

MASSACHUSETTS HEAD START ASSOCIATION

M H S A

2021

ANNUAL REPORT

Stronger Together



Triumph, Inc. children and teachers, summer 2021

MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Dear Massachusetts Head Start Association Members,

I want to thank all 4,520 Head Start and Early Head Start professionals for your contributions to the Massachusetts Head Start community. My first year as MHSA chair has been like no other. Together, we navigated year two of working with young children and families in a pandemic. Despite masking, mandates, the Delta variant and now the Omicron variant, **I SEE PROGRAMS PROVIDING OUTSTANDING SERVICES AND TREMENDOUS SUPPORTS TO THE NEARLY 10,000+ CHILDREN FROM 9,500+ FAMILIES ENROLLED IN OUR 29 PROGRAMS.**

Throughout the year, MHSA Executive Director Michelle Haimowitz and I have worked hard to target our supports and advocacy to the areas we heard were your priorities. Michelle thoughtfully advocated on behalf of the workforce to ensure MHSA programs were included in all funding opportunities offered in the state. She worked to help frame out the needs of programs and the workforce and has supported transformative changes our field so desperately needs.

The MHSA Board of Directors has made some significant investments internally this year as well. This began with an overhaul to our By-laws, the creation of four focused sub-committees, and the addition of new board leadership. In November, MHSA offered a great virtual conference for members. Michelle and I worked with Mal Hughes to support new Massachusetts leaders and directors during an engaging session. The Board of Directors of MHSA are extremely proud of our accomplishments this past year. Moving forward, you will see expansion and new projects starting as we diversify funding streams and bring on new initiatives.

I am incredibly humbled and proud to work on behalf of the most dedicated and driven individuals that support our vulnerable children and families in communities hardest hit by the pandemic. Our struggles are like no other, but our accomplishments are the greatest. Read on to see firsthand the great work happening in our communities.

MASSACHUSETTS HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START GRANTEEES ARE STRONG, PROUD, DEDICATED AND IN THIS TOGETHER!

Yours in Service,

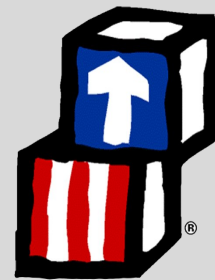
Jill Fox, MHSA Chair



2021 MHSA DATA HIGHLIGHTS

Head Start programs continued to serve through the Coronavirus pandemic in 2021, providing children and families with high-quality early childhood education and comprehensive services that are perhaps more important now more than ever:

- ✓ **29** HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START AGENCIES
- ✓ **10,484** YOUNG CHILDREN SERVED
- ✓ **9,591** FAMILIES SERVED
- ✓ **4,240** STAFF EMPLOYED



2021 MHSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

<u>BOARD POSITION</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>AGENCY</u>
Chair	Jill Fox	PACE Head Start Director
Vice Chair	Kristen Hayes	Friend of the Board
Treasurer	Nicole Blais	Holyoke Chicopee Springfield Head Start CEO
Clerk	Lyndsey Vincent	Community Teamwork, Inc. Parent
	Flossy Calderon	ABCD Head Start Deputy Director, Children & Family Services
	Lisa Correnti	Pathways for Children Head Start/Early Head Start Director
	Nancy Mahoney	Making Opportunity Count VP of Children & Family Services
	Carrie Mayen	Quincy Community Action Program Parent
	Delia Ramirez	Self Help Parent
	Meghan Siembor	Community Teamwork, Inc. Division Director, Child & Family Services
	Nancy Sullivan	Self Help, Inc. Head Start Deputy Director

STAFF

Executive Director Michelle Haimowitz

2021 MEMBERS

Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) Inc. Head Start & Early Head Start
 Associates for Human Services Early Head Start and Early Learning Programs
 Berkshire County Head Start
 Citizens for Citizens Head Start & Early Head Start
 Communities United, Inc.
 Community Action, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start
 Community Action Pioneer Valley, Head Start and Early Learning Program
 Community Action Programs Inter-City (CAPIC) Head Start
 Community Day Care Early Head Start
 Community Teamwork, Inc.
 The Dimock Center Early Head Start & Head Start Programs
 Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc. Head Start
 Holyoke Chicopee Springfield Head Start, Inc.
 LEO, Inc. Head Start & Early Head Start Programs
 Martha's Vineyard Community Services Head Start
 Making Opportunity Count (MOC) Child Care & Head Start
 Pathways for Children
 People Acting in Community Endeavors (PACE) Head Start & Early Head Start
 Quincy Community Action Programs (QCAP) Head Start & Early Head Start
 Riverside Community Care Early Head Start
 Self-Help, Inc. Head Start
 South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) Child Care & Head Start
 South Shore Early Education
 South Shore Stars Early Head Start
 Triumph, Inc. Head Start, Early Head Start & Early Childhood Programs
 Worcester Community Action Council Head Start
 Worcester Child Development Head Start Program
 YMCA Cape Cod Head Start & Early Head Start



Head Start children from LEO, Inc. summer 2021



MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the **MASSACHUSETTS HEAD START ASSOCIATION** is to support its members to administer high quality, effective Early Head Start and Head Start programs that provide outstanding services to pregnant women, infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

To this end, MHSA:

- ◇ **ACTIVELY ADVOCATES** for resources and policies that support this mission
- ◇ Forges and **MAINTAINS STRONG COLLABORATIONS** with the Office of Head Start (OHS) and the MA Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), other partners, advocates, governmental agencies, and community members
- ◇ **PROVIDES TO ITS MEMBERS** up to date **INFORMATION, ANALYSIS, STRATEGIC DIRECTION,** and other resources as available
- ◇ Through regular meetings, provides for its members **MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES** for information sharing, goal setting, and professional development

WHAT IS HEAD START

The premise of Head Start is simple:

Every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, has the ability to reach their full potential.

Head Start was founded in 1965 as a tool to help break the cycle of poverty by providing low-income parents with early childhood education and comprehensive family services. Since then, Head Start has expanded to include children birth-3 and now serves approximately one million children a year in all 50 states, including over 15,000 children in Massachusetts. Head Start comprehensive services include:

- Health, mental health, nutritional, and educational services for children
- Leadership, volunteer, and parent education opportunities
- Referrals and family advocacy

Head Start programs prepare children for Kindergarten success and provide vital supports for their families according to the unique communities' needs. While maintaining the original vision of communities investing in their youngest, most vulnerable children, Head Start has also developed over the decades to adapt, build on evidence-based practices, and continually improve to provide the highest quality programs for children and families.



Early Head Start teacher and child from Triumph, Inc.

ELECTED OFFICIALS VISITED HEAD START!

Thank you to all of our State and Federal officials who witnessed the magic of Head Start this year!



Senator Elizabeth Warren and Congressman Jake Auchincloss visited Triumph, Inc. in Taunton. The Senator and Congressman were joined by State Representative Carol Doherty and Senator Marc Pacheco.



Congresswoman Lori Trahan toured the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council Head Start program in June 2021. The Congresswoman was joined for the visit by State Sen. Diana DiZoglio and Rep. Linda Campbell among others.

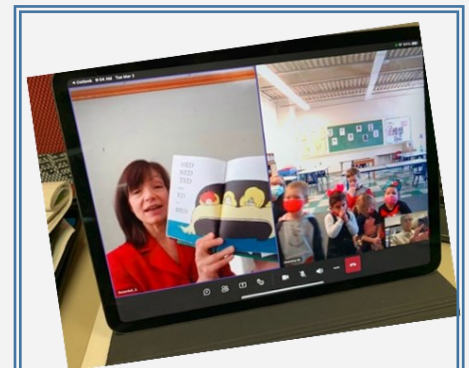


Lieutenant Gov. Karyn Polito visited two Worcester Child Development Head Start classrooms in October 2021 during Massachusetts STEM week. The Lt. Gov. engaged in several hands-on activities with children.

VIRTUAL BOOK BUDDIES AT WCAC

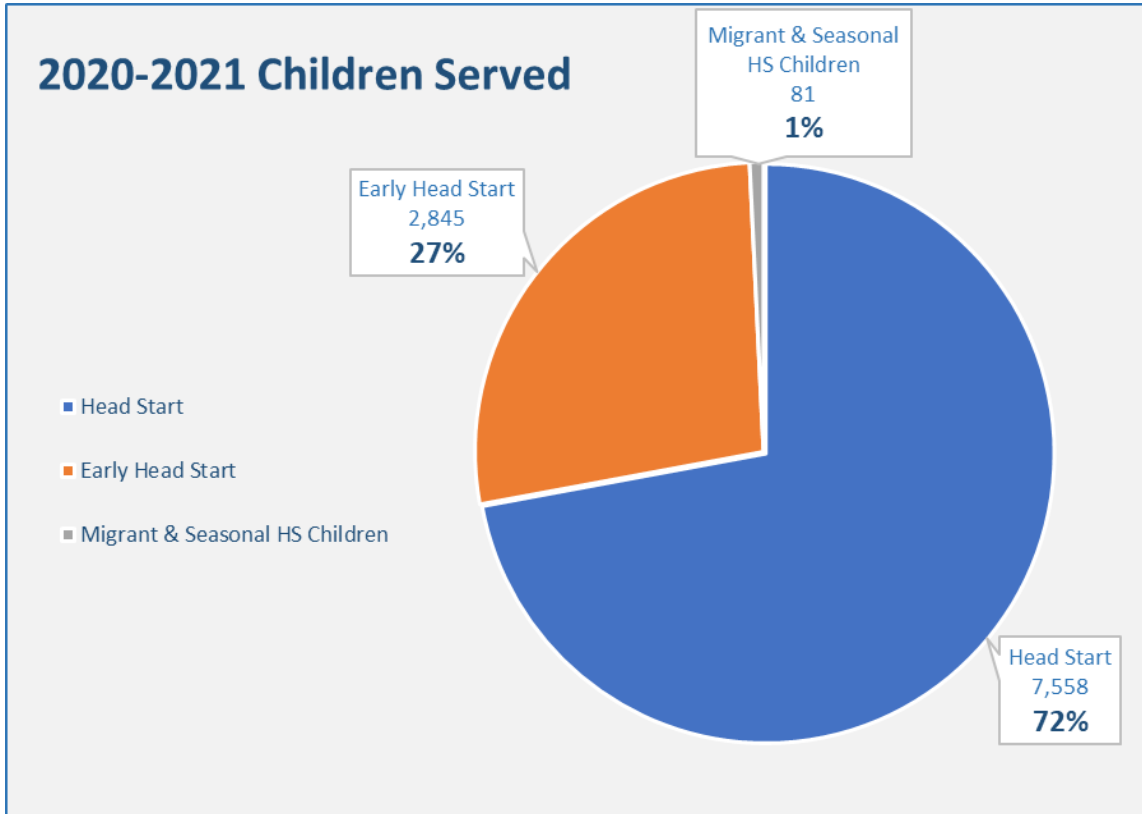


A strict no-visitor policy was put into place for both of Worcester Community Action Council Head Start centers in order to minimize potential germs from outside guests, and protect against the spread of the COVID-19 virus. In response, WCAC's committee MAPFRE USA volunteers were adaptable and created a library of virtual story times in the absence of their regular Book Buddy visits to children's classrooms.



MHSA HEAD START CHILDREN AND FAMILY DATA

In the 2020-2021 program year, **MASSACHUSETTS HEAD START PROGRAMS SERVED 10,484 CHILDREN, 9,591 FAMILIES** and **105 PREGNANT WOMEN**. Head Start and Early Head Start children are served in a variety of settings including center-based, home-visiting, and family child care.



9.5%
of families experienced homelessness this year

3.5%
of children were in foster care at some point during the year

9.6% HS
25.2% EHS
children were on an IEP (individual education program) or IFSP (individualized family service plan)

86%
of families received at least one family service

	# of families	Family Service
	4,530	received emergency/crisis intervention
	1,400	received housing assistance
	1,801	received mental health services
	814	received assistance enrolling in an education or job training program



KINDERGARTEN READINESS AT SOUTH SHORE EARLY EDUCATION



South Shore Early Education (SSEE) at South Shore Community Action Council held an 8 week *Ready for Kindergarten* program in the summer of 2021. Due to the pandemic, children entering kindergarten had not received a full year of Head Start services. Any child entering kindergarten in September was eligible to attend, even if they had not attended the program during the school year. The focus was on preparing the children for public school (*just like the first Head Start program back in 1965*).

The teachers at SSEE created schedules similar to the public schools and used the *Bridge to Kindergarten* curriculum as the foundation of the program. Children had “recess”, lunch where they learned to open their own milk cartons, reading and writing activities as well as STEAM exploration and experiments. There was a strong self-help skills section as well as an emphasis on social emotional learning utilizing the Second Step curriculum. An important piece for many children was the weaning off of their naptime, which many times is difficult the first couple months of kindergarten.

All of the children left the program confident and ready for kindergarten. See the messages from families about the impact of the program (*student names have been changed*):



“Jamie’s teacher first asked me if and where Jamie attended preschool. I told her where and she was very impressed. Jamie, along with two other classmates who attended South Shore Early Education in Plymouth, surpass their peers on so many levels.”

“Please share! You run an incredible program that I’m so happy my family has been a part of for the past couple years! From the time Tyler first started, I went from being a stay at home mom to a full time working single mom. South Shore Early Education has been a consistent positive place in mine and my children’s’ lives throughout all the changes and challenges we have faced.”

“I mentioned the Bridge to Kindergarten program that they all attended there and wanted those who ran the program, to get the credit they deserve. Peyton’s teacher said she has never seen children this prepared or come in with so much knowledge and skills as she has seen with these students. She said they all still continue to thrive and exceed all the curriculum expectations, especially with reading and writing.”



BOLD LEADER



BOLD RECOGNITION FOR ANAT WEISENFREUND!

This spring, the National Head Start Association named 14 individuals across the country as 2020 BOLD Prize winners in recognition of their extraordinary leadership in 2020 - among them Anat Weisenfreund, Director of Head Start & Early Learning Programs

for Community Action Pioneer Valley! Under Anat's leadership over more than a decade, the program has embraced a strengths-based and trauma-informed approach in which families are valued as essential partners and staff are valued, cared for, and recognized as each other's most valuable resource. When the pandemic hit, Anat knew it would put this approach to the test — would staff and families truly feel supported and empowered as they were engulfed in such collective trauma? "Through the unprecedented disruptions of 2020, we learned that it works," Anat says. "Consistent, empathic, and reflective listening and messaging to staff resulted in a workforce that felt deeply supported and appreciated, and were then able to offer the same connection, recognition, and support to children and families... *My advice: build strong, diverse teams invited to think and speak independently so that you have true partners in this difficult work. Seek and receive regular reflective mentorship so that you can become increasingly effective. With vulnerable babies and families always at the center, know that it's the strength of relationships that will determine the quality of care.*"



HAVING FUN AT MOC HEAD START



At Making Opportunity Count (MOC) Head Start's Mechanic Street site, leadership decided to help boost positivity and have fun by having a "Fun Friday" once a month. Beginning in October, Mechanic Street held an '80s day, inviting all staff and families to join in the fun. Children came dressed in '80s gear, teachers put out "artifacts" from the '80s, and even had a building wide dance party! In November, Fun Friday was all about sports! Staff, children, and families have had such a good time celebrating and enjoying each other.

hello fun friday!!



OUR WORKFORCE

HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START STAFF HAVE BEEN ON THE FRONTLINES OF THIS PANDEMIC, serving our most vulnerable young children and families through historically difficult times. Yet, our staff remains underpaid and in crisis.



- ✓ **15% of all Head Start and Early Head Start staff left their positions** during the 2020-2021 program year, but less than one third of all staff who left were replaced
- ✓ **60% of all the staff that left were education** and child development staff
- ✓ The **average salary** for a classroom teacher remains at just **\$37,352**
- ✓ Teachers with **bachelor degrees earn just \$40,033** on average, despite soaring cost of living in Massachusetts

MORE MASSACHUSETTS HEAD START WORKFORCE DATA

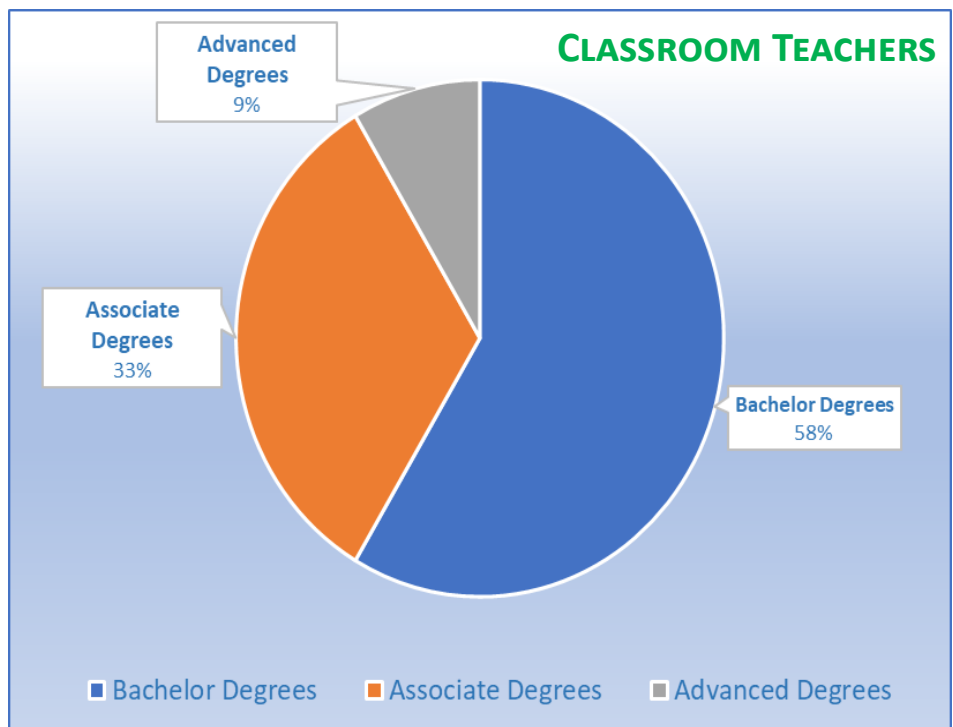
- ⇒ **4,240 TOTAL STAFF EMPLOYED BY HEAD START IN MA**
- ⇒ **25% OF WHOM (1,067) ARE CURRENT OR FORMER HEAD START PARENTS!**
- ⇒ **1,115 CLASSROOM TEACHERS (INFANT/TODDLER & PRESCHOOL)**

82

Home Visitors

53

Family Childcare Providers



MHSA 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

ADVOCACY AND COVID RELIEF

MHSA has been busy representing the Head Start community's interests at the state and federal levels. This year, Head Start programs saw federal stimulus funds reach the field through the American Rescue Plan Act both directly to Head Start programs and through the Department of Early Education and Care. These vital funds allowed programs to invest in program improvements and bonuses for the workforce. MHSA's Executive Director was named as a member of the Massachusetts legislative Early Education and Care Economic Review Commission, which has been tasked throughout 2021 and into 2022 with investigating accessibility, affordability, and other concerns surrounding early education and childcare in the Commonwealth and making recommendations to the state legislature for policy and funding solutions. Additionally, amidst the chaos of 2021, the Massachusetts legislature maintained critical workforce funding for the Head Start field by funding Head Start State Supplemental grants at \$15 million. MHSA looks forward to continuing to represent Head Start's interests with our legislative and regulatory partners.

2021 CONFERENCE

This year, MHSA held its second successful virtual conference, ***Head Start in 2021: Starting with Equity***. Rooted in diversity, equity, and inclusion, Head Start attendees from across Massachusetts engaged in two weeks of coordinated learning and sharing through seven workshops and two listening sessions with our partners at the Department of Early Education and Care. Fantastic presenters included Tonia Spence of the Diversity Informed Tenets leading a keynote session *Equity Begins with Me*, and Aditi Subramaniam leading a workshop *Nurturing Young Children Impacted by Traumatic Stress*. Over 150 members of the Massachusetts Head Start community joined MHSA to center our learning on equity at this year's conference.



EXPANDING THE BOARD



In March 2021, MHSA welcomed five new members to our Board of Directors: *Nicole Blais*, CEO of Holyoke Chicopee Springfield Head Start; *Flossy Calderon*, Deputy Director Children & Families Services of ABCD Head Start; *Lisa Correnti*, Head Start Director of Pathways for Children; *Carrie Mayen*, QCAP Head Start parent; and *Meghan Siembor*, Division Director Child & Family Services of Community Teamwork Inc. Head Start. Our new Board members bring our Board to eleven dedicated individuals leading and growing our Association.



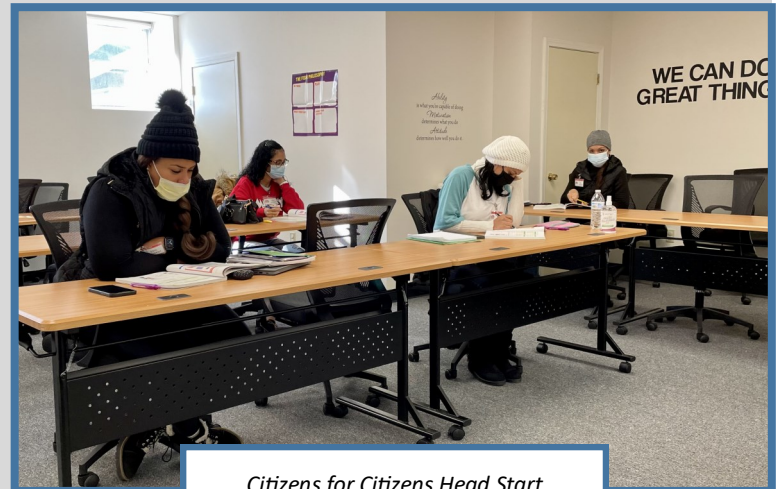
MHSA 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

HSSCO PARTNERSHIP REMAINS STRONG

MHSA's success is due in large part to its successful collaborative partnerships with government agencies and partner organizations across Massachusetts. One of MHSA's most important partners is the Massachusetts Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) at the Department of Early Education and Care. This year, we said farewell and congratulations to our friend and HSSCO Director Carol Nolan as she retired in the fall. We thank Carol for her years of service to and support of the Massachusetts Head Start community! MHSA is excited to continue working with the Department and with the HSSCO through its new interim Director Joy Cohen. Welcome Joy!

CITIZENS FOR CITIZENS LEARNING LAB

This year, **CITIZENS FOR CITIZENS HEAD START OPENED A NEW LEARNING LAB AT ITS ALDRICH HEAD START CENTER.** The Learning Lab hosts classes for parents and employees. Through a collaboration with SER Jobs for Progress, free ESOL Classes are currently offered for Head Start parents. Those enrolled receive a Chromebook, transportation, child care, morning refreshments and lunch plus a monthly \$25 gift card for a minimum 80% attendance. The Learning Lab is also hosting free Financial Literacy Classes through a collaboration with BayCoast Bank and will soon host free CDA Classes through a collaboration with Bristol Community College. Additional free classes are planned for spring 2022 including cooking and nutrition through a collaboration with Cooking Matters, Parenting Journey Classes through a collaboration with People, Inc., First Aid and CPR Certification Classes and more! With a child care area set up adjacent to the Learning Lab, it is the perfect, worry-free environment for parents to pursue their education and build connections with others who share their goals.



*Citizens for Citizens Head Start
Parents at the Learning Lab*

Learning



PARENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

In December 2021 MHSAs graduated its first class of Parent Ambassadors! Our parent leaders and advocates joined MHSAs for a year of intensive trainings and collaborative work to harness their existing skills and inspire them to serve as Head Start leaders and advocates! They completed an advocacy project collecting stories of Head Start parents' experiences with Head Start's eligibility standards.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2021 PARENT AMBASSADORS!

Here is what some of our Parent Ambassadors shared about their experience with the program:

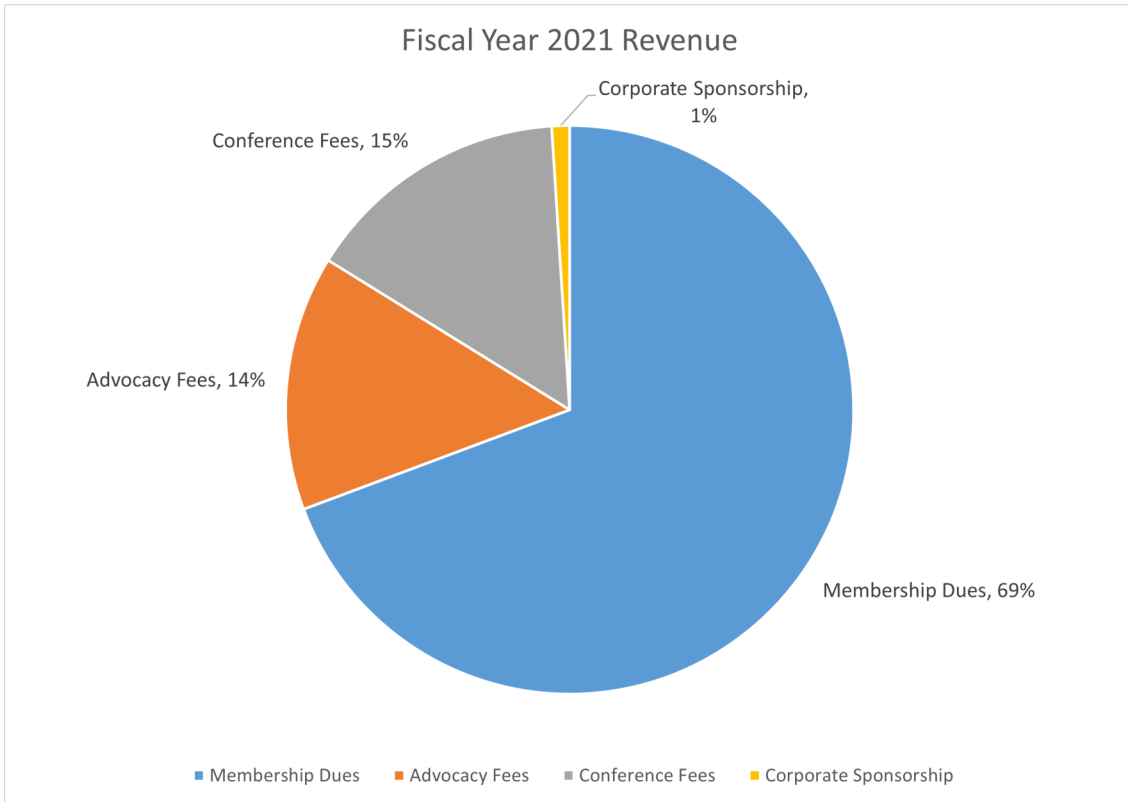
"I will use all the tools from this program in the future. They have already helped me improve my parenting, advocacy, and leadership skills. I not only grew as a person but I was given the opportunity to practice in real life what I have learned and I am eternally grateful."



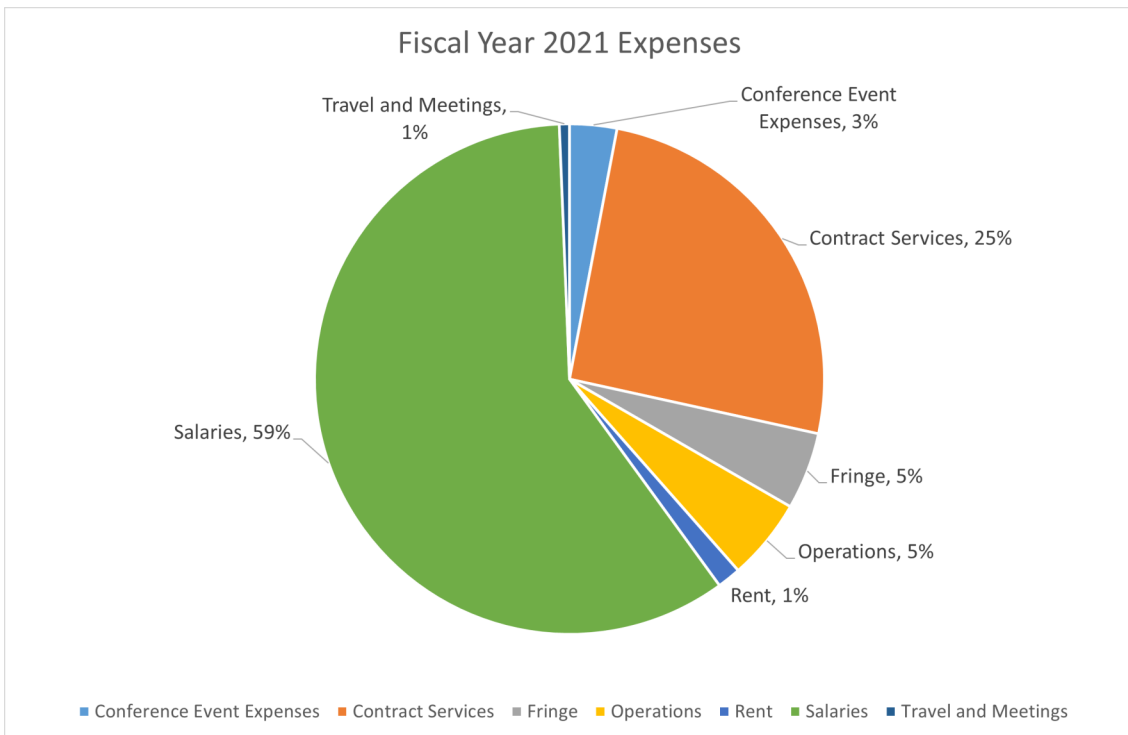
"Because of the program, I became confident enough to run for chairperson this year for Policy council and I have already started engaging with parents on the importance of being involved and helping Head Start get access to all the tools necessary to better serve the community. I plan to continue to participate in any meeting possible to share my experiences for advocacy for Head Start and I plan to continue engaging with other parents in the community to encourage them to participate as much as possible."



MHSA FINANCIALS



MHSA 2021 revenue totaled \$182,369



MHSA 2021 expenses totaled \$147,006





MASSACHUSETTS HEAD START ASSOCIATION

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