



# CITY OF OAKLAND HEAD START PROGRAM DIRECTOR



*The City of Oakland is an equal opportunity employer that values workforce diversity, inclusion, and equity. Oakland has a long history of activism around issues of justice and equity. Both oppression and this resistance to oppression have shaped the city's historical roots and the lives of its residents to this day. As public servants to one of the most diverse cities in the nation, we strive to develop employees who understand the harm and impacts of systemic inequity to create lasting, meaningful outcomes for everyone. Oakland strives to establish an environment that embraces the richness of culture, community, and individualism of employees.*



## **EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY IN THE CITY OF OAKLAND**

The City of Oakland's Head Start Program Director position is a well-positioned opportunity for a creative, visionary leader and systems thinker who is passionate about childhood development and the welfare of families to have a direct impact on the community of Oakland. The City is looking for a Head Start Program Director with a track record of highly effective, innovative, and professional program administration. The ideal candidate will bring experience navigating complex funding structures to ensure children and families are provided the highest level of early childcare and education, with a commitment to families to thrive emotionally, mentally and economically.

## **THE CITY AND COMMUNITY OF OAKLAND**

Oakland is the eighth-largest city in California with an estimated population of 440,646 (2020 U.S. Census Bureau). Oakland is a dynamic city with 50 distinct and eclectic neighborhoods, 17 commercial districts, an increasingly vibrant downtown, a strong economic base, world-class arts and entertainment venues, superior cultural and recreational amenities, and a rich multicultural heritage. The city serves as the administrative seat of Alameda County and the center of commerce and international trade for Northern California.

Oakland is one of the most diverse urban cities in the nation, with major representation from Hispanic and Latino, Asian, African American, and Caucasian residents speaking over 125 languages and dialects. The city is also home to the third-largest LGBT community among the 50 largest U.S. cities. The City's rich diversity is celebrated and shared through annual festivals including the Black Cowboys' Parade, Fruitvale's Dia de los Muertos, and Oakland Pride. In April of 2016, an official city motto was established as #OaklandLoveLive which embodies the love residents maintain for their city and the tradition of

working closely with the entire community, which truly represents an ideal place to live, work and play.

Oakland's landscape is a picturesque mix of coastline to the west and rolling hills to the east, providing an unparalleled view of the San Francisco Bay. Oakland has more parks and open space per capita than any other city in the Bay Area. Oakland is at the heart of the East Bay Regional Park District, a splendid system of 65 parks covering more than 119,000 acres and 29 regional hiking trails stretching 1,200 miles in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Jack London Square, the waterfront area, and Lake Merritt are destinations enjoyed by both residents and tourists.

Oakland has emerged as a major economic force in the region. As a center for international trade, the Port of Oakland is the nation's fifth busiest container port. The Oakland International Airport is served by 12 major domestic and international airlines. Oakland is home to several corporate headquarters including Clorox, Kaiser Permanente, Pandora, Cost Plus World Market, and Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream.

High quality educational opportunities abound as six major universities, including UC Berkeley, are within a 40-mile radius.

# OAKLAND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

## MISSION STATEMENT

*The Human Services Department (HSD) promotes the health, education and well-being of Oakland children, youth, families, single adults, and seniors by providing free resources and programs to build strong Oakland communities. The department collaborates with a diverse group of local organizations to eliminate poverty, economic, and racial disparities by addressing the current and emerging needs of the community.*

## OAKLAND HEADSTART/EARLYSTART PROGRAM

The City of Oakland's Head Start Program is committed to ensuring all families have equitable access to early education services, the support they need to fulfill their family's goals, and that their children have a firm foundation when transitioning to kindergarten.

The City of Oakland has been a grantee of the Head Start Program since January 1971 and has been a direct grantee of Early Head Start since 2009. The Head Start Program provides high-quality, comprehensive early education programming to 600 low-income children and families so that children start school ready to succeed, offering learning environments that promote social-emotional learning and comprehensive school readiness skills. The program design includes extensive support services for children and their families, such as health, nutrition, disabilities screening and support, mental health services and family support services, including employment readiness. Head Start also employs a shared program decision-making governance structure that ensures parent involvement in program implementation and oversight.

The Program is operated at 14 sites as well as through partnerships with a diverse set of community agencies, including: Brighter Beginnings and Bananas to help ensure sufficient services for children and their families. Oakland Head Start/Early Head Start operates three different program options: 1) Full-day, center-based Head Start and Early Head Start services; 2) Home-Based Early Head Start services; and 3) Full-day Family Child Care services.

## OAKLAND EARLY EDUCATION STATE CONTRACTS

The City of Oakland also receives funding from the State of California to oversee and manage early care and education classrooms ages 0-5 in centers. This funding is stacked with Federal funds which allows for increased hours of operations and days of service for families. All early education centers that operate within the department receive State funding.

The Program Director will be responsible for reviewing budgets, checking that expenditures align with allowable uses, and watching for early signs of risk—whether in financial reports, staffing patterns, or enrollment data.



## THE POSITION

The Head Start Program Director reports to the Director of Human Services, or their designee, leads a team of professionals, and is responsible for the direction, management, and implementation of the Head Start/Early Head Start Birth-to-Five program. The Head Start Program Director continuously monitors the progress on meeting child outcomes and school readiness goals with the deliberate intent of meeting or exceeding the national average for child outcomes. The position oversees 6 direct reports, a department budget of \$25 million, and staff of 100.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide strategic and operational leadership for the division, establishing priorities, goals, policies, performance standards, and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local requirements.
- Build and sustain collaborative relationships with the Head Start Policy Council, Advisory Board, Mayor's Office, City leadership, County, State and Federal partners, regulatory agencies, delegate partners, and community stakeholders.
- Ensure high-quality, culturally responsive child development services aligned with Head Start Performance Standards and California early childhood education standards and Community Care licensing.
- Oversee fiscal management, including budget development, financial oversight, contract administration, invoice processing, payments and pursuit of grants and alternative funding sources.
- Review budgets, checking that expenditures align with allowable uses, and watching for early signs of risk – whether in financial reports, staffing patterns or enrollment data.
- Direct and coordinate division operations, ensuring consistency in policy implementation and effective collaboration with external agencies, consultants, and vendors.
- Recruit, supervise, and develop staff; address public inquiries and eligibility determinations; and provide technical assistance to community partners.
- Establish community engagement, education and training programs for clients, partners and members of the public. This could be townhalls or listening sessions.

## IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will be an experienced program administrator with strong business acumen, staff management, problem-solving skills, crisis management abilities, fiscal stewardship, change management and a demonstrated track record of fostering a culture of collaboration, high performance, service excellence, and accountability in a transparent manner. This individual should bring deep expertise in systematically collecting, analyzing, presenting and using data, including Head Start Performance Standards to drive programmatic and operational decisions that improve outcomes for children.

## KEY ATTRIBUTES

- Mission-driven, community-centered leadership with a clear commitment to equity and positive outcomes for children and families.
- Deep Head Start/Early Childhood expertise, with a strong command of compliance, monitoring, and

performance standards (comfortable navigating multiple funding streams and regulations).

- Politically astute and publicly accountable; able to operate effectively in a transparent environment with public meetings, community advocates, and multiple oversight bodies.
- Relationship builder with presence; able to partner with Policy Council, Advisory Board/ City leadership, unions, providers, and cross-department stakeholders.
- Operational strength and systems mindset; able to stabilize and improve systems, staffing structures, and service delivery across multiple sites and program models.
- Talent and culture leader who deploys a strong strategy in hiring, retaining, developing, coaching, and building healthy team dynamics.

- Fiscal and contract management capability, proven track record in overseeing budgets, audits, procurement/contracting processes, and payment workflows.
- Change leader who can manage complex structures, set priorities, and execute a phased plan while maintaining compliance and service quality.
- Excellent communication and presentation skills; ability to communicate with individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- Creative, visionary, and system thinker with the ability to elevate programs to advanced implementation across the City.

## EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

The following qualifications are guidelines, as the appointing authority has broad discretion in filling exempt positions.

**Education:** Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in public or business administration, human services, education, health services, sociology, psychology, or closely related field. Master's degree in a related field is desirable.

**Experience:** Five (5) years of responsible supervisory or managerial experience in human services program administration. Experience in federally funded programs is desirable.

**License:** Individuals who are appointed to this position will be required to maintain a valid California Driver's License throughout the tenure of employment OR demonstrate the ability to travel to various locations in a timely manner as required in the performance of duties.

## THE PROCESS

The process for the Program Director position will begin with the screening of applications, resumes, and cover letters by The Hawkins Company. The most qualified candidates will be contacted to arrange a screening interview, which will determine who advances to the interview phase. Interviews will be conducted likely with a panel of technical experts and other stakeholders familiar with the position and with internal representatives. Final candidates will be interviewed by the Human Services Director and the program's governing bodies.

## COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

This comprehensive package reflects the City's commitment to attracting and retaining top talent in public service. The salary range for this position is \$164,730.84 - \$202,265.88 annually. Salary is negotiable within the defined range depending on qualifications. Benefits include generous medical insurance, life insurance, automobile allowance, paid holidays, vacation, sick leave, management

leave, public sector retirement (CalPERS 2.5% @ 55 classic member; 2% @ 62 new PEPPRA member), and voluntary deferred compensation. Click on the link for the city's Benefits Matrix [2026 Benefits Matrix](#).

## HOW TO APPLY

To be considered, please submit your resume and cover letter outlining the background and experience that make you the ideal candidate, electronically, to [hmdir.cityofoakland@thehawkinscompany.com](mailto:hmdir.cityofoakland@thehawkinscompany.com) by **April 10, 2026**. Applicants who apply by the deadline will receive first consideration. The position remains open until filled.

For additional information or questions, please contact Yonnine Hawkins Garr at 323-252-1655, [yonnine@thehawkinscompany.com](mailto:yonnine@thehawkinscompany.com) or Will Hawkins at 310-703-4474, [will@thehawkinscompany.com](mailto:will@thehawkinscompany.com) or Tisa Jones, at 213-309-7984, [tisa@thehawkinscompany.com](mailto:tisa@thehawkinscompany.com).



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*The City of Oakland is an equal opportunity employer, values workforce diversity and seeks to create an environment and culture that embraces employee differences. All qualified applicants are considered in accordance with applicable laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, gender, age, national origin, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, marital status or veteran status or any other legally protected status.*