

## Benefits of Hiring an Early Head Start Start-Up Planner

(link for viewing at end of transcript)

Amanda Schwartz: Welcome. I'm Amanda Schwartz from the Early Head Start Start-Up Planner Project and your moderator for today's call. We know that many of you are in the midst of -- of start-up work, whether it is preparing for the arrival of families or beginning to deliver services.

We are so pleased you took the time out of your very busy schedule to join us for today's webinar event, The Benefits of Hiring an Early Head Start Start-Up Planner. We know the topic is relevant to all of you and hope the information you receive today will help you make some important decisions. Today's live event is being recorded and archived for later viewing so that you can revisit it and so others who were unable to attend will be able to access this important information.

Just a couple of things to keep in mind during the call, throughout our conversations, all participants will be muted so that presenters can be heard clearly. If you have questions during the webinar, please email them to [ehsstartup@zerotothree.org](mailto:ehsstartup@zerotothree.org). This email address was included in the materials you received earlier and is the first bullet on your screen.

If we have not addressed your questions during the call, look for them under Start-Up Planning on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, otherwise referred to as the ECLKC. You will find it online at [eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov). We will attempt to answer as many questions as we can or forward them along to the appropriate resources.

Additionally, if you have any technical difficulties while you are on the webinar with us today, please contact GoToMeeting staff at 1-800-263-6317. With me at ZERO TO THREE's offices are Angie Godfrey, Infant/Toddler Program Specialist from the Office of Head Start, who will share with us the federal perspective on start-up, from which programs were funded to efforts to support you as you build your program.

Then Rita Schwarz, Director of the Early Head Start Start-Up Planner Project, will offer an overview of our work. Next, Carol Mills from the Early Head Start Start-Up Planner Project will be joined by Jeanne Dengate, Birth to Three Child Care Coordinator for the Tulalip Tribes, and Deb Shuey, Start-Up Planner from Lighthouse Consultation Services and Start-Up Planner for Tulalip Early Head Start.

They will discuss how programs are working with Early Head Start start-up planners participating in our project. Following this discussion, Christina Benjamin from the Early Head Start Start-Up Planner Project will share some strategies to select a start-up planner. Finally, we will end with your questions to the panelists.

Before we begin, we would also like to acknowledge Richard Russey, Consultant to ZERO TO THREE; Melissa Maybe, Administrative Assistant for the Early Head Start Start-Up Planner Project; and Patricia Haigler, Project Associate at the Early Head Start Start-Up Planner Project.

We would like to thank them for all their support before, during, and after the call. In our audience today, we are joined by new and expanding Early Head Start programs and Early Head Start start-up planners participating in this project. Once again, many of you are participating in this webinar live and others will access this as an archived event. Regardless of how you are attending, we send you a warm welcome. Our first panelist is Angie Godfrey, who will provide the Office of Head Start overview. Welcome, Angie.

Angie Godfrey: Thank you, Amanda, and good afternoon to everyone. I want to thank all the folks here at ZERO TO THREE for scheduling this as a time for us to revisit the Start-Up Planning Project and the work that everyone is doing, and thank all of you. Again, as Amanda said, I know that you have very busy schedules and it's so nice that you would take the time to come with us today in this little conversation.

And I just want to talk a little bit, again, about the overview of the programs that are out there and the programs that were funded. As most of you know, you fit into one of three categories, either an expanding EHS program, and we -- as we finally awarded all programs, 378 programs are expanding from current EHS programs, 180 programs were Head Starts that are offering Early Head Start services for the first time, and 69 programs are brand new to both Head Start and Early Head Start.

So needless to say, we're very happy that we have -- all of our programs have been funded and that everyone is busy working away. And again, I extend a welcome to all of you. One of the things that we also know is that the majority of our programs that were funded really do offer a variety of program options, and one of the things that we encouraged in the RFA is that you really look at your community and choose not just one, but maybe more than one program option.

And again, we know there are sometimes difficulties and challenges around implementing multiple options, but we funded programs that are center-based, home-based, programs with a family child care option, which is small but a growing option, and then the combination options -- not so many of those, and those of you who have done them know that you have to get approval for your combination option.

But as we look at the programs -- I just got another spreadsheet today of program options. It's nice to see so many services being offered, and particularly nice for me to see the numbers of programs that are providing services to pregnant women and expectant families and then transitioning babies into the variety of program options. So again, any issues that you may have or any questions about that, we're certainly glad to continue to provide resources about that.

The other thing that we all survived, including all of you, were Early Head Start orientations. We started -- we actually started with three, then we went to four, then we went to five. And it -- they were wonderful sessions. Each was different. All of the programs that went, and I'm sure it's most folks on the phone, will be getting a DVD of the best of the five orientations for you to have as an ongoing resource.

And I'm also very proud of the fact there were over 2,000 attendees at the orientation, and it just speaks to your commitment and speaks to the strength of staff who can go back into the program having spent time together not just with trainers and not just with the staff from EHS NRC, but with each other.

I think a lot of networking took place at the orientations, which was so important. So again, I hope you're all working away based on some of the things you learned at the Early Head Start orientations. The other thing that we like to take away from orientation are some of the things that we've -- [Coughs] sorry -- some of the things that we've -- that we've learned and some of the things that we hope that you learned. And I learned many valuable lessons from all of you.

And I think the most important thing for us as we plan and we work with you is to understand that each of you are at a different stage of implementation -- that you have received your funding, you've begun to plan, you've begun to implement services.

And you're all doing it in the context of your community and your program options and your staff. And so that's an important lesson for us to remember as we try to provide services to you and services to your program and continue to communicate with you around what your needs are.

Some of the lessons -- other lessons learned are the significance of services to expectant families. I think in all of the orientations that there were two areas that we had a great deal of conversations about, and services to expectant families was one.

I know that it requires a great deal of planning, and it certainly was an area that we spent time when we were training the start-up planners -- was around services to expectant families, because it's so important that we continue those services with the baby once the baby is born, once the program works with the family, to determine what the best options are for the newborn -- and the baby as they grow and the family as they're all growing. So that remains such a

huge issue.

And again, we do want to hear from you in terms of how that's going and how you're -- you're working with those issues, either with your start-up planner or with trainers or with other programs. The other thing that I think that we've learned, not just from orientation, but that we've also learned from the research and that we understand from the literature, the research, and the experiences of those Early Head Starts that came before you is how important it is to fully implement Head Start services.

It's so important, and I'm sure you all remember that everything we did at orientation, everything we did in the start-up planning training, was founded in the Head Start Program Performance Standards, and particularly those Standards that relate to Early Head Start. So that remains our goal, to support each of you in your progress towards full implementation.

We know it takes time, and we know that in many cases you haven't had as much time as you would have liked, so we're very committed to working with you around full implementation of services, again based on where each program is.

The other thing that I think was so important, a lesson that was learned, has to do with the differences between Head Start and Early Head Start. It certainly is the same philosophy of working with and supporting families and understanding how to work with the most vulnerable children and families in communities.

But it looks different. It's facilities. It's teacher training. It's home visitor training, family child care training. It's how you get through the day, the importance of routines, and developing a curriculum.

The importance of responsive caregiving and the continuity of caregiving, and understanding that all of the things that we look for and we hope to help children succeed with in Head Start are really founded in the relationships that children and families have in their Early Head Start program with -- with staff, families, and babies.

So we know that that's a huge issue, and it's something that we certainly want to spend a lot of time on with all of you and to learn more about from you. So those are just a few of the lessons we learned from orientation. The other thing we want to go over again today, we talked a little bit about this at orientation, why hire a start-up planner? What is -- what is it that you might need a start-up planner to help you with?

And for those of you that are expanding Early Head Start programs, you can probably remember the last time around because many programs did hire start-up planners. And again, we've developed specific resources and organizational readiness charts and start-up planning guides, and some of the same resources now that we've revised and updated, because we know that there is so much pressure and there is so much planning that needs to happen. And also, at the same time, implementation that needs to happen.

This morning, I talked to a program that's really struggling. They have their center-based program option up and ready to go, but they're really struggling with some issues around their home-based program option. And again, programs -- all of you understand what -- what that is like, but you also know that you need some support.

So we recommend that you continue to use a start-up planner. They're available for you. And again, it's not just someone who helps you plan and then leaves, but it's someone who really can work with you through planning and through the implementation of your program.

And we've listed a few benefits on the slide that's currently up on your screen, and one of the most important things is they provide expertise. The folks that came to us in the start-up planning brought many talents and experiences and expertise with them.

And what we tried to do in the start-up planning training was much what we tried to do in the orientation, was to build on the skills and the gifts and the talents that people bring, and founded -- and found all of our work kind of -- I always like to say nested in the Head Start Program Performance Standards. So it's important to understand what their

expertise is and to really learn about not just what a start-up planner is, but who might be the start-up planner you want to work with.

The second thing that a start-up planner can do is support short- and long-range strategic planning. And we know, again, the turnaround time is not what it was in the past. And yet, you still have to approach implementation with both short- and long-range planning. And sometimes it's good to have someone facilitate that.

One of the things that I think we did talk a lot about at orientation, as well as at start-up planning, is start-up planners don't come in and do your work, they facilitate your work. And it really is nice to have someone who can learn about your community, learn about your staff and your families, and then help to facilitate how you all are going to work together.

And that leads to the next one, which was facilitates problem-solving. We know that problem-solving can be challenging, and it can be something sometimes -- sometimes I just want to go to sleep rather than problem-solve. And we know what that feels like.

We all have different avoidance techniques -- mine is a soft pillow -- but one of the things that start-up planners are very good at is helping you get beyond those avoidance techniques and to really learn to work together as a group and to really build the kind of spirit and support among your program and your program staff that I think we all need someone to come and help us with.

The other thing that I just can't emphasize enough is that -- the lasting relationships that happens with programs and start-up planners. Some of the start-up planners at the training are still working with programs that they worked with during the first round of funding.

And again, I think that's so key. If what we're talking about to new Early Head Start programs is how important the relationship with families and staff is to -- for all of us to grow, then it's so important that we're also developing those relationships with the people who come into our program and work with us. And I'm just -- I'm always heartened to see programs and start-up planners that are still working together and still supporting each other. So those are just a few suggestions on why to hire a start-up planner.

And the other thing that I -- that is really important to us always is that we provide you relevant and meaningful resources. And through the orientations and through the -- that's okay, we're going to get to that slide. I can just talk forever, but I will [Laughing] just keep talking.

One of the things we're going to show you and recommend are some general resources that you can access, and there it is right there. And it's a wonderful list. It's just the beginning of a list. We know there's more out there, but what we wanted to do is give you an idea of how to continue the work that hopefully we started through orientation and you're doing with your start-up planner.

Office of Head Start, we really do want to know. We've -- I've been doing some site visits, as have some of my colleagues, and we really do want to be connected and understand what the challenges and the successes are and be a resource to you. So make sure you stay connected with us.

Regional Offices. Regional Offices are so important because some of you have encountered difficulties and you've had to make some adjustments and adaptations in your implementing the services. All of that must be done through communication with your Regional Office. And again, we listed the start-up planning-related resources, both the Office of Head Start and Regional Offices. Again, the start-up planner won't be talking directly to those folks, but they'll be facilitating your ability to communicate with them.

And you can include them as you want, but we've tried to ensure that at each of these levels we've tied programs into those resources and then start-up planners into supporting your access to those resources.

The third thing is the TA network. In addition to EHS NRC, which is -- works across the country with Early Head

Start program, there's regional and state TA systems. And again, through your Regional Office, you can access those folks. And those folks have a relationship with EHS NRC and certainly can help get more resources into your program.

And then, of course, down here are both the Early Head Start National Resource Center and the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. EHS NRC has so many resources on their web site, and their web site is linked to the ECLKC, so you can access those either way.

But they have written products, they have videos, they have online lessons, all of which are a wonderful resource, all of which your start-up planner can not only help you access, but can oftentimes do training with them. So those -- that's important to know. We have -- we have an Early Head Start landing page on the ECLKC. If you go onto the ECLKC, on the left-hand side they list different programmatic areas, and if you click on Early Head Start, you'll find lots of resources there.

And the last few things I just want to mention, and this probably has more to do when I was a Head Start director, but really reach out to the folks around you, to other directors, to other programs. And through your start-up planner, you can learn more about who else is out there, because they're a wonderful resource and a wonderful network for all of you, and just partnering with existing programs can be so helpful.

And then local and state associations -- and not just Head Start. And I certainly -- you know, state Head Start associations are wonderful, but if you're partnering with child care, there's state child care associations, also.

So look at who your partners are and see that as an opportunity to also work with people and to make sure that you're getting all the resources that you can and that we're supporting you in ways that are meaningful to you. So just a few things I wanted to go over from the federal side. So thank you, Amanda, I appreciated that time.

Amanda: Thanks, Angie, for giving us an overview of the Office of Head Start support and resources for Early Head Start programs. Next, we will hear from Rita Schwarz, Project Director for the Early Head Start Start-Up Planner Project at ZERO TO THREE. Rita?

Rita Schwarz: Thank you, Amanda. Hi, everybody. I want to spend a little bit of time talking about the EHS Start-Up Planner Project that Angie made reference to. The purpose of this project is to provide a group of trained start-up planners to support new and expanding Early Head Start programs during the various stages of expansion, planning, and program implementation.

OHS funded this project because they ultimately want you to be successful. And they want -- so they provided this project so that we could support the people who can ultimately support you to make you a successful program.

So who are the start-up planners? This spring, we provided two training sessions, actually, to a group of 95 potential start-up planners. And I say potential, because some of them are active start-up planners, some of them are waiting and available for your call so that they can work with your program.

Start-up planners are located throughout the country. Not every state has a start-up planner in -- in -- but most states do -- many states do. We intentionally recruited people with a variety of experience and expertise because we know that Early Head Start is a complex program, and we know that your needs are going to vary depending on where you are in the implementation process.

You may have one set of needs before you start serving children as you're finalizing your planning, and then your needs could change, because as you go through implementation things are going -- things never quite turn out exactly as planned. Things can come up and be different, and you'll need somebody that -- that can support you through that process.

We also really think that it's unlikely that any one person can be all things to you and can meet all your needs throughout the many stages. So our vision, really, is to have programs identify a lead start-up planner.

You don't have to do this, but this is what we'd like you to think about. Identify a lead start-up planner who will be, like, the main person you work with. That person then could contact and bring in other people with different types of expertise than they have as your needs emerge and change.

For example, your start-up planner could -- or you and your start-up planner could decide that you really need help figuring out fiscal issues, and the start-up planner may not have that expertise. So that person can bring in somebody with fiscal to do a limited amount of TA with you on -- directly related to whatever your problem is related to fiscal. You're going to hear more about this vision and how this can work when we talk with a start-up planner and the program that she's working with later in this webinar.

Start-up planner, we provide -- the project provides ongoing support to start-up planners. This project will go through next July, so we have many things beyond the training planned to -- to work with start-up planners. We offer regular conference calls every month. Each of the groups of start-up planners has a conference call with their leader.

And I should go back and say that we really... The -- the whole purpose of the start-up planning process -- the start-up planners was to develop a community of practice. And we wanted to do this with the smallest group possible, so we divided the 95 or so start-up planners into three groups.

Each of those groups works with a facilitator from our project, and each of those groups then have gotten to know each other and gotten to know the various skills and areas of expertise within their cohort. And they -- so that facilitates the process if you need somebody with expertise beyond what they can provide, they will be readily aware of other people that can come to your assistance.

We expect -- we will have webinars with these -- these groups as we move through the project and we provide one-on-one support. So it really is ongoing -- an ongoing opportunity to -- for start-up planners to problem-solve with other people who are doing similar work.

It's an opportunity for -- for start-up planners to raise questions with their colleagues if they run up against something that -- that is unfamiliar to them. So it really is a -- it makes for a -- a very supportive group, that working together can make each other a better start-up planner and a better support for you.

Angie mentioned some of the -- the challenges that programs face that start-up planners might address. I'm going to mention a few more, and that is... Angie -- Angie mentioned the fact that your timelines for start-up are really pretty -- pretty rapid. And we know that that means that you're really multitasking and doing many -- doing many -- doing many things at the same time.

And a start-up planner can really help you manage that process and figure out kind of what's been done, what needs to be done, remind you of what needs to be done, and help you and ease you through the fact that you do have to do many, many things quickly.

One of the things that we hear -- we hear is that people really think about start-up planning as the time before you serve children. It's not. It's -- start-up planning is really a process that begins in a time before you start serving children, but continues definitely throughout the first year and probably beyond that.

I mean, we know -- we learned from previous expansions, especially with standalone programs, that it can sometimes take up to three years for programs to really stabilize and become the quality program that they want to be. It's just hard, and it's just complex. And -- and you need to allow for things to change as changes are needed and to expect the unexpected as you progress. So really, we think of start-up planning as a process, and we think of it as extending well beyond when you begin serving children.

We know that for many of you -- for all of you, you will either be developing written plans or adapting written plans. And adapting particularly is true for Head Starts that are taking on Early Head Starts for the first time.

It may also be true for programs -- EHS programs expanding, because, as you add more kids, you may be adding

different options. You may be adding different staff. Your plans may need to be adapted to accommodate what your program looks like with additional children, and a start-up planner can help you through that.

We know that finding the right staff with infant/toddler expertise can be challenging, and while a start-up planner doesn't necessarily have a magic bullet to find the staff for you, they can help you problem-solve that process and think through ways that or places that you can look, or how you can develop staff so that you have the right level of expertise that you need to serve infants and toddlers.

Many of you are taking on an -- an option that may not be familiar with you. Some of you may be doing home-base for the first time. Some of you may be trying or entering the world of family child care for the first time.

Some of you may start out thinking you're going to be doing center-base and then discover that your facilities aren't going to be ready when you need them, and you may have to adapt and do a home-based option on the short-term. A start-up planner can facilitate you -- facilitate the process of thinking through what it will take to -- to implement an option that you may not have done in the past.

The other thing that a start-up planner can do for you is, especially for -- this is particularly true for programs that are brand new to Early Head Start. Some programs have staff that -- that have been -- done infant/toddler work but in a different type of setting and are entering the Early Head Start world for the first time. It doesn't take long to figure out that it is -- there's a whole other language. There's a whole other set of requirements and standards and -- and expectations.

And having a start-up planner help you navigate through the process of learning, of entry into the Early Head Start world can be a very helpful thing for you. So these are some of the things that you -- some of the challenges that programs are facing that start-up planners can help you with. You will hear more examples of ways start-up planners can help you in the next couple of segments of this webinar. So, Amanda?

Amanda: Thanks, Rita. Now that we've heard about the support and training available to start-up planner, some Early Head Start programs may wonder how working with a start-up planner takes place in practice. To help you with this, my colleague, Carol Mills, will host a conversation between a new Early Head Start program and their start-up planner. Carol.

Carol Mills: Thank you, Amanda. Today, we have the pleasure of hearing from Jeanne Dengate, Birth to Three Child Care Coordinator with the Tulalip Tribes, and their Start-Up Planner, Debbie Shuey of Lighthouse Consultation Services. I would like to make a notation to you that due to the fact that they are in Alaska, there may be a time delay. So with that, Washington to -- Washington D.C. to Washington State.

Before we get started, I'd like to give our audience some background information about Tulalip Early Head Start program. And actually, Jeanne -- I think, Jeanne, you would be the best person to share that information with. Jeanne?

Jeanne Dengate: Okay, can you hear me now? Carol: Yes, yes, we can. Jeanne: Okay... Carol: Welcome to this webinar.

Jeanne: Oh, thank you so much. It's really exciting to be here and share with you about Tulalip's grant that we just received. We have slots for 74. Sixty-four will be our children that will be center-based, and we have 10 pregnant women. After looking at our model with our planner, we rearranged it a little bit and we have decided that we will take eight of those children out of center-based and do home-based with them for a total of 18.

That way we have places for those mothers after having babies if they can't get into the center-based program, we can be able to do home visits with them. So that was one thing. The other thing is this was something that was a dream for a long time out here at Tulalip. We do have a program for children three to five -- two programs.

One is called ECAP, which is an early learning program for low-income that's funded through the state, and then we have a Montessori preschool program, which -- we have 75 children. So we do have those two programs that our

children can move into.

Carol: Jeanne, thank you. Actually, you're sharing some examples exactly about what Angie and Rita were speaking about. What made you decide, may I ask -- what made you decide to consider bringing in an Early Head start-up planner and how did you identify Debbie as your program start-up planner?

Jeanne: Well, originally, of course, probably like our other grantees out there, we were very excited to hear that we received a grant, and then in another breath, oh my goodness! What's going to happen next? And who's going to help us, is what I thought.

So our grant writer, who I have actually known before and took some training under before, suggested that we get a start-up planner -- a start-up consultant that could work with us, someone who'd be strong and really knew how to get things done and help us in that process. And so she recommended Debbie to us, and so Debbie... We called Debbie, and my executive director and myself made the decision that we should hire her and move forward with that.

Carol: Thank you, Jeanne. Can you describe any other characteristics that you think would be important for those that may be considering in identifying a start-up planner? Would you like to add anything else to that?

Jeanne: Well, I would say, first of all, you want to have someone who's got knowledge and experience -- someone who's perhaps been a director, someone who understands the Performance Standards and all the necessary pieces that fall together to offer a successful, high-quality program.

Even though I've been in early childhood for over 30 years, and I've started up three Montessori preschool child care programs and so I understand all the licensing regulations, but I'm still not in tune to all the Head Start Performance Standards. So I know what my limits are and when I needed to ask for help, so I was very grateful to have someone to give me some support and to help me get this up and running.

Carol: Great, thank you. Thank you so much. Jeanne: You're welcome. Carol: Debbie. Debbie, welcome to the webinar. Debbie Shuey: Thank you, Carol.

Carol: I'd like to ask you, could you please share with those that are listening today? Tell us a little bit about yourself and about your background.

Debbie: Yes, Carol. Actually, I live in Alaska. And I've been working in the Head Start field for 13 years, and I have over 25 years experience as a nurse, educator, and manager. And when I started in Head Start, I started with a brand new tribal program, and I know what it's like to start up a new program and what it feels like some days if you just want to throw in the towel.

So I have that background, and while I was there, I held a lot of the different positions, wore many, many hats. And in the last three years at that tribal program, I was the director. And for these past several years, I've been working as a T/TA provider.

Carol: So it sounds like you've had some experience for this position now as a start-up planner. Debbie, can you share with us some of your -- what you identified with the Early Head Start program, some of the goals to work on with the Early Head Start program at Tulalip? And what are some of the activities and strategies that you've been involved with recently?

Debbie: Yes, I think that the most immediate goal, as soon as I started working with them, was to identify my role as the facilitator of this process. And I guess for me, I see myself as a conductor of an orchestra, that we have so many different parts and jobs to this...

...and that there's a lot of education and information and -- and learning that we need to do together, and we all bring our own expertise. And I'm just there to help to facilitate that and bring out the best and make it all work together.

And so in that facilitation, the first thing that we did that I think was so important was for myself to learn about the community and go over their community assessment, read their grant application, look at the budget that they submitted, and talk about the resources that they have. And Jeanne and I, as well as with Jeanne's supervisor, talked a lot about those different areas and, kind of, then that was our foundation to go from.

And then after that, we looked at what was the timeline that we were looking at. And so we looked at the timeline that was in the grant application, but we also looked at the Organizational Readiness Chart that the Early Head Start project has put out, and we regularly use that to see what phase we're in and where -- where we need to go and -- [Coughs] excuse me -- and I also had set up a -- when I do my reporting, I do it in that report format with that timeline.

And then, once we looked at the timeline, we also talked about the facilities, which is huge right now. They are renovating one existing building and then they are adding a modular onto another building, so working with the tribal architect and deciding what needs to be done and make sure that it, you know, meets the Performance Standards regulations. And then we also brought in the key players.

So we looked at the community and started talking about our Policy Council, working with the governing body of the tribe. Tulalip has tremendous resources and tremendous relationships with their Part C early intervention people, also with their school district. They have dental, mental health, and nutrition services that they can tap into.

I met with their consultants that they're going to use for health, mental health, and nutrition and went over what some of the responsibilities were and talked about what it was like to be a consultant in those areas. And then we established memorandum of agreements where that was necessary.

And Jeanne has been working really hard at scheduling trainings for the staff, so we identified the needs that the staff had and started setting up trainings for them. And Jeanne's done a wonderful job in that area so that the staff will be as well-prepared as they can be when we start up in September.

Carol: Debbie, it sounds pretty comprehensive in the complexity of it all, and I love your analogy of the orchestra -- making music for babies and children and families. I love it. Debbie, I understand that Tulalip is working with several start-up planners. Rita spoke to that briefly. Can you share with those that are listening a little bit how you came to that and maybe some examples of how that is working for you?

Debbie: Sure, Carol. Both Angie and Rita talked about the complexity of this and, you know, Angie talked about how we can't do it all. And I realized that right away that, you know, I can't do this all by myself. And first of all, even if I could, it wouldn't be a benefit to the -- to the program itself.

And so as Jeanne and I were looking at our timelines and talking about the needs and the different things that we have to have taken care of, we identified possible resources. And since I had attended the Early Head Start planner training, I also have quite a network of colleagues that I've worked with. And so I got to visit with them at that training and also got to visit with and learn from others.

I started to see what our needs were, recommended to Jeanne that maybe we look at bringing in some other Early Head Start planners to help, specifically in the fiscal area and with the home visiting, because they are starting home-based and they are brand new to home-based services.

So I said, well, let's, you know, look at those kind of trainings. So we did bring in a couple of Early Head Start planners in those areas. And as well as Early Head Start planners, we also looked at other resource people. We're working really closely with the grantee performance support specialists through that T/TA network that Angie was talking about with the Office of Head Start, and of course working with the program specialists.

But we also identified that the staff needed some specific content area training, so I worked with Jeanne on, you know, identifying those trainings, and she did get scheduled quite a few trainings for the curriculum. And we also were looking at the data management system and looking at bringing a consultant in for that.

Carol: Debbie, thank you. Thank you so much for sharing that -- that information. Let's talk a little bit about success and challenges. I'd like to ask Jeanne, first, to reflect on maybe the successes first. Can you share with us some example or maybe even a brief story of something that you feel resonated with you, something successful thus far and that helps you each morning to wake up and go to work -- and I'm sure you put in more than eight hours a day.

Jeanne: Oh, yes. [Laughing] Carol: I hear you laughing, yes. Can you share there with the listeners there, you know, some of your successes first and then the challenges? We'd love to hear that from your perspective.

Jeanne: Okay. Well, there's a lot of successes, I think. I think what helps me realize the successes is the strength that Debbie has provided with setting up the -- you know, the organizational chart, our timeline. For me, that's very good because I have many tasks that I'm doing besides helping with this project until we get a new Head Start director, so I'm doing lots of different things.

It keeps me focused. I can look at each morning or each day and say, wow, I did that one. I can check that one off; I can check this one off. Our Policy Council coming together has been -- I think that's been, to me, very -- a real solid thing even though we didn't have all of our players coming on board at the same time, but we've got them on right now.

We're going to have -- we've had two introductory sessions with them and we're going to have a training next week that Debbie is going to be providing for that. So I feel like that's another major thing that we've got moving forward.

I just got a great email right now that it looks like they -- all the applicants... We've put in a number of positions, and our employment office just emailed me right now and said -- looks like we have more than enough qualified people to fill those positions that met all our... So I couldn't -- I have tell you, I've been holding my breath on that one to make sure that that was going to happen. So things are falling into place, and I feel -- I feel really good about that.

And I think that every morning when I get up, I know that my planner is there to support me. I really -- I really do feel that -- sincerely, that I can -- I can call her or email her and say, I've got this dilemma, what do you think I should do about this? And it's great because I don't have really anyone else that I can talk to about it on that personal level.

I do have a couple of other tribal programs that I am in touch with, but they're also very busy, so they can't give me as much time. But they will give me support when I need it. But I know for her being there for me now has really been a godsend. So that's been the success, is knowing that I have someone else that I can count on so I don't stand by myself.

Carol: And that is so important... Jeanne: Yes. Carol: ...in whatever work we do. And of course, with the balance of life, we have challenges. Jeanne: Oh yes, a lot of challenges. Challenges, I think -- I think the hardest thing is the timeline of everything getting done so quickly when you're brand new and making sure all those pieces go together.

Some things are totally out of my control, just like with other programs. I can't make employment work faster to do some of these things. I can't make grants give me this PO that I need quick enough to get this done and this ordered. So I have to rely on a lot of people, so that does get very frustrating.

Also, it's summer, and gee, I think everybody deserves a vacation, so some of these key players are on vacation when I need them. So that gets very frustrating. But it's also life and it's also what's really real, and you just have to, you know, kind of pick up and move on with it, I think. Do the best you can.

Carol: And it sounds like you are doing the best. Debbie. Debbie, if you could share with us also -- too, some successes and challenges, and feel free to start with successes. Do you have a story or some examples of that?

Debbie: Yes, thank you, Carol. I just really think that the biggest success for this program is the dedication that the Tulalip Tribe has made... Carol: Excuse me, Debbie, could you speak a little bit louder into the mic? Debbie: I think that the biggest... Carol: Thank you.

Debbie: ...success is the dedication that the Tulalip Tribe has made to their Early Head Start program and -- and to the

children in general. They have management staff, governing body, language people, just a lot of folks that are there for their Early Head Start program. And they've put a lot of thought and effort into getting this grant and into the foresight of wanting to start this. And when you start off with that success, I think that it makes a lot of things easier.

They also have a lot of resources within their own Tribe that we can pull upon, and Jeanne is just outstanding in the way that she networks with people, communicates, and gets help. And she has quite a bit of resources that she can pull upon. And she also has a lot of knowledge and experience in -- in the zero to three early childhood area, so that's another, you know, tremendous success.

I think that we also have been really successful in identifying what our needs are and getting those resource people to help us. And both Jeanne and I know that we can't do it ourselves and we are not reluctant at all to ask for help, and I think that that, you know, also makes it successful.

We also have really good communication. We've established how to communicate, who to communicate with, who to copy emails to. And in -- with working with Jeanne, I also have real close communication with her supervisor, as well, who, you know, ends up making the ultimate decision. So we try to keep everybody in the loop, and I think we have a real good communication system around that.

But with that, the challenges, as Jeanne said, in meeting sometimes those deadlines is that even though you communicate really well, there's so many players. And of course, each of them have their own jobs or their own timelines that they're on, and sometimes things just don't move along as fast as we would like them to, such as the facilities. Jeanne already has a Plan B in place so that -- in case the modular isn't up and running, that they can still provide services you know on the timeline.

So, sometimes the players that we're working with have different timelines, and that's been a real challenge. And I know it can be really frustrating and -- and I really, you know, tell Jeanne, just call me. Sometimes it's just a matter of talking through those kinds of challenges when she's talking with a particular person and -- and such and such comes up.

Or the other thing is that she'll be talking, like, with the architect and they'll be saying one thing and Jeanne's remembering that through the orientation or reading Performance Standards or -- that -- that it should be different. So she calls me and we talk through that, and, you know, maybe I can even give her some words to use for that. So that challenge has been really great.

And I think the other challenge -- well, two other challenges. One of them is the grant application itself and looking at the options that were in there. We've had to revisit the grant application and kind of amend that and keep the program specialist in the loop, of course, about that. But after looking at the community assessment, after looking at the resources that they have, and looking at the needs, we've found that the one option that they're doing -- they are doing home-based.

They're serving expectant families, they have a center-based, and they were looking at combination-based options. But the combination doesn't seem like it's really going to meet the needs of the population, and so that's when we decided, well, maybe it's better to do some extra home-based services and then the majority of that combination-based just go to full-day.

So really looking at what the needs of the program are, asking those hard questions, looking at the staffing and budget, and then, you know, maybe tweaking things here and there as we're needing to. And the other challenge that we have, and I see it probably even becoming more of a challenge as we're going down the road, is the supporting of the staff. They already are offering child care services and have been offering quality child care services for years,...

...but their staff won't necessarily all move in to the Early Head Start staffing positions because of the qualifications. So communicating with the staff, helping them to understand what is happening and what their role is in this process, and then having them have the training and being able to not only attend the trainings, but to, you know, do the -- what they've learned, practice what they've learned in a timely manner. So those are challenges that I'm starting to see, and I

think we're going to see more of that.

And change is hard and it can be stressful, and some of the staff are already doing, you know, double duty, so to speak. So just challenging to keep communication open, remember those relationships, and making sure that they're being taken care of. And that -- I think that's it, Carol.

Carol: Debbie, thank you for the passion and the commitment of your words. Just to take a moment in reflection, I heard that you spoke about the importance of networking, the importance of resources, also the -- how important it is in communicating, but how you communicate.

Also, I just -- I heard you speak about timelines, the importance of timelines. And sometimes -- the outside contractors or partners, sometimes they don't comply with our timelines, so it must be a challenge at times.

And also, two important other factors I want to reflect on just for a moment is that change -- that change is hard. Whether you are in an AI/AN, American Indian/Alaska Native community, or an urban community or a rural community, change is hard. So thank you for sharing that.

And I like when you mentioned ask for help. For programs that are listening out there, whether you are brand new or expanding, it is so important and that it's okay to ask for help. That's why we are all here for you. In closing -- and I'd like to begin with Jeanne first, in closing, I'd like to see if you would be able to share with us any lessons learned or maybe one experience that you would like to share with the listening audience. Jeanne?

Jeanne: Okay. Well, I will reiterate what you just said and what Debbie said, and I think that I have also said previously, and that is, don't be afraid to ask for help. It's okay, and it's good to learn something new.

We never should feel that we know everything. So there's always something good, some gift that someone else can share with us. So I -- I think that's important. And in -- in the beginning, I think that with the grant and going back and -- back reading through it, just like Debbie said, looking at our community assessment, looking at how everything was going to fit into place,...

...don't be so rigid in thinking that that is the only way. If you can, do a little tweaking with it at the beginning, especially if it's going to benefit the families in a greater capacity than it would have before, and so that's what we did by looking at how to change that model for us to make it work better.

And I somewhat --- like, we're a pilot program because we have been a birth to three center here for 10 years and now we're just going to move right in with our wrap-around services with Early Head Start and still keeping some of our child care -- some children that will still just be in the child care.

But the beauty is that -- beauty of it is that our children that are in the child care part are going to benefit in the same way. We are going to have the same size classrooms, we're going to have the continuity of care, and we're going to be using you know a set curriculum through the whole program.

And the parts of the program that Early Head Start stops to pay for, so many hours -- I think we have 47 hour slots, and -- and we have 16 nine-hour slots -- that the additional funding will be made up through our Child Care Development Fund grant for those families or through the Department of Social and Health Services. But we will be providing all of that care for them.

So, I don't know. I -- I just think that it's really exciting what we're being able to -- to provide for the families here. And I just can't say enough about the quality that we're looking forward to being able to provide for them. And I -- I think the lesson -- another lesson learned is just, you know, don't be afraid to try new things. Don't be afraid to ask for help and then, I think, in the end, the ones that will benefit will be truly the families.

Carol: Thank you, Jeanne. Jeanne: You're welcome. Carol: Thank you very much. And Debbie, any lessons learned, especially from your perspective as a start-up planner?

Debbie: Yes, Carol. I -- I guess, you know, in closing, I -- I'd just like to say that I just feel really blessed to be a part of the Early Head Start project, because in that -- being a part of that, I'm able to help assist programs in this huge job that they have in establishing an Early Head Start program.

And I really think that, you know, with Jeanne and I supporting one another and remembering why we're here -- and that's to provide quality programming for the tribal families and children -- and that we're not alone and that we ask for help and use our resources, that we really can establish a quality program.

And that -- remember that change can be difficult and slow and that it's very important to build and maintain relationships. Relationships are the key, and in order to have good relationships, you need to have open, honest communication. And I think that by setting up the foundation of the program, which Angie talked about, is to really try to have full implementation of services based on the Program Performance Standards, that then you'll truly be able to serve the families and children.

And I just also want to thank everybody out there for all of the services that they're providing to the families and children, and thank Tulalip and Jeanne for what they've undertaken with this project and the wonderful, wonderful benefits that it will have for their Tribe. Thank you, Carol.

Carol: So well said, so heartfelt. Thank you, Jeanne and Debbie, for this conversation and for your insight and your passion and your commitment. Thank you very much. I'd like to turn it over to my colleague, Amanda, our moderator. Amanda: Thanks, Carol. Now -- now, to provide you with more information about how to identify a start-up planner and other resources, my colleague, Christina Benjamin will lead the next portion of our webinar. Christina?

Christina Benjamin: Thank you, Amanda. As you've heard, there are many benefits to using a start-up planner. Regardless of where your program is in the start-up process, a start-up planner's knowledge and experience can enhance the quality of services provided to pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and their families.

In order to select the most appropriate start-up planner for your program, you will need to assess your program's needs and goals. I've provided several questions for you to consider. The first question is: where is your program in implementing services? Perhaps your program has been delivering services in the past three months, or even longer. A start-up planner could help you assess if the written policies and procedures reflect what staff are doing in practice.

The second question is: what is the expertise level of the staff? If you are a Head Start program expanding to Early Head Start for the first time, you may have staff with limited experience working with infants and toddlers. A start-up planner with extensive infant and toddler experience can help facilitate a discussion around professional development needs of staff.

The third question you will see is: is the program implementing a new program option? As you heard in the -- in the conversation between Jeanne and Debbie, their program needed to provide an additional option. It is useful to have the guidance of a start-up planner who has implemented several different program options to help you address issues or concerns as they arise.

And finally: what is the status of building and maintaining collaborative partnerships? Your program may be working with a new Part C provider to coordinate services for infants and toddlers with disabilities. A start-up planner can be instrumental in helping you to assess the effectiveness of this partnership by asking questions about your program's needs, as well as that partner's ability to support them.

All of these situations present challenges and require appropriate responses from Early Head Start programs in order to comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

There are a few characteristics and skills of a potential start-up planner that you will want to consider: someone who has the knowledge and ability to implement the Head Start Program Performance Standards; someone who has the ability to recognize the unique requirements of services to pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and their families.

In Early Head Start, it's important to consider several transitions that infants and toddlers and their families may experience. For example, as infants get older, in a center-based program they will transition into a new classroom and may have a new primary caregiver. Another characteristic to consider in a start-up planner is someone who understands how a program can operate in and within various organizational structures, such as a school district or a nonprofit organization.

You will also want to consider a start-up planner who can communicate effectively with all stakeholders, and also someone who can seek additional expertise and assistance when provided. The Early Head Start Start-Up Planner Project has developed several helpful resources for Early Head Start programs to identify start-up planners.

There are two start-up related fact sheets that provide questions for Early Head Start programs to consider. The first fact sheet is Determining the Need for a Start-Up Planner in the Early Head Start Programs. This fact sheet highlights several roles of a start-up planner, including guiding program leadership and staff through developing policies and procedures, assisting program management team and staff with creating and/or revising management systems to ensure effective delivery of services.

The second fact sheet is Selecting an Early Head Start Start-Up Planner to Meet Each Program's Needs. This fact sheet provides strategies for working effectively with the start-up planner. One example is providing a contract with a detailed scope of work that outlines the roles and responsibilities of a start-up planner and the programs and the timeframe to accomplish specific tasks.

This project has also developed an Early Head Start Start-Up Planner Database. In the materials you received prior to the webinar, there are -- there are instructions on how to locate a start-up planner on the Database available at ECLKC. The Database provides you with several program -- with several options to search for a start-up planner. Some of these options include: the geographic location, you can enter a city or state or even a zip code to identify a start-up planner;...

...the experience and areas of expertise that a start-up planner has in management systems and program services is another option you have; and then you can also enter a start-up planner's first or last name to locate them; and finally, we also provide the option of searching for start-up planners by languages spoken. Thanks, Amanda.

Amanda: Thanks, Christina. Now, let's move on to the questions and answers session. Angie, one program writes in and asks, "How is the start-up process different from previous Early Head Start expansion?"

Angie: Thanks, Amanda. I think the most obvious difference is something we've talked about several times today, and that's the shortness of the timeframe to implement the program. The last time around programs had up to 12 months to plan for implementing services.

And now most programs have been given a much shorter period of time, and I think it's created some of the stress that programs are experiencing. But it's also -- I was sitting here listening to this webinar, and I just have to say, I thought, what a wonderful resource.

And there have been so many wonderful resources through the Start-Up Planning Project that that's different, too. The ability to -- for us to understand that there's a shortness of time and then provide people, like all of the folks sitting around the table, like -- like Deb and Jeanne -- Jeanne who joined us, and resources to really support programs. So I think that's just been a wonderful piece of a -- of the work that's happening right now.

Amanda: Great. Thank you. Christina, another program wants to know, "What kinds of questions should we ask someone we're interviewing to be our start-up planner?"

Christina: You should ask questions to assess the experience level of a potential start-up planner. You will want to know what type of Early Head Start experience an individual has. Has the start-up planner been an infant and toddler teacher, or even a home visitor? You will also want to find out if the potential start-up planner has been a supervisor

or a manager within an Early Head Start program. Another area that you will want to assess is the areas of expertise that a particular start-up planner may be able to offer your program.

Some of these areas may be in health, disabilities, fiscal, transportation, or facilities. You will also want to know if the start-up planner has specific content areas that they specialize in, such as curriculum and providing services to pregnant and expectant families. You will also want to ask start-up planners to give you examples of how they facilitate or deliver different information to individuals or teams that they may be working with.

And finally, to assess the potential start-up planner, you want to find out how they deal with challenging situations and have they been in a situation where they've had to counsel a staff member about a delicate issue.

Amanda: Thanks. That's -- that's great information and I think the programs will really appreciate knowing that. Rita, one program writes in and indicates that they really resonated with what Jeanne said about acknowledging her strengths and challenges. They want to know, "How do we coordinate with our start-up planner to ensure we're accessing the expertise of consultants in areas in which we need support?"

Rita: Well, you know, that really is one of the benefits of this project that we've talked about, and that is the fact that we have a group of 90 people -- 90-plus people who are broken down into smaller groups of 30, and as the groups have begun to -- to work together, they've really built networks, which helps them understand who else is there and who else might be available to understand, to -- to -- to address some of the issues that a program may have.

The key that Jeanne mentioned was having a lead start-up planner to support the program in identifying needs and suggesting other consultants from the group to take the lead on other areas where the start-up planner may not have expertise. This person can help you assess where you are, where the gaps are, and help you address -- identify a person that could help support you to address the gaps. Your start-up planner is really your facilitator for all the many things that -- that need to be looked at during the -- as you begin and -- and during the implementation process.

When you think about it, there really won't be any other time, maybe, in your future as a program where you have the opportunity to have somebody who is a partner with you as you work through the many challenges of not only thinking about what you're going to do and working through what you're going to do, but actually delivering the services and all the changes that can happen when you actually get into implementing services.

Amanda: Thank you so much, Rita. Angie, we have another question for you. This is a program that's still working on building their staffing, so they're wondering what role can a start-up planner play as they work towards full capacity.

Angie: Thanks, Amanda. And -- and again, I think there are many ways that a start-up planner can assist as you're building your staff and as you're planning and thinking about positions and who the people are that you need to work.

One of the things that I really enjoyed listening to was the conversation that Deb and Jeanne had about program options and moving from totally center-based to bringing in some home-based, and then talking about what was involved in that. It was really bringing in a whole other program option and how do you staff that. And I think that Deb gave very good examples of how working to -- with Jeanne and other folks in the program to determine, okay, who are you going to need and then how can you find these folks.

The other thing a start-up planner can do is connect you, maybe, to resources on what -- what interview questions should be. What -- what kinds of questions are we going to ask the folks that we interview? What kind of references are we looking for? There's so many other programs out there doing that, and it may take you a while as a program to delve through these things where a start-up planner can connect you more easily to the resources you need to support coming to full staff.

Amanda: I think that's a -- a really great answer, and it will help people a lot. Rita, one of the programs that writes in is in a really rural location, and they're concerned about working with someone who may not live nearby. So the question is, "How important is it that our start-up planner lives close to our program?"

Rita: Well, it's not that important. I think, in an ideal world, you would identify a start-up planner that lives maybe in the same area you live in and is familiar with the area and is somebody maybe you're familiar with as a program, but we know that's not going to happen. We know that Early Head Start is all over the country. We know that our -- well, our start-up planners are all over the country. They're -- you know, you may want somebody who's not right -- not located, maybe, even within your same state.

What we've done in the information that we have on our Database is we've asked the start-up planners to identify the states that they're willing to work in. So no matter where you are in a state, one of the things you can do is look for a group of people that said they want to work first in your state, and then contact that person and see how much they're -- they're willing to travel, whether they're willing to work anywhere in the state, and whether they're willing to work within your specific community.

We talked about really trying to find a start-up planner that matches a program and -- or that really understands the communities that the program works within. So ideally, it would be somebody that -- that has familiarity with working in a rural area and what that means in terms of transportation, what that means in terms of resources, what that means in terms of time to get around, and -- and...

But you know what? There are a lot of people who have experience in rural areas from having been reviewers or having been, you know, part of TA system or whatever, so I really wouldn't let that stop you from at least asking the question.

It is a matter of resources and whether or not you have the funding to support bringing somebody in from a distance, but it really -- you know, EHS is everywhere, and many, many, many of our start-up planners are willing to work -- are really willing to work almost anywhere. So I think exploring the Database and looking for somebody who's willing to work in your state is really the first thing to do.

Amanda: Great, thank you. I know that fit is always the -- the first priority. Finally, Angie, one program applauds the Office of Head Start's efforts to support start-up and wonders, "What resources will be available after this project ends?"

Angie: Well, sometimes I wonder what we did before gateways, because it's wonderful. The ECLKC will house things for such a long time. I find myself going back to resources on the ECLKC that were developed during the last time that we expanded with Early Head Start, and they're still there.

And the other thing, I mentioned earlier a variety of resources that you can access either through EHS NRC or through ECLKC, and one of the things that I've been working on with folks at EHS NRC is updating and revising tip sheets. So things are on there, but they're also under review to change as -- as new regulations come in. The family child care program option is one where we've updated resources to include information on that.

And we've also been updating resources to make sure that they don't reflect just information in the Head Start Program Performance Standards, but there's a very specific section in the Head Start Act around Early Head Start. So it's always -- always current and always being updated to remain current, so remember those web sites.

And then the other thing I just want to say is sometimes materials can be overwhelming, and it's why we also invest in people to support us. And long after you've been in business for a year or two or three or four, the start-up planners will still be around. They may be in a different capacity.

One of the things I enjoyed about Debbie's conversation was all the different roles she's played in Head Start. And I think we all know that Head Start lives within each of us, and we've all had a variety of roles, and certainly that will continue on long after this -- as Rita mentioned -- the project end date. Long after that, you will still find resources and people to support your work. So, thank you.

Amanda: Thank you, Angie. Before we end today's webinar, we're going to hear closing remarks from Angie Godfrey, so thank you.

Angie: Thanks, again. I love to talk, which is a good thing I suppose. Right, Amanda? I just want to close by thanking, first of all, everyone at the Start-Up Planner task force at ZERO TO THREE. I want to thank Debbie and Jeanne, who were on the phone, and all of you. To both programs and start-up planners, it's such a wonderful time. It's such a wonderful time to be working in Early Head Start and Head Start.

And I just thank you for all the work that you're doing, and I know, particularly as I begin to visit programs and communities, how much -- that infants and toddlers and their families are benefiting from the work that you all do.

And I do understand, because I have been in Head Start a long time and I know many of you understand that you're really not just changing the lives of very young, very vulnerable children and their families, but you're also changing communities and what it is that they can do. So thank you all for your work.

Amanda: Thank you for joining us today, and remember if you have questions regarding today's presentation, email them to [ehsstartup@zerotothree.org](mailto:ehsstartup@zerotothree.org). Take care and keep up the good work. Thanks for joining us.

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