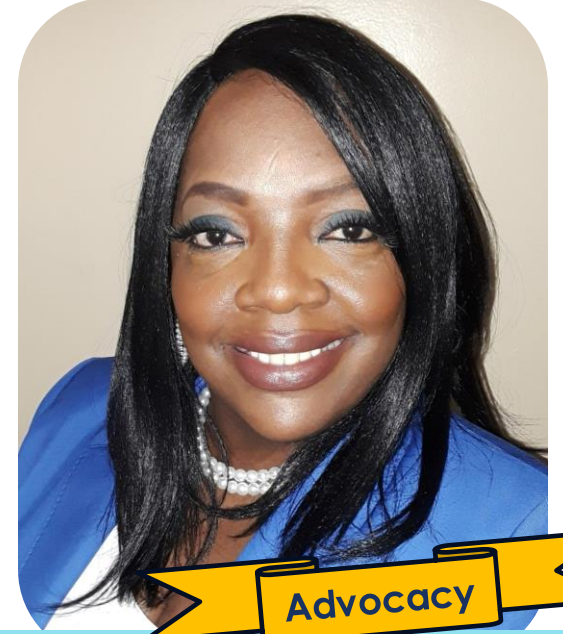
Steering

**Rosaida Iraola**  
KenCrest  
(Philadelphia)



Steering

**Judi Clyman**  
Childworks  
(Montgomery)



Advocacy

**Josie Jones**  
KenCrest West  
(Philadelphia)



Advancing quality early care  
and education in Bucks, Chester,  
Delaware, Montgomery and  
Philadelphia Counties

## 2026-2027 SEPECC COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS

### **Steering Committee**

Zakiyyah Boone (Co-Chair)  
Melanie Brennan (Co-Chair)  
Andrea Sampson  
Ebony Baggett  
Judi Clyman  
Kia Douglass  
Laverne Cheeseboro  
Mary Graham  
Melody Connell  
Minnette Taylor  
Rosaida Iraola  
Shineal Hunter  
Sharon McClafferty  
Jackie Groetsch

### **Advocacy Workgroup**

Eleanor Levie  
Josie Jones  
Laverne Cheeseboro  
Lisa Iliopoulos  
Mercedes Fleet Mount  
Nicole Fetherman  
Shineal Hunter  
Shirlee Howe  
Sim Loh

### **Advisory Council**

Khadijah Sabir  
MaryKay Mahar  
Norma Finkelstein  
Elizabeth Ozer  
Pamela Haines

### **Social Media Workgroup**

Eleanor Levie  
Sim Loh

# UPDATES

- LOCAL -

**JACKIE GROETSCH,**  
FIRST UP

First Up



Champions for Early Education

## Philadelphia City Council Special Committee on Early Childhood

### Sub committees

- Access and Affordability
- Workforce Development
- Compensation and Benefits
- Systems Coordination
- Early Intervention
- Sustainability & Investment



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## **BUDGET & POLICY UPDATES - STATE-**

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**KIMBERLY EARLY,**  
MSW, LSW

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC  
POLICY AND ADVOCACY  
**PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION FOR  
THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG  
CHILDREN (PENNAEYC)**



Pennsylvania Association for the  
Education of Young Children

# FY 2026-2027 STATE BUDGET

## Child Care

- \$5 million increase in the Child Care Staff Recruitment and Retention Program (total allocation \$30 million)
- \$1.129 M increase in Child Care Assistance
- Level funding for Child Care Services

## Pre-K

- \$3.75 M increase for Pre-K Counts
- \$1.043 M increase for Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP)

## Early Intervention

- \$5.2 million reduction in funding for the infant and toddler Early Intervention program in the Department of Human Services budget.
- \$41.221 million in additional funding for preschool Early Intervention in the Department of Education budget.

## Home Visiting

- Level funding for evidence-based home visiting in the Community-Based Family Center line item
- Small reduction in the Nurse-Family Partnership line item due to a change in federal matching rates.

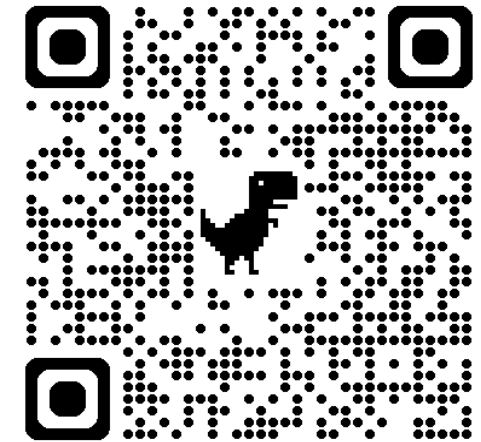
# BUDGET & POLICY UPDATES - FEDERAL-

**MARY GRAHAM,**  
CHILDREN'S VILLAGE



The SEED Act, or Supporting Early Childhood Educators' Deductions Act, will allow eligible early educators to deduct up to \$350 in out-of-pocket classroom and professional development expenses.

Thank Congress for Passing  
the SEED Act! - First Five  
Years Fund



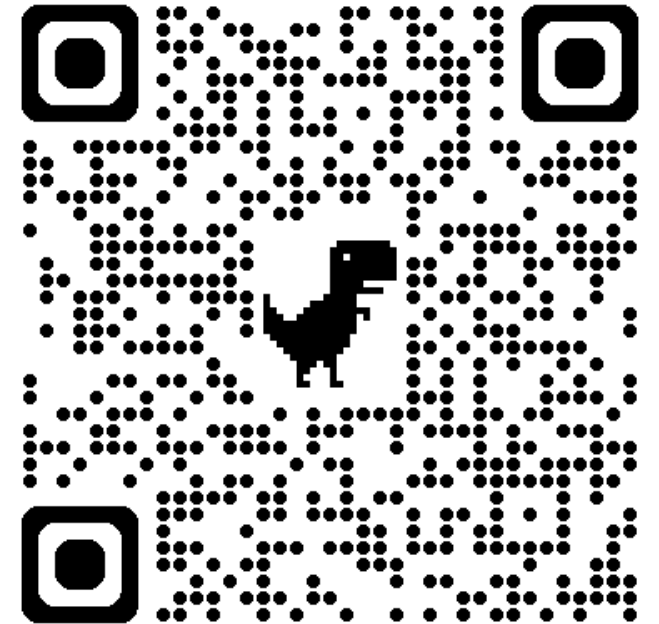
# BUDGET & POLICY UPDATES - FEDERAL-

**MARY GRAHAM,**  
CHILDREN'S VILLAGE



Contact your Member of Congress today and urge them to show support for the child care and early learning programs working families need.

Senate: Support  
Child Care and Early  
Learning - First Five  
Years Fund



# SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

## HEAD START NPRM: WHY IT MATTERS AND HOW YOU CAN HELP



**KATIE HAMM**

PRINCIPAL

NEXT STEPS EARLY CHILDHOOD LLC

[KHAMM@NEXTSTEPSEC.COM](mailto:KHAMM@NEXTSTEPSEC.COM)

**MELANIE BRENNAN**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS,

KENCREST SERVICES



HHS has  
proposed a  
major overhaul  
of Head Start  
quality  
standards and  
comprehensive  
services

- The **purpose of Head Start** is to **promote the school readiness** of children by supporting their cognitive, social, and emotional development **with an early learning program and health, nutritional, and other social services** to those **children and their families**.
- The Head Start Act **requires programs to provide education, health, mental health, nutrition, parent engagement and support services** and requires **HHS to issue standards on all these services** (and more) after consulting with experts and research and review and modify as needed.
- The Head Start Act **prohibits reductions to the quality, scope, or type of services** compared to 2007.
- **NPRM rescinds over 90% of the current Head Start regulations**, called the Head Start Program Performance Standards.
- **NPRM strikes almost all specific services requirements, defers health and safety standards to states, places new restrictions on enrollment procedures, restricts consideration of post-secondary degrees and credentials, mandates English-only instruction, and lowers admin cap.**

## What's In

Nutrition & physical activity

English only

Limits on admin costs

Marriage education

Eligibility restrictions

More federal control over grants

Limits on “incentivizing” or requiring post-secondary education

## What's Out

Teaching and learning standards, duration

Limits on ratios and group size, child safety provisions

Teacher qualifications

Health, dental, mental health services, developmental screenings

Inclusive services for children with disabilities

Services for children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care

Parent governance, engagement, privacy protections

# Two paths to stop the Head Start rule

We're pursuing both at the same time. Strong comments power both paths.



## PATH 1 · PUBLIC COMMENTS

### Flood the record with strong comments

Opposition that is diverse, widespread, and expert, and shows harm



Associations



Programs



Staff & parents



Partners



Citizens

TOP PRIORITY NOW

# 50,000

comments by October 6

17.5 k  
so far



### Why it matters

- Comments become the public record, which can be used if litigation is pursued
- Volume shows Congress people care, and Members act when they see it



## RULE STOPPED

Either path can keep it from taking effect



## PATH 2 · CONGRESS

### Block it in the December spending bill

The ask: add language to the appropriations bill that bars HHS from carrying out the rule

### Where we focus Congressional outreach

#### TIER 1

**ME · OK · WV · AL**  
Keep up steady outreach now

#### TIER 2

**PA · WI · AK · NC**  
Continue outreach now if possible

#### TIER 3

**All other states**  
Can pause until Oct 6 for comments if capacity is an issue



### Why it matters

- Republican appropriators flooded with calls and emails from their home states
- Key targets: appropriators outside leadership and vulnerable Republicans



# Comment Templates: Specific Focus Areas

Start Early's Together for Head Start and other organizations have developed comment templates to support the early childhood and allied fields in responding to the NPRM.

**Immigration**

**Early Childhood + Head Start Educators**

**State/Local Government**

**Young Children with Disabilities**

**Researchers**

**Infants, Toddlers,  
Pregnancy  
& Home Visiting**

**Health**

**Dual Language**



Together for Head Start

ALL COMMENT TEMPLATES CAN BE FOUND ON THE  
TOGETHER FOR HEAD START NPRM <sup>17</sup>LINKTREE

<https://linktr.ee/headstartnprm>



# Sign-On Letters

Start Early's Together for Head Start and other organizations have developed sign-on letters for individuals in the Head Start community and early childhood field to endorse.

Head Start  
Parents

Philanthropy

Early Childhood +  
Head Start  
Educators

Local, State,  
Territorial, Tribal &  
National  
Organizations



Together for Head Start

## Together for Head Start

N PARTNERSHIP WITH HEAD START ASSOCIATION

### Head Start Staff: Urge the Administration to Protect Head Start

#### OVERVIEW:

Together for Head Start invites all members of the Head Start workforce to sign onto a joint comment urging the Administration to withdraw their recent Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that would undermine quality of and access to Head Start services.

This letter will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as a comment and will be shared with members of Congress, members of the press, and on social media to advocate for Head Start. Please feel free to share this form with colleagues.

#### COMMENT DRAFT & BACKGROUND:

##### Instructions + Who is this Letter For?

**Current** Head Start staff members are invited to raise their voices in opposition to the Administration's proposed changes to the Head Start Performance Standards by:

- Read more about the proposed rule and review the joint comment [here](#), then use the form below to add your signature.
- Read the notice of proposed rulemaking [here](#).
- Use [this template](#) to submit your own, individual comment to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. If you're interested in submitting a longer, more detailed comment, additional templates will be available 9/4.

#### SIGN-ON INSTRUCTIONS:

- Please sign on by end of day **September 25, 2026**.
- After completing the form below, your name and state will be added to the letter.
- Questions? Email [Advocacy@StartEarly.org](mailto:Advocacy@StartEarly.org).

#### Sign-On Letter:

Submitted electronically via [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov).

October 6, 2026

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.  
Office of the Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington DC, 20201

#### Re: Reducing Federal Burden for Head Start Programs (RIN 0970-AD30)

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

We – the undersigned **####** individuals – are teachers, home visitors, staff, bus drivers, food service workers, and professionals that work in Head Start's 20,000 locations across the country. We are coming together from across rural, urban, suburban, tribal, and remote communities in **##** states and territories to express our concerns that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS's) newly proposed rule (RIN 0970-AD30) will undermine our ability to offer the children in our communities the highest quality education, welcome all children and help them prepare for school, and effectively meet their families' needs.

Supporting young children and families in Head Start is hard and rewarding work that requires skill and training to differentiate learning experiences for each child. We create settings where every child – including children with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, and children in the foster care system – is loved and valued. We ensure that each child's experience in Head Start is tailored to meet their unique needs within the family and community context. We support families in accessing health, dental, and other services that bolster children's well-being. We partner with parents as their child's first teacher, arming them with the skills to be lifelong advocates for education.

#### Concerns

Every day, we provide a safe, stable, and enriching environment for children to grow and learn. Each role in Head Start requires different training, including early childhood education, public health, nursing, nutrition, psychology, social work, and business management. **It is because of both our commitment to the children and families we serve and our extensive experience and expertise that we express our concern about HHS's proposed rules undermining our ability to welcome and serve the families in our program in the most impactful ways possible.** If finalized, the proposed rule would result in many Head Start teachers and staff being asked to disregard what we know is most beneficial and effective for children and families and instead:



ALL SIGN-ON LETTERS CAN BE FOUND ON THE  
TOGETHER FOR HEAD START NPRM LINKTREE

<https://linktr.ee/headstartnprm>

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**PROTECT**

**HEAD START**

**BE PART OF THE ACTION**

# HEAD START ADVOCACY RESOURCES TO USE AND SHARE



There are many ways  
to take action!



Sign On to the Letter to  
Your Legislators



Call Your Members of  
Congress



Submit a Public  
Comment by  
10/6/2026

### **THREE WAYS TO ADD YOUR VOICE**

There are currently three Head Start sign-on opportunities available. Everyone can participate in the Community sign-on, while Staff and families may also be eligible for additional sign-ons. Some people may be eligible for all three. Share this information with your network so everyone can see which opportunities are available to them.

### **EVERYONE WHO IS PROUD OF HEAD START**

Community members, former families, former staff, partners, friends, and others connected to Head Start can add their name.

<https://startstrongpa.org/take-action>

### **HEAD START STAFF**

Current Head Start and Early Head Start staff can sign the Staff Letter.

<https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLScCSSXo6vWenm.../viewform>

### **HEAD START FAMILIES**

Parents, grandparents, caregivers, and family members can sign the Family Letter.

<https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSeQc3NVIG6SDk.../viewform>

***Staff. Families. Communities. Three opportunities to be represented.***

# CAN'T MAKE THE TRIP? MAKE THE CALL!



TAKE 2 MINUTES ON  
SEPTEMBER 15 & 30 AND  
CALL YOUR MEMBERS OF  
CONGRESS FROM HOME.



Head Start is the **gold standard**  
for early learning, and it's  
under attack.

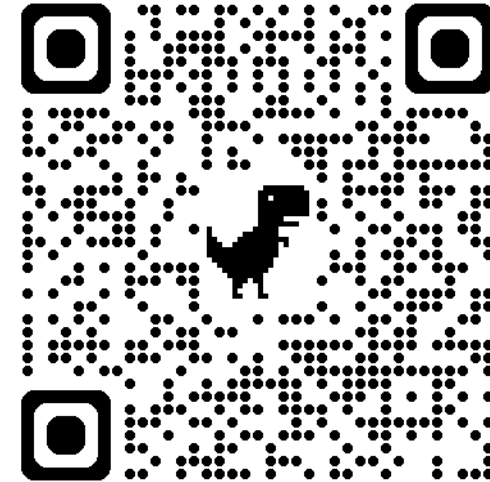
#SpeakUpHeadStartWorks #ProtectHeadStart



START  
STRONG  
PA

PRE-K  
FOR PA  
READY TO SUCCEED  
AN INITIATIVE OF EARLY LEARNING PA

[https://www.congress.gov/  
members/find-your-  
member](https://www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member)





Together for Head Start  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HEAD START ASSOCIATIONS

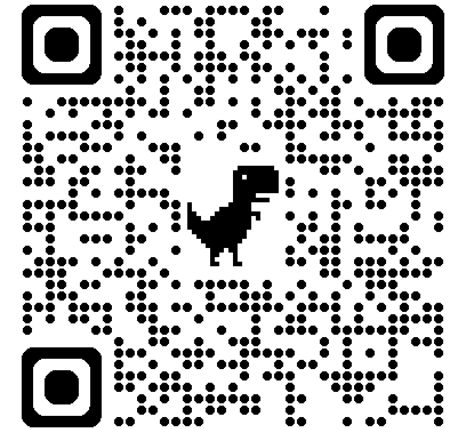
## Head Start NPRM Office Hour

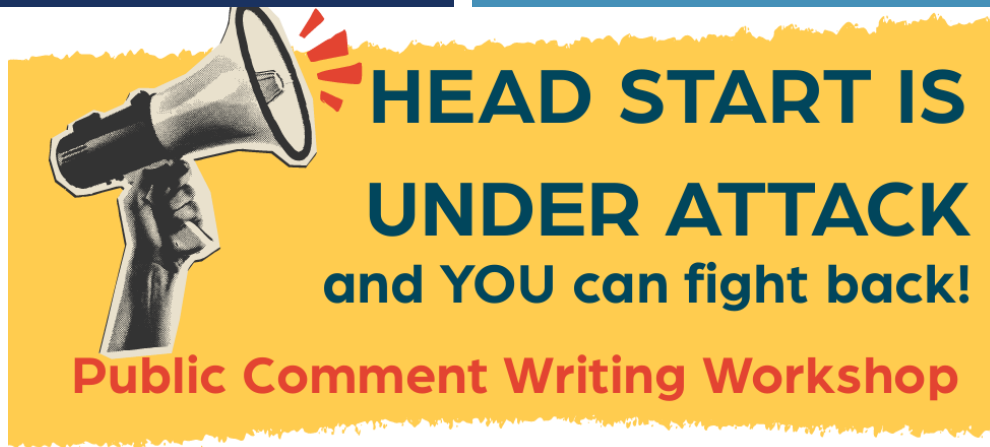
Register Here:  
<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/5QicAzdsRN-wqnlpOHLPMg#/registration>

Date & Time Oct 1, 2026 03:00 PM in [Eastern Time \(US and Canada\)](#)

Description Join the Together for Head Start team for an office hour to support the final push for comments on the current Head Start Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. We'll provide a brief update on the work, walk attendees through the commenting process, review available templates and related resources, and answer questions.

All are welcome - Head Start grantees, associations, parents, staff, and partner organizations supporting this effort.





Join Children First to craft and submit comments that count!

**October 1, 2026  
2:30 to 3:30pm**

Montgomery County  
Intermediate Unit  
1605 W. Main Street  
Norristown, PA 19403  
Preston Room  
Dinner and activities  
for children provided!



Scan to register or click [here](#)

Public comments are your legal right to voice concerns and force the government to address them before a proposed rule becomes final

### What's at stake?

**Proposed federal rule changes would:**

**INCREASE** class sizes

**REDUCE** service hours

**DISMANTLE** protections for  
our most vulnerable children

**SLASH** budgets for critical  
expenses

Register Here:  
PUBLIC COMMENT WRITING  
WORKSHOP



## Statewide Action: Protect Head Start

The federal government is proposing a rollback of the quality, health and safety standards for Head Start.

Help Head Start teachers, children, and families by sending a letter to your state and federal legislators urging them to stand up for these essential standards.

 **First Up**  
Champions for Early Education

SCAN HERE TO TAKE ACTION



<https://startstrongpa.org/take-action>



ADVOCACY IN ACTION!



# NATIONAL CHILD CARE CONVENTION

**SHINEAL HUNTER**  
DIRECTOR  
FAMILY CIRCLE  
ACADEMY

# UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE



SAVE THE DATE!

May 10,  
2027

**DAY WITHOUT  
CHILDCARE**

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# ADVANCED CHILD CARE LEADERS TRAINING

SEPTEMBER 18 – 20, 2026

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## KELLEY BURNETT

KELLY'S INSPIRATIONAL  
DAYCARE SERVICES (KIDS)



Sept. 18-20

# Advanced Childcare Bootcamp: A New Way to Connect ECE



WELCOME *to the* OFFICIAL  
SITE *of* POWER INTERFAITH

# The Problem: The History



Began during slavery



Never was intended to be a  
profession



Low pay to work all day



No political clout or power

# The POWER of Change

Power Over vs. Power With:

Power Over is when one exerts control and dominates others. This can be done through fear, coercion, and using status to make people obey.

Power With builds collective strength through mutual respect and shared interests. Power With allows for co-creating solutions, strong teamwork, and sustainable positive change.



# Topics of Conversation



Providing Political Education



One to One visits



Short and Long term  
Interests



Next Steps

- Policy Agenda
- Small Business Focus Group
- ECE Summit
- Shaping the governors budget
- Lehigh Valley Childcare Summit
- Fastrack Campaign

A gathering for Black and Brown (Latino) home-based child care providers to connect, be inspired, and grow together.



- Inspiring keynote address
- Hands-on workshop offerings
- Child care policy updates
- Industry best practices
- Community & provider networking
- Breakfast & lunch provided

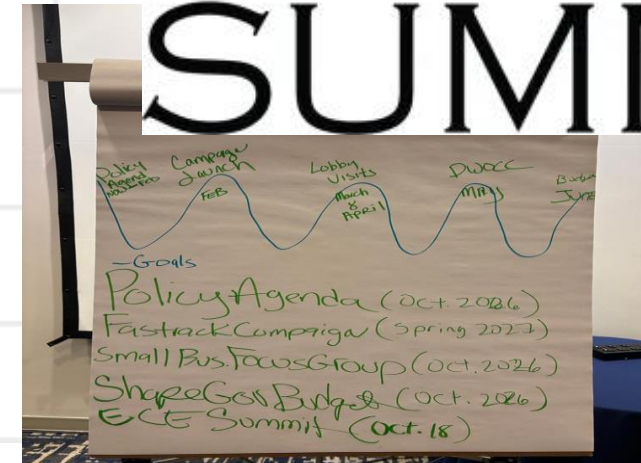
\*No fee to attend\*

November 21, 2026  
9:00am - 5:00pm  
The Renaissance  
12 N 7th St, Allentown, PA 18101

**POWER INTERFAITH**  
FAITH COURAGE JUSTICE



SCAN TO REGISTER



# ✦ Educators' Thoughts:



Power comes from acting together, not from dominating others. People often experience powerlessness; this may make you feel safer and avoid conflict, risk, and responsibility!

✦ We have a broken system that has been weaponized against us! We have to be strategic to move the needle forward and change the nature of how we fight

Tension and conflict are not automatically bad; they can be steps to negotiating a shared goal.

We must align our self-interests! The power is not in the numbers; it's in the self-interests. If our self-interests aren't aligned we won't impact change.





# Call to Action

We need to find common interests across the state of Pennsylvania. We need to gain power by supporting each other, no matter the facility type or facet of the profession.



[Powerinterfaith](#)



**ECE Summit Oct. 18-20**



**Isaiah Thomas focus group**



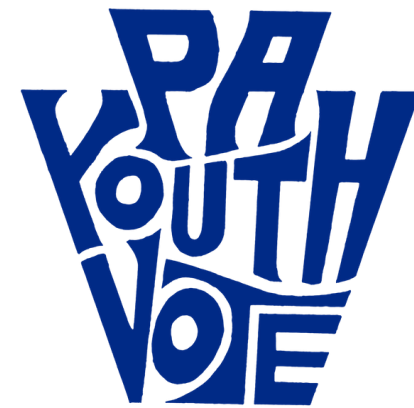
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**GET OUT THE VOTE!**

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**THOMAS QUINN**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & POLICY  
PA YOUTH VOTE





## Our Mission:

PA Youth Vote is a nonpartisan **collaboration** of youth, educators, and organizations working to elevate youth voices, **improve public school civics education**, and **empower youth as civic actors**. Together, we are **building youth political power** and changing the policy and culture around youth voting statewide.



## Our Values:

**Antiracism:** Using our vote and our voice to dismantle systemic racism and end white supremacy

**Students-first:** Encouraging our students to lead the direction and shape of our work

**Community-based:** Centering the perspectives of youth in oppressed communities of color as well as immigrant, gender nonconforming, and low-income communities

**Public schools:** Promoting equity in Pennsylvania public schools

**Voting rights:** Countering disinformation and voter suppression

**Accountability:** Holding elected officials accountable to young people

## Why vote every year?

# 2026

**Primary: May 19 / Gen: Nov 3**

### **NATIONAL:**

- US Representatives

### **STATE:**

- Governor
- Lieutenant Governor
- PA State Senators (even districts)
- PA State Representatives

### **PARTY (Primary Only):**

- State Committee People
- Precinct Committee

# 2027

**Primary: TBA / Gen: Nov 2**

### **STATE:**

- Appellate Justices & Judges

### **LOCAL (varies by municipality):**

- Mayors
- City Council members
- County Commissioners
- Other row offices
- Common Pleas Court Judges
- Municipal & Magisterial

# 2028

**Primary: TBA / Gen: Nov 7**

### **NATIONAL:**

- President & Vice President
- 1 US Senator (Class 3)
- US Representatives

### **STATE:**

- Attorney General
- Auditor General
- Treasurer
- PA State Senators (odd districts)
- PA State Representatives

# 2029

**Primary: TBA / Gen: Nov 6**

### **STATE:**

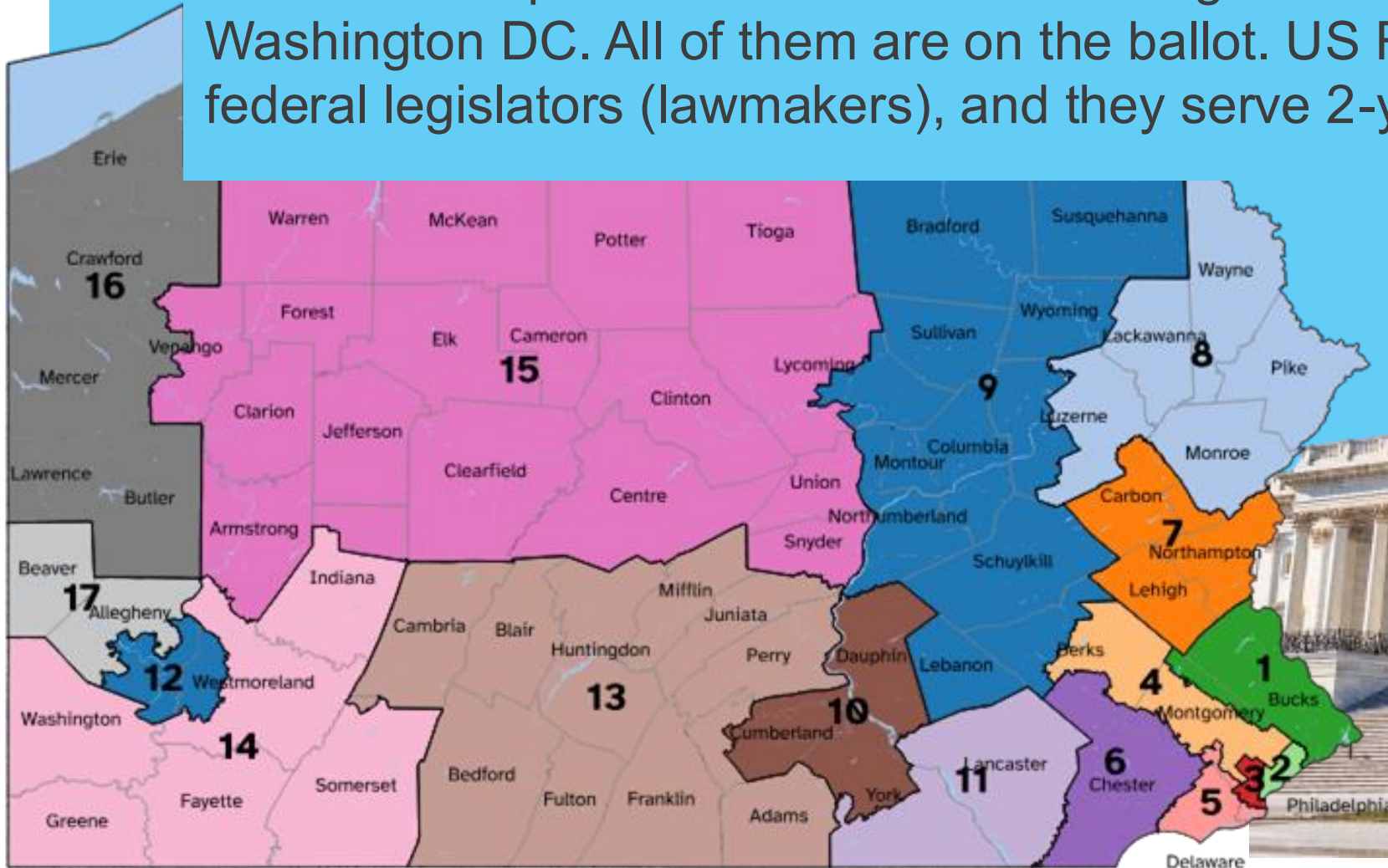
- Appellate Justices & Judges

### **LOCAL (varies by municipality):**

- District Attorney
- Other row offices
- Common Pleas Court Judges
- Municipal & Magisterial District Judges (MDJs)
- Election Officers (18-

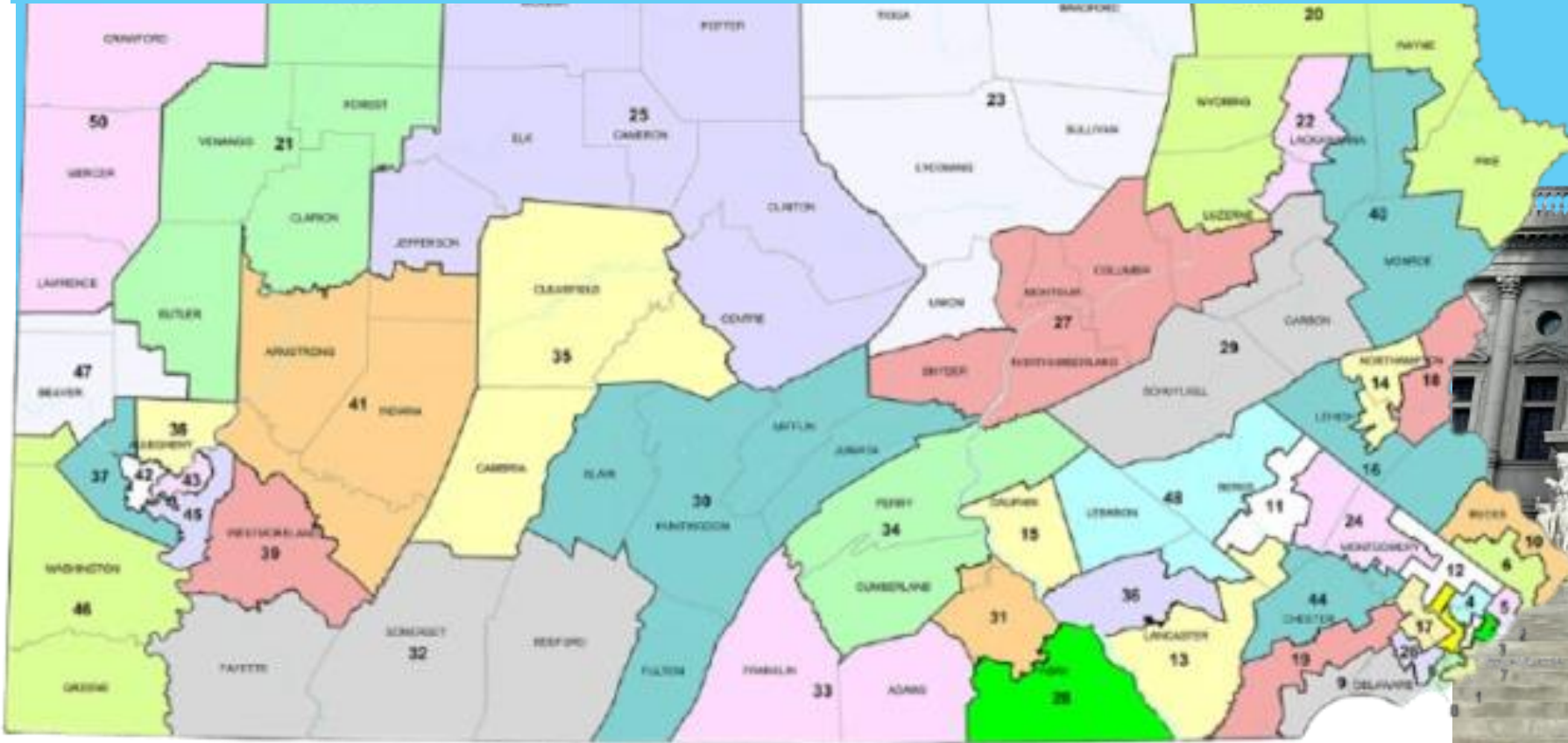
## US Representatives

PA has 17 Representatives in the US Congress in Washington DC. All of them are on the ballot. US Reps are federal legislators (lawmakers), and they serve 2-year terms.



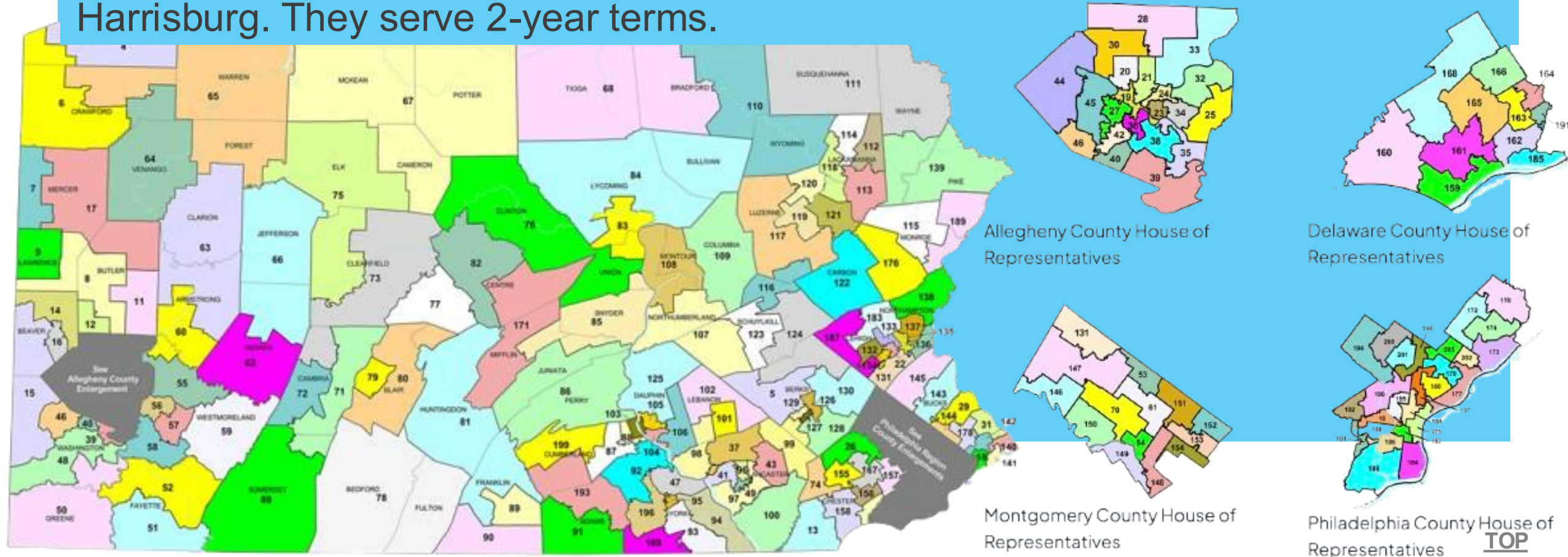
## PA Senator

PA has 50 Senate districts. Only the even numbered districts are on the ballot. Senators are legislators (lawmakers) in PA's bicameral General Assembly in Harrisburg. They serve 4-year terms.



## PA Representatives

PA has 203 House of Representative districts. All of them are on the ballot. PA Reps are legislators (lawmakers) in PA's bicameral General Assembly in Harrisburg. They serve 2-year terms.



# Get Yourself (and others) Ready to Vote!

Register to vote or apply for a mail ballot: [PAyouth.Vote/FirstUp](https://PAyouth.Vote/FirstUp)

Check your voter registration status: [Vote.PA.gov/Status](https://Vote.PA.gov/Status)

Find your PA legislators: [PAyouth.Vote/FindMyLegislator](https://PAyouth.Vote/FindMyLegislator)

PA Youth Vote First Up Voter Guide (printable)

2026 PA Youth Vote Voter Guides & Slides in 11 languages for 7 PA counties: [PAyouthvote.org/educator-resources](https://PAyouthvote.org/educator-resources)



# Thanks!



Ideas & Questions?

Info@PAyouthvote.org  
PAyouthvote.org  
@PAyouthvote

Thomas Quinn, Education & Policy  
Director  
TQuinn@PAyouthvote.org

CREDITS: This presentation template



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# ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES & RESOURCES

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**SIM LOH**

PUBLIC POLICY SPECIALIST

[SIM.LOH@FIRSTUP.ORG](mailto:SIM.LOH@FIRSTUP.ORG)



# EMPOWERING EARLY EDUCATORS & FAMILIES TO VOTE



## Empowering Early Educators and Families to Vote

Families and educators of young children play a vital role in shaping the future—but they're often overlooked as voters. This workshop will explore why voting in every election matters, review resources for making informed voting decisions and discuss strategies to encourage civic engagement among staff and families. The session will be presented in English with live Spanish interpretation, and ECE professionals can receive 1 PQAS hour.

### Sessions Available



[10/6 Registration](#)

Session 1

**Tuesday, October 6th**

**1:00 PM - 2:00 PM**

**REGISTER TODAY**

SCAN HERE



or

Session 2

**Wednesday, October 14th**

**6:30 PM - 7:30 PM**

**REGISTER TODAY**

SCAN HERE



*First Up is a 501c3 nonprofit organization*

[10/14 Registration](#)

# FIRST UP ECE ADVOCACY FELLOWSHIP

Embark on a transformative journey to unlock your full leadership potential and ignite change in the dynamic world of early childhood education. This immersive Fellowship begins with a deep exploration of your personal leadership strengths and growth areas, setting the stage for a profound learning experience.

Throughout this empowering fellowship, you will dive into the foundational pillars of leadership and advocacy within the early childhood education landscape.

## THE BENEFITS:

- Increase your ECE knowledge
- Strengthen your advocacy skills
- Gain 27+ Leadership hours for your PQAS profile
- Build your professional network through peer relationships

**REGISTER**  
**TODAY**

SCAN HERE



## Information Sessions

September 30th at 1pm

Register here:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9151252H3bpPrG8J-A>

-OR-

October 27th at 6:30pm

Register here:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9151252H3bpPrG8J-A>

Contact [Rosanna.Matos@firstup.org](mailto:Rosanna.Matos@firstup.org) or [James.nicolson@firstup.org](mailto:James.nicolson@firstup.org)

For More Information!

# PARENT PARTNERSHIP ALLIANCE (PPA)

YOUR **VOICE.**  
YOUR **EXPERIENCE.**  
YOUR **IMPACT.**



## PARENT PARTNERSHIP ALLIANCE

PARENTS ARE PARTNERS. PARENTS ARE LEADERS. PARENTS ARE POWERFUL.

Parents and caregivers know what children and families need—and your voice belongs in the conversations that shape early childhood education.

The **Parent Partnership Alliance** brings families together to learn, connect, and take action on issues that impact young children, families, and communities.

### TOGETHER, WE WILL:



**CONNECT**  
with other  
parents and  
caregivers



**LEARN**  
about early  
childhood  
education and  
issues affecting  
families



**BUILD  
CONFIDENCE**  
in sharing  
your story



**LEARN TO  
ADVOCATE**  
and engage  
with decision-  
makers



**HELP SHAPE**  
stronger  
programs, policies,  
and communities  
for children  
and families



### NO ADVOCACY EXPERIENCE NEEDED!

Your lived experience is your expertise.  
We'll provide the information, tools, and  
support to help you turn your voice into action.

### INTERESTED IN JOINING US?

- MEETING:** 2nd Monday of every month (Sept – June)
- TIME:** 6:30PM – 7:30PM
- LOCATION:** Zoom (Link provided after registration)
- SCAN TO REGISTER OR LEARN MORE!**  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/joining/register?gclid=Cj0KCQjWwR9WkQj0-OB1Kq>

**QUESTIONS?** | We'd love to hear from you!

### WE MEET



**2<sup>ND</sup> MONDAY  
OF EVERY MONTH**

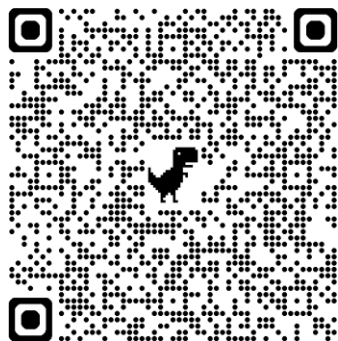
- > SEPT 14, 2026
- > OCT 12, 2026
- > NOV 9, 2026
- > DEC 14, 2026
- > JAN 11, 2027
- > FEB 8, 2027
- > MAR 8, 2027
- > APR 12, 2027
- > MAY 10, 2027
- > JUN 14, 2027



**6:30PM – 7:30PM  
VIA ZOOM**



# ADVOCACY DISPLAY KIT



Request Your Advocacy Display Kit Today!

**PA SENATE DISTRICT 6**  
REPUBLICAN serving part of BUCKS COUNTY

**STATE SENATOR**  
**FRANK A. FARRY**

Senator Frank A. Farry, elected to the Pennsylvania Senate in 2023, represents the 6th Senatorial District of Pennsylvania, which encompasses a population of over 269,000 people in parts of Bucks County including Bensalem, Upper and Lower Southampton, Middletown, Warminster, Warrington, Wrightstown, and more.

**COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**

- Law & Justice
- Appropriations
- Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure: Vice Chair
- Community, Economic & Recreational Development
- Health & Human Services
- Urban Affairs & Housing: Chair
- Communications & Technology

Scan to find your legislator!

**DISTRICT OFFICE**

**PRE-K FOR PA**  
READY TO SUCCEED

**START STRONG PA**

**Scan this QR code to find your legislators.**

**PA HOUSE DISTRICT 74**  
DEMOCRAT serving part of CHESTER COUNTY

**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
**DAN K. WILLIAMS**

Representative Dan Williams, elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in 2019, represents the 74th Representative District of Pennsylvania encompassing parts of Chester County.

**COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**

- Judiciary
- Professional Licensure
- Aging & Older Adult Services: Secretary
- Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness: Secretary
- Human Services (Subcommittee on Drugs and Alcohol: Chair)

Scan to find your legislator!

**DISTRICT OFFICE**

3496 East Lincoln Highway  
Thorndale, PA 19372  
(484) 200-8256

## Adopt-a-Legislator

This outreach project connects elected officials with child care and/or pre-k programs in their district through activities and events at an early care and learning facility, visits in the legislator's district office, and by using other correspondence methods (letters, artwork, etc.). The suggested outreach activities are intended to support communication between the child care and/or pre-k program (the staff and the children and families they serve) and their local legislators to build relationships and highlight the important role early care and learning plays in local communities.

### TO GET STARTED:

Look up the state senator and representative and/or member of Congress that serves your community at [www.tinyurl.com/palegis](http://www.tinyurl.com/palegis) by typing in your program's address in the form. The website will give legislators' names and district office contact information.

Send your state senator and state representative and/or member of Congress a letter describing how your program would like to build a relationship with them and "adopt" them as a part of the child care and/or pre-k program's family.

If you do not hear back from the legislator's district office within a few weeks, give their district office a call to schedule a visit. This initial visit can be in the district office, or it can be at your program.

### Tips for a district office visit:

Bring general program information.

Bring a parent or family member if possible.

Bring children's artwork or something to leave behind that they can display.

## KIDS CAN'T VOTE BUT YOU CAN

The quality of your child's education depends on supportive legislation.

REGISTER TO VOTE HERE

FIND YOUR POLLING PLACE HERE

## GET OUT TO VOTE!

**Important Election Dates**

**Oct. 19, 2026** - Last day to REGISTER to vote in General Election

**Oct. 27, 2026** - Last day to REQUEST a mail-in or absentee ballot

**Nov. 3, 2026** - General Election Day!

**First Up**  
Champions for Early Education



# **OCDEL, DHS & ELRC Announcements**

NETTA RADZINSKI – OCDEL  
[C-JRADZINS@PA.GOV](mailto:C-JRADZINS@PA.GOV)

ELRC REGIONS 15, 16, 17, 18, 19



Pennsylvania  
**Office of Child Development  
and Early Learning**

**NETTA RADZINSKI**

SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR  
EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT  
[C-JRADZINS@PA.GOV](mailto:C-JRADZINS@PA.GOV)

# HELP SHAPE THE ECE SUMMIT OCDEL TOWN HALL

- OCDEL wants to hear from Pennsylvania's early childhood community as we prepare for the 2026 ECE Summit Town Hall. This year's Town Hall will include Deputy Secretary Shante' Brown, DHS Secretary Val Arkoosh, PDE Secretary Carrie Rowe, and OCDEL Bureau Directors. We are gathering feedback in advance to help identify the issues, questions, and priorities that are most important to providers and other early childhood stakeholders. Please use this form to tell us what you would like state leadership to hear!
- [Use this Link](#) or QR Code

## 2026 ECE Summit OCDEL Town Hall: Topics & Questions



# Child Care Staff Recruitment & Retention Timeline

## TIMELINE

**October 13, 2026:** CCSRR Application posted to the DHS and PA Key websites.

**October 13, 2026 – November 30, 2026:** CCSRR Application submission period.

**November 30, 2026:** Last day applications will be accepted by the ELRC. Any application postmarked after this date will not be eligible for award funds.

**March 2027:** OCDEL will release a Special Announcement to providers of the final bonus amount.

# RESOURCES FROM CERTIFICATION

## The Confluence Podcast – Bureau of Certification Services

- [Listen to The Confluence Podcast](#)

### Episode #13: “Support Before Sanctions: Helping Child Care Providers Stay on Track”

- Deputy Secretary Shante’ Brown and Certification Director Ruby Martin discuss how providers can recognize early warning signs, ask for help before challenges escalate, and connect with OCDEL and partner resources. The message: **you don’t have to wait until there is a serious problem to ask for help.** [The Pennsylvania Key -](#)
- **Tools to Help Providers Understand & Maintain Compliance**
  - **Certification Inspection Instrument (CII)** — Review the same inspection tools used by Certification, including instruments, worksheets, checklists and provider tip sheets. [Certification Inspection Instruments & Worksheets](#)
  - **Staff Data Worksheets** — Prepare and maintain staff records before an inspection; center, group and family child care versions are available on the CII page. [Staff Data Worksheets & Tip Sheets](#)
  - **Regional Certification Offices** — Contact your regional office with questions about regulations, licensing requirements, compliance or concerns. [Regional Office Map & Contact Information](#)
  - **Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRCs)** — Connect with your local ELRC for child care information, Child Care Works and other provider supports. [Find Your ELRC & Contact Information](#)
  - **Confluence Podcast** — Monthly conversations from Certification covering practical topics such as supervision, staff files, health and safety requirements, challenging behaviors and other issues providers encounter. [Browse All Confluence Episodes](#)
  - **Certification Vodcasts** — Short, 10–15 minute videos covering topics such as plans of correction, Tiered Inspection Summaries, staff files, children's files, emergency response and other licensing requirements. [Certification Vodcasts](#)

# Child Care Staff Recruitment & Retention Timeline

**End of March - Beginning of April:** ELRC timeframe to release Recruitment and Retention Bonus payments to qualified providers.

- Upon receiving funds from the ELRC, providers must issue the entire Retention Bonus payments to qualified staff within 45 calendar days.

**March 26, 2027- September 17, 2027:** Provider timeframe to release Recruitment Bonus payments to newly hired, qualified staff.

**September 17, 2027:** Last day for providers to spend Recruitment award funds.

**October 15, 2027:** Last day for Final Expense Report Forms to be received and unspent funds to be returned to the ELRC.

**December 2027 – February 2028:** ELRCs perform monitoring of provider CCSRR awards.

# PA NAPSACC WELLNESS GRANT

Licensed child care providers have an opportunity to strengthen nutrition and physical activity practices and policies while helping young children build healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

## **What participating programs can receive:**

- Individualized technical assistance
- Support from a Child Care Health Consultant at no cost to your program
- Guidance with self-assessment, action planning, policy development, and continuous quality improvement
- Up to \$500 in grant funding upon completion of grant requirements

**Application Deadline:** October 2, 2026, by 11:59 PM

Informational Webinar: October 27, 2026, 12:45–1:45 PM

75 spots available — enrollment will be first-come, first-served following the informational webinar.

- Past participants may apply, with priority given to programs that have participated no more than once since 2020.
- Complete the online application today [via Survey Monkey](#).

# NEW: TEACH ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Pennsylvania's Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) has updated the TEACH income criteria for FY 26-27. Early childhood professionals can now earn up to \$25 per hour; directors can earn up to \$30 per hour.

Pennsylvania Child Care Association (PACCA) offers a variety of TEACH Scholarships to meet the needs of the early care and education workforce in center-, group-, and home-based settings. Eligible applicants must:

- work a minimum of 25 hours per week year-round, directly with children in a DHS-certified child care program,
- be a resident of Pennsylvania,
- be employed with a sponsoring program for at least six months before enrolling in courses through the scholarship program,
- make \$25 or less an hour (\$30 or less per hour for directors), and
- be interested in pursuing coursework at a partnering college/university toward a degree and/or teacher certification in PreK-4/Early Childhood Education.

## TEACH Scholarship Applications Open for Spring 2027!

- TEACH helps early learning professionals advance their education while continuing to work, supporting both staff retention and program quality.
- Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, but priority consideration will be given to complete applications submitted by Friday, November 13, 2026. *(Semester begins mid-late January.)*
- To learn how to apply, visit the [PACCA website](#). The TEACH College Enrollment Checklist and a recording of the recent TEACH Scholarship Information Session are also available at the [PACCA website](#).
- If you know an early educator who would benefit from TEACH, please share this!

# RESOURCES FROM CERTIFICATION

## The Confluence Podcast – Bureau of Certification Services

- [Listen to The Confluence Podcast](#)

### Episode #13: “Support Before Sanctions: Helping Child Care Providers Stay on Track”

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- **Tools to Help Providers Understand & Maintain Compliance**
  - **Certification Inspection Instrument (CII)** — Review the same inspection tools used by Certification, including instruments, worksheets, checklists and provider tip sheets. [Certification Inspection Instruments & Worksheets](#)
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  - **Certification Vodcasts** — Short, 10–15 minute videos covering topics such as plans of correction, Tiered Inspection Summaries, staff files, children’s files, emergency response and other licensing requirements. [Certification Vodcasts](#)



## ELRC REGIONS 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 UPDATES

# ELRC 15, 16, 17, 18 & 19 - UPDATES

## Keystone STARS Continuous Quality Improvement Awards are out!

- To be eligible for a 2026-27 Keystone STARS CQI Award, a provider must meet all the following requirements as of July 31, 2026 , and at the time of the Award payment issued by the ELRC:
  - DHS Certification Status: provider must possess a current, regular DHS certificate of compliance. Providers with provisional certificates, those in a “refuse to renew” status, or those with revoked certificates are ineligible. An exception is made for providers operating with a provisional certificate of compliance due solely to a change in location under the same legal entity. Newly opened programs operating with an initial provisional certificate will remain ineligible.
  - Keystone STARS Designation: The provider must be designated as a Keystone STAR 2, 3, or 4 program and must not be in a Keystone STARS Suspension status.

*\*See Policy Eligibility Exception for STAR 1 Programs and Special Consideration for STAR 2 and STAR 3 Programs.*

# ELRC 15, 16, 17, 18 & 19 - UPDATES

2026–2027 CQI Award amounts remain largely consistent with previous CQI award cycles, with several targeted adjustments based on provider feedback. Changes include:

- Family Child Care programs and School Age Child Care programs will receive an additional \$250 at each STAR level compared to previous CQI Award cycles.
- Two new capacity tiers which include increased award amounts at each STAR level to better reflect program size and operational differences among larger providers. Previously, all centers with a licensed capacity of 181 or greater received the same award amounts at each STAR level.
- These revisions were informed by provider feedback gathered over the past year through direct feedback shared with OCDEL and provider discussion groups facilitated through the State Advisory Council.

# ELRC 15, 16, 17, 18 & 19 - UPDATES

- Providers receive communication directly from their ELRC with award details.
- Full information can be found on the PA Keys website
- Questions? Reach out to your ELRC directly

- **1-Minute Exit Survey:**

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/fmLKRD0Wgz>

- **PQAS Hours Request Form:**

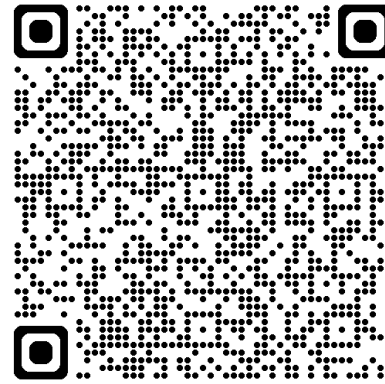
<https://forms.office.com/r/RfzSg97k7j>

- **Upcoming Meetings: 12:30-2:00pm**

- Oct. 27 (4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday)
- Nov. 17 (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday)
- Dec. 15 (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday)

- **Meeting Slides, Recording & Registration Links**

<https://www.firstup.org/advocacy/#sepecc>



THANK YOU  
IT'S A WRAP!

MEETING  
WRAP UP