

# Head Start wants to unionize [US] <sup>[1]</sup>

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**Source:** Lake County Record-Bee

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 28 Sep 2006

## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS Head Start Child Development Program staff in Lake and Mendocino counties are in the process of unionizing after a majority of workers contacted by a weighty labor union expressed a desire to organize. Head Start is a state and federally-funded preschool program and child care service for low-income families, and operates locally under the umbrella of North Coast Opportunities (NCO), a private nonprofit corporation that provides a myriad of supportive services to the community. Head Start staff has contacted Service Employees International Union (SEIU) several times over the past 10 years, according to SEIU Local 707 Organizer Lynda McClure, and can now go forward with the effort. "At this point in time we were able to put the time and resources into contacting all the people," said McClure. The contact base included approximately half of the 98 Head Start workers, who then spread the word to the rest, said McClure. SEIU is the largest labor union in the United States, and "the fastest-growing union in North America, with 1.8 million members in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico," according to its Web site. Problem areas identified by Head Start staff included "short staffing, lack of and confusing communication from the head office to the sites, lack of needed supplies, increased health insurance costs, and job security," according to a recent SEIU press release. ... Family support specialist Mary Adams, who works at an Upper Lake center, said she is very much in favor of the unionization. Adams cited a need for uniformity among the centers which, she said, is lacking because often site supervisors set up the class sites. "We find that doesn't offer a uniform program to families from site to site," she said. ... An NLRB hearing officer conducted hearings in Ukiah Wednesday and Thursday to decide whether or not lead teachers will be included in the effort to organize. After Wednesday's hearing, McClure noted that NCO wants lead teachers excluded from the unionization effort on the basis that they may be counted as supervisors. If lead teachers are excluded, support for unionization could potentially suffer a 22-percent reduction, as 22 of the total 98 Head Start staff in the region are lead teachers. ... - reprinted from the Lake County Record-Bee

**Related link:** Service Employees International Union <sup>[2]</sup>

**Region:** United States <sup>[3]</sup>

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