

**National American Indian and Alaska Native
Head Start Collaboration Office**



STRATEGIC PLAN

2012-2016



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES



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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Collaboration is a process of working together: communicating, sharing ideas and perspectives to maximize available resources. For American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) grantees, this entails establishing and strengthening ties with community partners and early childhood education-related organizations to provide needed support to AIAN children and families.

Without the support and guidance of a group of dedicated individuals who represent various community partners and early childhood education-related organizations on a national level, formulating a strategic plan for the National AIAN Head Start Collaboration Office (NAIANHSCO) would not have been possible. The American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start National Collaboration Advisory Council (NCAC) consists of individuals invited from various representative entities (see NCAC membership directory in addendum to this report).

A heartfelt **thank you** to all the AIAN Head Start and Early Head Start grantees who completed the collaboration needs assessment, and to the National Collaboration Advisory Council who provided valuable insight and developed a culturally-appropriate direction for this office!

Micker (Mike) Richardson, MBA
Director
National American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Collaboration Office
Region XI/FHI 360/Center for Early Care and Education
1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009-5721
Phone: 202-884-8155
Fax: 202-884-8732
E-mail: mirichardson@fhi360.org

INTRODUCTION

The National American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Collaboration Office, created under Public Law 110-134 ("Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007"), is directed "to facilitate collaboration among Head Start agencies (including Early Head Start agencies) and entities that carry out activities designed to benefit low-income children from birth to school entry, and their families." [Sec. 642B(a)(2)(A)]. Like the Head Start State Collaboration Offices, the NAIANHSCO works to identify potential partners for collaboration, communicates the needs of Head Start children and families, and, in a group effort, forms an alliance to provide appropriate support to Head Start/Early Head Start programs. Unlike the State Collaboration Offices, the NAIANHSCO strives to perform these tasks across multiple states and, due to the unique relationship that sovereign American Indian and Alaska Native entities hold with the federal government, this includes developing relationships with offices and organizations that are national in scope (e.g., Indian Health Service; National Congress of American Indians; National Indian Education Association; Office of Child Care, etc.).

The NAIANHSCO serves 152 AIAN Head Start and 58 Early Head Start programs in 26 different states across the country.



THE WORK OF THE NAIANHSCO

SCOPE OF WORK - Head Start State Collaboration Offices (HSSCOs) facilitate collaboration among Head Start agencies and state and local entities as charged by the Office of Head Start and the Regional Office.

- **SCHOOL TRANSITIONS**

To foster seamless transitions and long-term success of Head Start children by promoting continuity of services between the Head Start Child Development and Learning Framework and State early learning standards including pre-k entry assessment and interoperable data systems

- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

To collaborate with institutions of higher education to promote professional development through education and credentialing programs for early childhood providers in states

- **CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS**

To coordinate activities with the State agency responsible for the State Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program and resource and referral, to make full-working-day and full calendar year services available to children. Include Head Start Program Performance Standards in state efforts to rate the quality of programs (Quality Rating and Improvement System, or QRIS) and support Head Start programs in participating in QRIS and partnering with child care and early childhood systems at the local level. Relevant to AIAN HS programs is the collaboration with Indian Child Care (ICC). The collaboration of the AIAN HS and ICC is an important factor in meeting this requirement, both for bringing about full-day and calendar-year, as well as improving quality in both programs.

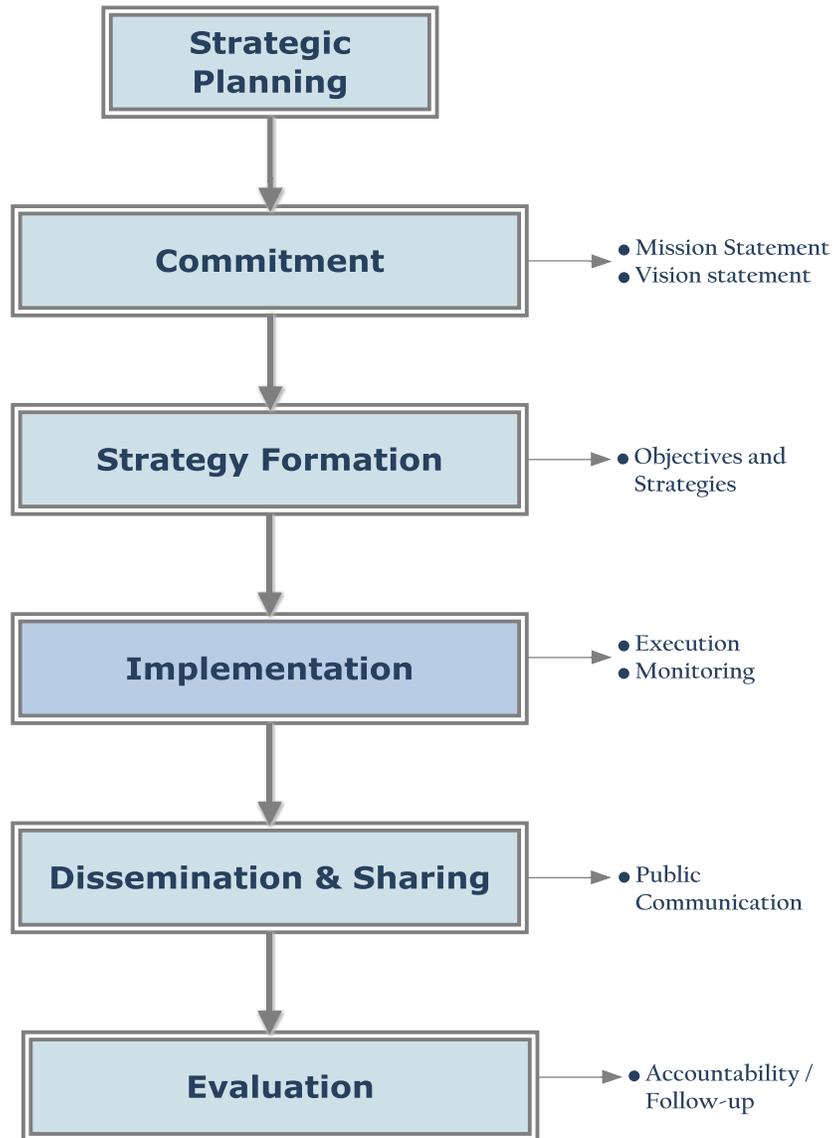
- **REGIONAL OFFICE PRIORITIES**

To support other regional office priorities such as family and community partnerships; health, mental health, and oral health; disabilities; and support to military families. Other special OHS and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) initiative requests for HSSCO support should be routed through the OHS Regional Offices. An additional priority for AIAN HS programs is Language and Cultural Preservation, which is the core of tribal programs.

In the Head Start Act of 2007 (P.L .110-134), the National American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Collaboration Office (NAIANHSCO) is required to conduct a needs assessment of National American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start (AIAN HS) grantees to determine the specific needs of programs and to develop a strategic plan based on the results of the needs assessment.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The 2012-2016 NAIANHSCO strategic plan addresses the broad conclusions and strategies of how the NAIANHSCO will assist and support AIAN HS grantees in meeting the requirements of the Head Start Act with respect to collaboration, coordination, and alignment of Head Start services in the areas of school transition, child care and early learning systems, professional development and regional priorities. The following represents that NAIANHSCO's general methodology in terms of strategic planning and addressing the aforementioned areas of focus:



COMMITMENT

MISSION STATEMENT:

The National American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Collaboration Office is committed to assisting Head Start grantees in developing collaborative partnerships to improve the quality of life for American Indian and Alaska Native children and families.

VISION STATEMENT:

A commitment to collaborating, to cultivate a strong educational environment for all AIAN HS communities by shaping the future while preserving the past through Native American and Alaska Native cultures, languages, beliefs and values.

STRATEGY FORMULATION

The goal of the strategic plan is to guide the work of the NAIANHSCO for delivery of quality services in all priority areas established by OHS. The strategic plan goals will remain in effect during the four years of the NAIANHSCO contract; the objectives will be updated as the NAIANHSCO Needs Assessment is updated annually.

Years: 2012-2016

PRIORITY AREAS: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

SCHOOL TRANSITION

Promote alignment of systems to ensure a successful transition of AIAN HS children and parents into the public school system.

Objective: Promote alignment of systems between Head Start and Local Education Agencies (LEA) to ensure a smooth transition for Head Start children. *2016*

Objective: Promote constructive, collaborative partnerships between AIAN HS programs and the local entities responsible for administering Pre-K programs in Head Start service areas. *2016*

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Increasing higher education access and support for AIAN HS grantees and staff as they strive to meet the teacher credentialing requirements mandated by the Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Head Start.

Objective: Collaborate with institutions of higher education to promote Early Childhood Education (ECE) coursework accessibility from accredited colleges/universities and ensure coursework credit transferability for AIAN Head Start grantee staff pursuing professional development opportunities. *2016*

Objective: Promote collaborative partnerships with research-based organizations with a focus on comprehensive “promising practices” to inform and support programs supporting AIAN HS children and families. *2015*

CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS

Establish relationships with national and state agencies and representatives to ensure that the voices of AIAN HS children and families are represented in all planning and policy making decisions

Objective: Promote collaborative partnerships between AIAN HS and Indian Child Care (ICC) at the national, regional and local levels. *2014*

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Support regional office priorities (i.e., family and community partnerships, disabilities, health, mental health, oral health, and language/cultural preservation for AIAN HS)

Objective: Promote access and utilization of Indian Health Services (IHS) (medical, dental, mental health) for AIAN HS children and families. *2015*

Objective: Increase an awareness of family literacy and family literacy resources among AIAN Head Start grantee programs. *2013*

Objective: Increase understanding of and promote access to resources for AIAN HS families regarding homelessness. *2015*

Objective: Identify and/or create opportunities that support language and culture preservation for AIAN HS children and families. *2014*

Objective: Identify and promote resources that will assist AIAN HS military families and AIAN communities. *2014*

Objective: Provide AIAN HS programs with resources related to disability services for Head Start children and families. *2013*

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the goals and objectives will be detailed in the NAIANHSCO annual work plan. The work plan is organized into four areas: school transition, professional development, child care and early learning systems, and regional priorities. The elements that delineate how the determined objectives will be met are: the cost to accomplish the objectives, the lead partners who will work in partnership with the NAIANHSCO Director to accomplish the objectives, the timeline for completion of those objectives, the resources available to the NAIANHSCO Director to accomplish the work, and the outcomes expected from the objectives.

The NAIANHSCO annual work plan is available upon request.

DISSEMINATION & SHARING

The NAIANHSCO 2012-2016 strategic plan update is publicly available to American Indian and Alaska Native communities as well as the general public.

The plan will be made available through email distribution to AIAN HS programs, Head Start State Collaboration Offices, OHS Region XI, AIAN HS Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) and other community partners. This plan will also be posted on ECLKC at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov>.

Information will be made available to the following:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Update | AIAN HS community (including grantees and delegate agencies, OHS Region XI, National Indian Head Start Directors Association (NIHSDA), AIAN HS T/TA, Office of Head Start Collaboration Office, HSSCOs, and Head Start T/TA offices across the nation. |
| Listserv | The NAIANHSCO will establish a listserv for continual communication with our partners and collaborators which will include, but is not limited to, members of the NAIANHSCO Advisory Council, task forces or forums that currently exist or those that may be established during the implementation of the four-year strategic plan. |
| Mailing | The NAIANHSCO 2012-2016 strategic plan update will be distributed electronically to the Office of Head Start, NIHSDA, Regional Offices, AIAN HS T/TA, HSSCOs and community partners including the NAIANHSCO Advisory Council membership. |

EVALUATION

ACCOUNTABILITY/FOLLOW-UP

Objective: Monitor and evaluate activities for the four-year NAIANHSCO strategic plan for quality assurance.

- Progress reports on the four broad areas addressed in the strategic plan: status of implementation, including progress toward each of the overall strategic goals, evaluation measures, and needed adjustments to plan.
- Review of the strategic plan will be a permanent agenda item on the NAIANHSCO Advisory Council meeting agenda.
- Changes to the four-year strategic plan will be made in collaboration with the NAIANHSCO Advisory Council.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATING STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Are established goals and objectives being achieved according to the established timelines?

If goals and objectives are being met, what are the driving forces/key strategies that help to make them happen?

If goals and objectives are not being met, what are the challenges or barriers identified that need to be discussed?

What resources, time extensions, and/or collaborations are needed to achieve the goals and objectives according to the timelines specified in the plan?

Does NAIANHSCO have adequate resources (funds, equipment, facilities, training, personnel, etc.) to achieve the goals?

Are the goals and objectives realistic?

Should priorities be changed to focus more on achieving goals that are more realistic after this evaluation?

Should the goals be changed? (Clearly define and understand why efforts to achieve the goals are not successful before changing the goals)

What decisions can be made from what we learned from the monitoring and evaluation process that will enhance the on-going implementation of the plan as well as improve future monitoring and evaluation efforts?

AIAN HEAD START NATIONAL COLLABORATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (NCAC)

(as of Feb. 2013)

Name/Position	Agency	Address	Contact Information
Bernard Garcia, Group Leader	Office of Indian Education	Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, LBJ Education Building, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202	202-260-1454 Bernard.Garcia@ed.gov
Cpt. Robert Bialas, Regional Director	Region XI AIAN, Office of Head Start Department of Health and Human Services	Portals Building, Suite 8513 1250 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20024 202.205.9497	202.205.9497 Robertbialas@acf.hhs.gov
Patty Brown, Head Start Director	Karuk Tribe Head Start Program	PO Box 1016, 64236 Second Avenue Happy Camp, CA 96039	530-493-5305 pbrown@karuk.us
Guadalupe Cuesta, Director	National MSHS Collaboration Office	1875 Connecticut Ave., NW Washington, DC 20009-	202-884-8005 gcuesta@fhi360.org
Myrna Dingman, Head Start Director	Pueblo of San Felipe Head Start Program	PO Box 4346 San Felipe Pueblo, NM 87001	505-867-2816 mdingman@sfpueblo.com
Elaine Mulligan, Project Director	National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities	FHI360/ NICHCY 1825 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 700 Washington, DC 20009	202-884-8355 emulligan@aed.org
Albert Rinehart, Director	Tlingit & Haida Tribes Central Council Head Start	320 West Willoughby Ave. Suite 300 Juneau, AK 99801	907-463-7150 arinehart@ccthita.org
Jaclyn Haight, Head Start Director and NIHSDA President	Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe Head Start NIHSDA Board	31912 Little Boston Road, NE Kingston, WA 98346	360-297-6258 jhaight@pgst.nsn.us
Khari Garvin , Director	North Carolina Head Start Collaboration Office	301 N. Wilmington St. Raleigh, NC 27601	919-807-3618 Khari.garvin@dpi.nc.gov
Brian Richmond, Tribal Child Care Program Specialist	Indian Child Care Child Care Bureau	901 D Street, S.W., 5 th Floor East, Washington, DC 20447	202-401-1484 brian.richmond@acf.hhs.gov

AIAN HEAD START NATIONAL COLLABORATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (NCAC)

(as of Feb. 2013)

Name/Position	Agency	Address	Contact Information
Joe Henry, Director	Head Start/ Early Head Programs	Shoshone & Arapaho Joint Business Council, Box 308, Fort Washakie, WY 82514	307-332-7163 sahstar@tribcsp.com
Yasmine Daniel, TTA Manager	Region 11 AIAN Head Start TTA	1825 Connecticut Ave NW Washington, DC 20009	202-884-8264 ydaniel@fhi360.org
Al Kuslikis, (STEM) Associate	American Indian Higher Education Consortium	121 Oronoco Street Alexandria, VA 22314	703-838-0400 x121 akuslikis@aihec.org
Jennifer Jennings- Shaffer Director	Washington Head Start Collaboration Office	P.O. Box 40970 Olympia, WA 98504	360-725-4423 Jennifer.jennings-shaffer@del.wa.gov
Micker (Mike) Richardson, Director	National AIAN Head Start Collaboration Office	1875 Connecticut Ave., NW Washington, DC 20009-5721	202-884-8155 mirichardson@fhi360.org
Clint Bowers, Research & Policy Associate	National Indian Education Association (NIEA)	110 Maryland Ave, NE Suite 104 Washington, DC 20002	202-544-7290 cbowers@niea.org
W.J. Strickland, Senior Program Specialist	Office of Head Start Region 11	1250 Maryland Avenue, SW, 8 th Floor Washington, DC 20024	202-205-8201 w.strickland@acf.hhs.gov
Paul Sugar, HSSCO Director	Alaska Head Start Collaboration Office Department of Education & Early Development	801 W 10th Street, Suite 200 Juneau, AK 99801	907-465-4862 Paul.sugar@alaska.gov
Anne Suggitt, Head Start Director	Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Head Start/EHS Programs	2076 Shunk Road, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783	906-635-7722 asuggitt@saulttribe.net
Cheryl Wilson, Director	Indian Health Service Head Start Program	801 Vassar Dr., NE Albuquerque, NM 87106	505-248-7694 cheryl.wilson@ihs.hhs.gov



NATIONAL

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HEAD START COLLABORATION OFFICE
