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**Wisconsin State Conference of Branches**

Frank Humphrey, President

REPRINT FROM THE NAACP NATIONAL OFFICE

## NAACP AND NHSA JOIN FORCES IN MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

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*Core Directives Include Voter Registration, Healthcare Enrollment and Fair Housing Advocacy*

**BALTIMORE, MD** – The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Head Start Association (NHSA) have announced an historic joint initiative aimed at empowering the country’s most vulnerable families by facilitating voter registration, health care enrollment, and fair housing advocacy at Head Start centers across the county.

Since its creation in 1965, Head Start has improved the lives of 32 million at-risk children and their families, laying the foundation for lifelong success. As the outstanding model for quality early learning, Head Start’s comprehensive, two-generation approach, including services such as home visits, health screenings, and improved nutrition, gets children ready for kindergarten and sets families on a path toward self-sufficiency.

NAACP President and Head Start alumnus Cornell Brooks revealed the Memorandum of Understanding, which focuses on three core directives:

- **Voter registration:** Organize voter registration drives at Head Start centers to provide Head Start parents with crucial tools and information to bridge gaps in the voting process, including helpful resources such as voter guides with state-specific information on how to register and vote.
- **Healthcare / Affordable Care Act:** Educate families and provide resources to the Head Start community to help families enroll for health care coverage and access critical medical care.
- **Housing Advocacy:** Provide Head Start families with fair housing advocacy tools to help build a foundation for stabilizing the family and home, and ensuring the entire family is prepared and invested in their own lifelong success.

“Head Start has long been the center of community and learning in neighborhoods across the country, providing the required resources to strengthen families, communities and the well-being of our children,” said NAACP President and CEO Cornell William Brooks. “This new partnership with Head Start is a natural extension of their commitment to educating and empowering families and the communities they serve.”

Head Start’s benefits to building community - The existence of central center locations in the poorest neighborhoods where young parents can meet, socialize, and see one another helps create neighbors and neighborhoods.

- **Providing children early knowledge, nurturing and stability** that readies them for kindergarten, instills love of reading, and phenomenal socialization skill development that hopefully expands beyond the walls of the center.

- Creating opportunity/access to community services for parents and children. Parents are able to gain training, set family and community goals, participate in councils at centers, and grow into positions of empowerment.
- Social Justice Imperative - In modern society, child care and Pre-K are considered basic needs for children, and often out of reach for struggling parents. Head Start and other programs help create a more stable and peaceful world that values education, self-direction and community that we must continue to cultivate.

“We are proud to partner with the NAACP to open up the democratic process for Head Start families, and ensure access to critical health and housing opportunities,” said NHSA Executive Director Yasmina Vinci. “Head Start has always emphasized that parents are their children’s first teachers and a program’s most important partner. Expanding access to these resources is a crucial part of breaking the cycle of poverty and empowering families to achieve their own goals for education, employment, stability, and success.”

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*Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest nonpartisan civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities. You can read more about the NAACP's work and our six "Game Changer" issue areas [here](#).*

*The National Head Start Association is a not-for-profit organization committed to the belief that every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, has the ability to succeed in school and in life. The opportunities offered by Head Start lead to healthier, empowered children and families, and stronger, more vibrant communities. NHSA is the voice for more than 1 million children, 200,000 staff and 1,600 Head Start grantees in the United States. Visit [www.nhsa.org](http://www.nhsa.org) and follow @NatlHeadStart for more information.*