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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!

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## 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.

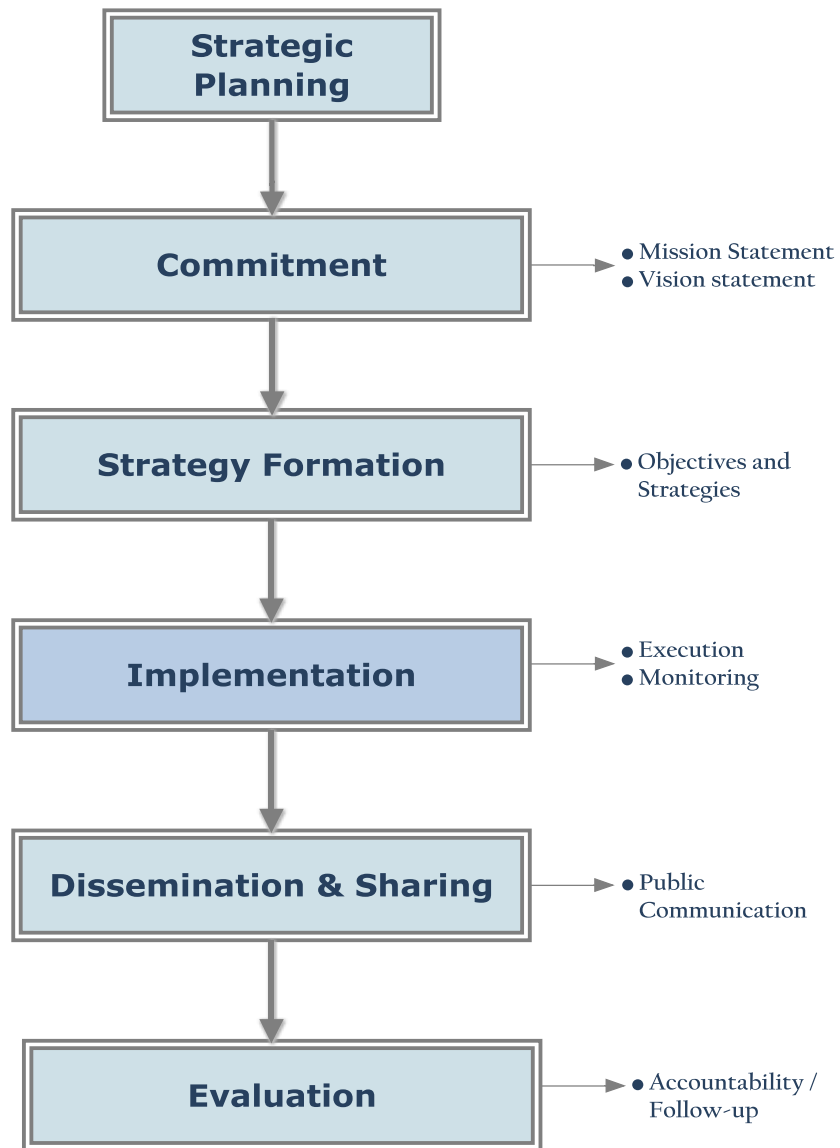
- **REGIONAL OFFICE PRIORITIES**

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:



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## **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:

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| 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.   |

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## 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)

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(as of Feb. 2013)

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AMERICAN INDIAN & ALASKA NATIVE  
HEAD START COLLABORATION OFFICE

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