

**OFFICE OF HEAD START
TRIBAL CONSULTATION**

**August 17, 2015
Billings, Montana**

Presented by
Dr. Blanca Enriquez, Director
Office of Head Start

Introduction

Pursuant to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Tribal Consultation Policy and Section 640(1)(4) of the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, in 2015, the Office of Head Start (OHS) planned four Tribal Consultation sessions. The sessions were for the purpose of better meeting the needs of American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) children and families, taking into consideration funding allocations, distribution formulas, and other issues affecting the delivery of Head Start services in their geographic locations.

OHS is committed to consultation with Tribes through which elected officials and other authorized representatives of Tribal governments have the opportunity to provide meaningful and timely input on the development of policies or regulations, the interpretation of existing regulations, or other policies or procedures that affect Indian Tribes. OHS is committed to seeking input from AIAN governing bodies, leaders, and individuals designated by Tribal leaders and incorporating the input into its decision-making process related to matters that affect Tribes and Region XI (RXI) AIAN children and families.

The 2015 schedule follows:

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| March 16, 2015 | Albuquerque, New Mexico |
| June 16, 2015 | Sacramento, California |
| July 30, 2015 | Tulsa, Oklahoma |
| August 17, 2015 | Billings, Montana |

By Notice in the *Federal Register*, dated April 7, 2015, OHS notified RXI AIAN leaders of a Tribal Consultation for Tribes in RXI on August 17, 2015, in Billings, Montana, to be held in conjunction with the Northwest Indian Head Start Coalition Conference. The following report reflects comments and recommendations of RXI AIAN leaders and representatives, comments and responses from OHS, and the issues raised that require additional follow-up. (There are will be separate reports for each Tribal Consultation listed above.)

Participants

OHS presenters: Dr. Blanca Enriquez, Director, OHS; Captain Robert Bialas, Regional Program Manager, Region XI

Additional OHS and national contractor staff participated in person or via conference call. See the Appendix for a list of participants.

Tribal College and University (TCU) presenter: Dr. Tarajeau Yazzie-Mintz, Senior Program Officer, American Indian College Fund

Tribal leaders and Tribal representatives: See the Appendix for a list of participants.

Introductory Remarks

W.J. Strickland, OHS, offered the invocation. Captain Robert Bialas, RXI AIAN Regional Program Manager, welcomed participants and reviewed the agenda. He noted that OHS officials would provide responses to questions during the dialogue or at a later date. He stated that following the introductory remarks by Dr. Blanca Enriquez and his overview, there would be a presentation by a Tribal speaker about Tribal colleges, Tribal testimony and remarks, and an opportunity to ask questions.

Captain Bialas asked participants to introduce themselves and then introduced Dr. Enriquez, Director of OHS. He explained that she has a great passion for Head Start children, Head Start programs, and the OHS staff. He recounted observing her strong leadership during a meeting of the Secretary's Advisory Council. He said her words and actions are powerful, she ensures that action items are completed, and she follows up, when appropriate. OHS staff is eager to follow her leadership.

Dr. Enriquez thanked Captain Bialas and recognized Robert Crumley, her special assistant. She thanked the Board of Directors of the Northwest Indian Head Start Coalition noting that the members serve 10 states and 71 Tribes.

While a Head Start director, Dr. Enriquez supported partnerships in a border community and served many dual-language families. Through this experience, she learned the value of the voices of parents, collaboration, and partnership. Many programs have great strengths, and some have areas for improvement. They share in common a passion for children and their parents, and a dedication to staff who want to do what is right for young children.

As Director of OHS, Dr. Enriquez said she will place her energy into creating a vision and strategic priorities. She invited participants to embrace the Head Start journey and encouraged all to walk forward together.

Dr. Enriquez presented a PowerPoint presentation titled *Moving Forward...Strengthening Our Legacy*. She observed that Head Start has experienced 50 years of growth and has reached maturity. Without continued growth, there may be atrophy. It is critical to strengthen the legacy of Head Start and to bring the early childhood education field forward to prominence.

Head Start showed the world that it develops children and helps them grow. Head Start also reaches out to the home and creates a safety net for parents so they can flourish. Our parents lack economic opportunity, and it is important to work with them and link them to community agencies. Head Start has developed a strong foundation, and OHS looks forward to continued growth. It is important to position Head Start as a value-added and highly respected and accepted program for young children and families. Head Start is the premiere early childhood program. It is notable that other providers of services for small children pattern services on those offered by Head Start. OHS believes that grantees must be high-

performing organizations offering high-quality, comprehensive early care and education for every child. That is the strength of Head Start.

Dr. Enriquez proposed four strategic priorities:

1. High-performing grantees
2. Comprehensive school readiness
3. Partnerships and collaboration
4. Leadership with character

Grantees are customers of OHS. They need to be high-performing grantees, to have quality systems and effective governance, to use data-driven decision making, and to have a continuous quality improvement mindset to be responsive and accountable. At this point, many programs use automated systems and grantees use available data to make needed changes.

Comprehensive school readiness will entail high-quality systems that are strengths based with comprehensive services for all children. Parents will be encouraged to offer feedback on the new proposed *Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS)*; the comment period has been extended for 30 more days to obtain their input and capture more comments. Head Start will serve children on a continuum of development from birth to age 5; the new *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five* supports this goal of serving children birth to 5.

Grantees can support partnerships and collaboration by partnering with colleges, universities, government agencies, and families so they can grow, strengthen, and benefit the families. Head Start must lead and share and must explain the rules and regulations to others. Head Start also must model teamwork.

Head Start should exhibit leadership with character by sharing and exhibiting honesty and integrity, effectiveness, inclusiveness, ethics, and transparency. Treat all with dignity and respect. This approach resonates with boards and echoes the values of Tribes.

Dr. Enriquez continued by stressing that it is important to embed priorities in Head Start work and to help staff and parents embrace the priorities. This can be accomplished by building supportive relationships. The RXI AIAN team can work together to build Head Start and to reach out to grantees that are the focus of their work. The team works on the budget, training and technical assistance (T/TA), Regional Office program operations, collaboration, quality assurance, administration, education, and comprehensive services.

In closing, Dr. Enriquez said she is happy to visit AIAN grantees and communities to become educated about their culture and trials. She said she is amazed by the work they do. It is important for them to inform OHS about the issues in AIAN communities and how the proposed standards will affect AIAN people. These comments will help OHS develop standards that are useful for future generations. It is critical to develop a vision of how Head Start will work in the future when others in the Head Start community are the leaders. Then

all can use this wisdom to decide what works best for the children. She encouraged participants to embrace Head Start, go forward, help one another, strengthen Head Start, and form a strong foundation, which will support the program through future changes. Dr. Enriquez thanked all participants for what they do every day and said it is an honor to be present at the consultation.

Captain Bialas presented a report on Region XI AIAN services. He noted that RXI serves Tribal nations; other regions serve Tribal grantees. He stated that he has been happy to serve over 150 nations for 23 years and feels at home on all reservations.

Captain Bialas reported that RXI serves 150 nations spanning a vast territory across 26 states. Regional enrollment is funded for approximately 24,000 children and families. There are 150 Head Start grantees, consisting of 147 Head Start programs, and 3 standalone Early Head Start programs. The current budget for RXI AIAN services is \$225 million. Including expansion and partnership grants, the budget increases to \$240 million with a funded enrollment of 24,000 children. OHS wants to know the actual enrollment numbers and will be inquiring about challenges Tribes have reaching enrollment.

Tribes are in a position of making enrollment decisions. If they find that pre-kindergarten is depleting their enrollment, they have a choice of increasing the enrollment of 3-year-olds or deciding if the Tribe should establish or expand Early Head Start. These are important questions. He noted that in one Tribal program last year, every child left for public preschool. When Captain Bialas met with the program, he learned that the community assessment indicated that families needed service between the hours of 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. and the public prekindergarten offered those service hours. When Head Start made changes to accommodate that need, all the families returned to Head Start. Clearly, it is important to know the community and the service needs.

Dr. Enriquez added that the Tribes should inform OHS about their problems. It is the responsibility of OHS to sit down with the programs to explore ideas and the landscape to help programs maintain their grants and funded enrollment. Captain Bialas agreed that OHS is accountable for this action.

Captain Bialas made remarks about the following topic areas:

- *RXI AIAN Team*: The team is broad and depends for success on the Tribal leaders. Captain Bialas sees a difference in programs when the leaders are involved. The other team members are Head Start programs, program specialists, National Centers, T/TA providers, Tribal organizations, Danya, and other collaborators. He noted the importance of Danya's monitoring efforts and stated that Tribes can learn from reviews. Tribes also can ask for his assistance if they have concerns about reviews. Reviews are not forwarded to Dr. Enriquez until Captain Bialas has examined the reports three times.
- *Designation Renewal System (DRS)*: Captain Bialas noted that DRS in RXI differs from the other Regions (Regions I–X and Region XII). When there are findings in

other Regions and they meet one of the seven conditions for DRS, the programs go directly into recompetition. In RXI, OHS works with Tribal leaders, T/TA staff, and programs by conducting Tribal consultations, which last up to one year. In this case, OHS sends a letter to Tribal leaders explaining the conditions leading to the consultation (Classroom Assessment Scoring System™, or CLASS, scores or deficiencies), schedules a meeting with leadership, makes calls or in-person visits, and works with the Tribes to develop Plans to Improve Quality (PIQs), which are T/TA action plans. OHS honored every T/TA request for the first 3 cohorts of Tribes in DRS. Programs have looked at their strengths and challenges and have made progress by collaborating. There have been efforts to reach out to colleges for teacher training, as well. As a result, programs have dramatically improved, and they are building a solid foundation. Many programs not in DRS are producing PIQs to benefit from a deep look at their programs.

- *CLASS:* Captain Bialas said he recognizes that Tribal programs that are within the lowest 10 percent are not notified until November or December. This is because OHS must review all observations across all Regions before determining the lowest 10 percent. He stated that it is difficult to call a program that had a clean review when they later fall under 10 percent. One program in Oklahoma fell below the 10 percent threshold by 0.002. At the end of the consultation process, the director of that program said it was the best year of her career because she had taken a deep look at her entire program. It is notable that all of Cohort 1 and 2 programs were successful when reevaluated. Captain Bialas stopped the reevaluation process during Cohort 2 to meet with leadership and Office of General Counsel about the reevaluation process. Tribal leaders had concerns about the reevaluations. After consideration, reevaluations were restructured. Now, if a program is in DRS, it has an opportunity to correct the problem through follow-up and can show it will sustain correction during the reevaluation. If the program is in DRS due to CLASS scores, the CLASS observation will determine if the program meets all the thresholds. This system is working; there are positive results and improvements in programs. Presently, OHS is finalizing action on Cohort 3. In Cohort 4, Tribal consultations have taken place and T/TA has begun. Rhonda Kindred from ICF has reviewed PIQs for Cohort 4. Captain Bialas shared RXI AIAN CLASS scores, observing that in 2012, RXI had the lowest scores in the country. He noted that over time and with T/TA, the low scores became acceptable scores. Recently there were several perfect scores for CLASS observations in RXI. Although there are still Tribal concerns about CLASS, in Fiscal Year 2015, there was a major improvement in the Region.
- *Communications:* Captain Bialas encourages strong communication and has an open-door policy. He promised continued communication improvement. When he arrived at OHS, he learned that some program specialists had never visited Tribal programs. He believes that it is important that program specialists observe changes that occur, particularly because every Tribe and its leaders are unique. Captain Bialas introduced new OHS program specialists who are listed in the appendix. He said that it is an honor for OHS to serve the Tribes and that he wants OHS to respond to Tribal concerns quickly. He stressed that he believes it is important to support

two-way communication and to provide prompt answers to questions raised by the Tribal programs.

- *T/TA*: ICF International has been awarded the contract to provide T/TA for Tribes. FHI 360 made over 5,000 site visits during their 3-year T/TA contract. Captain Bialas has been meeting with Rhonda Kindred, T/TA Coordinator for ICF, and she is putting together a great team; team members are preparing to go into the field. Some members are experienced, and there also are new providers and leaders. He assured the audience that the support will be high quality. He introduced Willie Mays, the new ICF Grantee Specialist Manager. The T/TA group met last week, and there is a sound plan to deliver high-quality services.
- *Data Boot Camps*: The boot camps are important for Tribes because it is critical to evaluate available data during the 5-year grants. It is important to understand what the data mean and what changes should be put in place as a result of data analysis. The Program Information Report is due in a few weeks and will include a great deal of information that can be used and analyzed to help programs to improve.
- *Health Literacy Institute*: This institute held by the University of California, Los Angeles taught families how to improve children's health. It was held for 2½ days in Washington, DC, and staff from 27 grantees attended who will become trainers in their local programs. Program specialists and grantee specialists also attended. Professionals were available to train the trainers on how to use materials. It was a great opportunity, and staff and families also are benefitting from ongoing training post-Institute for up to 1 year.
- *Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES)*: For many years RXI was not included in this important survey. Captain Bialas sent staff to meetings held by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), which oversees the study, to determine how best to include AIAN people. As a result, a workgroup was established, and weekly calls have been held with AIAN Tribal leaders to enable them to contribute to the design for AIAN FACES data collection. Data are scheduled to be collected in the fall of 2015 after approval by the institutional review boards (IRBs) for Tribes. Captain Bialas stressed that it is important for AIAN to see representative data collected in FACES.
- *Head Start Health Managers Descriptive Study*: This study offers an opportunity to learn about health services in Tribal communities. The survey covers the AIAN characteristics of health managers, their priorities, and support for health services. OPRE has submitted the information to the IRBs for Tribes, and the survey results will be disseminated in 2015 when the review is completed. OHS expects to learn from the results and make any needed changes, and will use the study to assess strengths.
- *Facilities Report*: OHS has had the opportunity to view a high percentage of centers. To date, when compiling the current survey data, OHS has looked at 83 percent of the centers. When the survey is complete, 100 percent of grantees will have had some or all centers assessed for the first time. Data analysis is underway. The report will be approved by OHS leadership and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). The report will contain the location, ownership, and condition of centers visited in accordance with the requirements of the Head Start Act. OHS and

ACF also plan to gather information about the costs of improving facilities by, for example, repairing or replacing buildings and roofs, and by making bathrooms accessible according to the standards in the Americans with Disabilities Act. The information about the costs to make improvements will demonstrate to the U.S. Congress the severity of AIAN facility needs nationwide. Tribal leaders will have the opportunity to see the report. Captain Bialas hopes they will use the report to advocate with congressional leaders.

- *New Funding Opportunity*: At the end of this year, there will be a \$5 million Funding Opportunity Announcement for expansion of birth-to-5 programs. These funds represent funds allocated to AIAN programs that were unused. The funds only can be used for expansion, not for quality improvement, due to the details of congressional appropriation.
- *HSPPS*: The proposed HSPPS were released as a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on June 19, 2015. The proposal offers an opportunity to comment on regulations designed to improve the program. The extension of the comment period to September 17, 2015, for a total of 90 days, will enable OHS to collect more comments, including comments from parents whose children are returning to Head Start after the summer break.
- *Native Language Preservation*: Captain Bialas mentioned the [Native Language Preservation, Revitalization, Restoration, and Maintenance in Head Start and Early Head Start Information Memorandum \(ACF-IM-HS-15-02\)](#), which demonstrates OHS commitment to Native language preservation. He recalled his visits to reservations and noted that the Information Memorandum (IM) supports the languages and culture of Tribal programs. OHS works with the Kellogg Foundation and other collaborators to encourage Native language use and to incorporate culture into Head Start classrooms and programs. He agrees with the intent of the IM that all Native children should learn about their culture.

Captain Bialas referred to the challenge of earning degrees and Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ certificates. He noted that there is interest in collaborating and reaching out to community and Tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) for assistance to support programs who want to build from within. Staff members are interested in opportunities to take classes and to participate in off-campus learning. He noted that the Navajo Nation is a super grantee that has struggled to obtain staff training. Many areas on the reservation have no Internet access, and therefore no access to web-based learning. The Navajos entered an agreement with Arizona State University (ASU) to help teachers attain degrees remotely without using the Internet. For example, participants used the phone to stay in contact and mailed assignments to professors. The first ASU cohort has graduated. He also reported that a second Arizona grantee is trying off-campus learning at another large Arizona college.

Captain Bialas introduced Dr. Tarajeau Yazzie-Mintz, Senior Program Officer for the American Indian College Fund. She oversees and directs TCU early childhood initiatives. She was joined by R. Cindy Pyatskowitz, College of Menominee Nation, who directs two projects.

Dr. Yazzie-Mintz displayed a PowerPoint presentation about early childhood initiatives and lessons learned that can inform teacher training for Head Start programs. She made the following points:

- The American Indian College Fund is a nonprofit organization providing Native American student scholarships and programmatic support for the nation's 34 accredited TCUs located on or near Indian reservations. The purpose is to provide access to an affordable, quality higher education. The fund, established in 1989, is the nation's largest American Indian scholarship organization.
- The American Indian College Fund provides support and creates awareness of the unique, community-based accredited TCUs. These schools offer students access to knowledge, skills, and cultural values that enhance their communities and the country as a whole. The fund offers Native people access to affordable, culturally sensitive higher education.
- In 2012–2013, the TCUs served 19,687 students. Of those, approximately 15,000 students were from the AIAN population.
- In 2013–2014, 23 TCUs had an early childhood education or similar program. Twenty-four TCUs offered A.A. degrees; six offered B.A. programs.
- In 2011, the fund launched two early childhood education initiatives, and in 2014, the fund launched a family engagement initiative. Six TCUs worked on these initiatives.
- In 2013, TCUs and the fund convened an early childhood education meeting to develop a vision for future work.
- The vision is to ensure that Tribes have educational sovereignty rooted in their cultures and language, and there is recognition of the fact that Tribes have the right to socialize their own children. This vision will lead to the development of educational structures that are seamless. The vision includes community-based participatory research approaches.
- TCUs are leaders for early childhood initiatives and restorative efforts. The initiatives have five domains and a list of strategic priorities.
- There has been a significant impact over the term of the early childhood initiatives. Over 300 families have been served, 195 of the 300 families participated in training, and 325 children were served directly. From 2011 to 2013, the TCUs trained 371 teachers serving Native children and families in Head Start, Early Head Start, and local preschools. There were 18 local partners, 10 regional partners, and 11 national partners. Over 5 years, they served 29 Tribal nations.
- TCUs and partners have accomplished significant milestones and are prepared to continue to engage with partners and to inform local, state, and national leaders. Sustained success is a shared responsibility; it is their collective work to share lessons learned, which include these:
 - TCUs are excellent partners for improving early childhood education.
 - Increased investment in TCUs is important.
 - It is critical to open pathways to earning credentials for AIAN teachers.

- Providing financial and other resources is critical for culture- and language-based adaptations to curricula.
- Resources are important for systems development.
- A responsive policy and systems should be designed to address challenges facing AIAN communities.
- It is important to include AIANs in national longitudinal studies and in the early childhood longitudinal study.
- It is necessary to developing funding cycles that allow sustainable transformation of Head Start programming and curricula.
- It is essential to recognize community-led frameworks that honor culture and languages and multigenerational approaches to family engagement.

Dr. Yazzie-Mintz suggested referring to the fund’s website (<http://www.collegefund.org>) to follow the progress of the work on the early childhood initiatives.

Captain Bialas asked Tribal leaders and representatives to express their concerns. He stated that OHS will answer as many questions as they can and will get back to participants with responses that cannot be provided at this consultation.

Comments of RXI AIAN Participants and OHS Responses

A. Language Revitalization and Culture—RXI AIAN Participant Comments

- *Rodney Morris, Omaha Tribe:* Mr. Morris’ testimony concerns Native American language revitalization. He mentioned that on June 16, 2015, he attended a training conference in Sacramento, California. He is interested in the White House initiative on revitalizing Native languages and policy to support the use and development of Native American languages. Language is irreplaceable and integral to national character. Scores of languages have disappeared; those surviving are endangered and facing extinction by 2050. It is critical that federal staff strengthen the ability of Native peoples to engage in revitalization. This administration has stated it is committed to revitalization and promotes partnership to coordinate federal plans, functions, and resources to assist in implementation. There is a working group to support the White House Executive Order. Mr. Morris urged OHS to include Omaha language immersion as part of the Head Start curriculum for the Omaha reservation and to support this approach for other reservations. He traveled in April 2015 to a conference where officials from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) discussed a memorandum of agreement on Native languages. This was a non-binding expression of intent between the Department of Health and Human Services and ED. He urged OHS to follow the White House initiative and to help programs interested in language revitalization. He is interested in Head Start offering assistance to those revitalizing languages, identifying technical tools to support this effort, and making the tools available to programs. Programs also need access to data and information about how best to proceed to revitalize languages. Mr. Morris provided documents and Tribal resolutions to Captain Bialas and Dr. Enriquez. He noted that there was a conference of six Tribes on this topic.

- *Pearl Hopkins, Nez Perce Tribe:* She offered to help other Tribes with their resolutions and noted her appreciation of elders and other teachers. In her opinion, their culture is language and taking care of the land, and they need to get back to that. Sadly, the Tribe is losing its identity. She is proud that Head Start helps children, teaching them culture and how to be good citizens. They will become the leaders. There is power in numbers, and Tribes must keep struggling together.

Language Revitalization—OHS Responses

- Captain Bialas thanked Mr. Morris for his comments.
- Dr. Enriquez noted that OHS places value on home language while students learn English. It is an additive approach. Children grow up learning both languages. OHS supports this approach in the new HSPPS. Without language, culture ceases to exist. She said she will examine the documents shared by Mr. Morris.

B. Consultations—RXI AIAN Participant Comments

Patricia White Temple, Nez Perce Tribe: Head Start is a top priority area for many on Tribal councils. There are important meetings of the National Congress of American Indians and National Indian Education Association (NIEA), and there should be Head Start consultations and forums at those meetings. She suggested breakout sessions at those meetings covering what Head Start means to Tribes. The Tribes could use the meetings to talk about the meaning of government-to-government consultation. There is another coalition in the Northwest that provides an opportunity for sessions of this type. Councils must understand that it is important to start with a focus on children.

Consultations—OHS Responses

- *Captain Bialas* said he is interested in addressing the Tribes' concerns about consultation location. He often asks leaders about the appropriate location for consultations and enjoys seeing a room filled with leaders. Other venues are possible, and he is reaching out to organizations on the east coast, too. He agrees that NIEA is a good contact. Coordinating consultations with meetings and conferences for Native Americans is best. It is challenging to plan Tribal consultations to ensure participation by Tribal leaders. OHS will continue to explore and find the best consultation venues.

C. Teacher Qualifications and Compensation—RXI AIAN Participant Comments

- *Joel Valentin, Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe:* The most critical need for this Tribe is for adequate technical assistance funding for teacher certification. The program has partnerships with several University of Wisconsin schools offering BA degrees. Because current T/TA funding is unchanged, funding levels are not adequate to compensate the teaching staff. Please consider additional funding for teacher certification and licensing. Mr. Valentin also observed that funds are needed to keep teachers at Head Start. They are hired by nearby schools. If children go to Head Start, they have a better chance to go to high school and college. Their teachers need to be prepared with education. Presently, there is no money for raises or incentives. This is his first month on the Tribal Council, and he is learning a great deal.

- *Mary Whitepole, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe:* They have the lowest paid teachers in the United States. At meetings, the Tribe talks about the teacher shortage and low pay. As soon as teachers earn their degrees, they leave. Long hours lead to burnout for the salary offered. Their Head Start budget is small. They want to ask for more funding for Head Start. It is hard to fill positions in their area. In Head Start, babies receive the love and care they do not receive in their homes. This should be a priority; it is the only way to achieve change. She served 9 years on the Tribal Council and will serve 3 more. Head Start works with Tribes over and above other government entities. She has seen gains and improvement. Though funding is an issue, she sees a difference with their Head Start staff. The Tribe will help lobby and advocate for funds. Ms. Whitepole is the chair of the education committee. She plans to learn as much as she can about Head Start to effect change because knowledge is power. Program Specialist Robin Brocato has been helpful on her many visits to the Tribe.
- *Viola Wood, Fort Peck Tribes:* Ms. Wood thanked OHS for having the consultation at the Northwest Indian Head Start Coalition Conference. She has been hearing about the need to extend the period for teacher certification. Teachers have families and may be the sole breadwinners. Tribes are struggling to meet unfunded mandates in the regulations.
- *Marcy Maki, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation:* There are staffing problems at their program. The teaching staff members earn CDAs, A.A.s, and B.A.s, and then they are hired by other schools in Seattle. The minimum wage in Seattle is \$15 per hour, and the Tribes cannot offer this hourly rate.

Teacher Qualifications and Compensation—OHS Responses

- *Dr. Enriquez* thanked Mr. Valentin for bringing up issues.
- *Captain Bialas* said they see these problems across the entire Region, and OHS will continue to try to assist Tribes.

D. Training for New Directors and Council Members

- *Viola Wood, Fort Peck Tribes:* New directors can refer to resources online at the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc>) and work with program specialists. She is happy she can get answers from her Program Specialist, Lula Howard.
- *Roxanne Wells, Cankdeska Cikana Community College Head Start:* Ms. Wells explained that there are serious administrative challenges for new directors. She noted that she has worked for 19 years in a variety of settings: in western Arizona, the program had a perfect review; at the Los Angeles County Office of Education, she served five Native Tribal reservations as a director; now she works at the community college Head Start. She worked in many programs of varying sizes, and they had issues in common. All need buildings, all are short staffed, and all have staff working on credentials. When beginning at a new location, the director and staff must start over. There are no systems, policies, or procedures in place other than the federal Head Start policies. In the past 14 months, she spent 90 percent of her time developing and writing procedures for staff. There was a more than 50

percent turnover rate at this location, and she hired 30 new teaching staff; there are 10 openings. They face serious challenges: the college is 17 miles from any city, there is wind chill from the lake, and five buildings are in disrepair. It would help if the T/TA team offered core packages to meet the needs of programs that could be individualized by each program. Ms. Wells said T/TA is extremely helpful and she appreciates materials provided by email and hard copy. However, the director is juggling many needs in addition to the need to move forward on systems development. What is needed is a systemic component piece on policies, procedures, and regulations to help directors implement the program. In her experience with nine different cultures, serving six Tribes and migrant families, she has learned this is a need at many locations. Of course, it also is critical to do criminal background checks on staff to ensure children are secure. She brought in a psychiatrist and social worker to discuss trauma and addiction because the staff needed this information. As a result, they learned about a baseline of stability and how problems can impact children. There is turnover due to tardiness and failure to attend. This has to do with choices staff members make. They need to understand there are norms; they did not learn these norms when growing up. The director must recruit, hire, and retain staff and, because directors are not human resources experts, they are unsure how to perform these tasks. Ms. Wells also is interested in staff recognition programs and would like information about recognition. It is wise to reflect on accomplishments and to offer programmatic recognition to note how far the program, children, and families have come. Ms. Wells concluded by saying that staff resources, professional development, and system integration including fiscal management are critical. Putting the recommended systems into place is difficult, and burnout is an issue for directors. It is hard to take systems and put them into practice, as they may be foreign to many staff members, and the director is dealing with crisis management.

- *Patricia White Temple, Nez Perce Tribe*: All councils change on specific timetables, often yearly. OHS should offer in-service training for people who are new to Tribal councils. Nez Perce Tribe has improved their education of the council members but this is a difficult process.

Training for New Directors and Council Members—OHS Responses

- *Dr. Enriquez* thanked Ms. Wells for painting the big picture of what Head Start has become and the need to take a business approach to systems. She noted that systems and fiscal management are critical. She understands what Ms. Wells is requesting and will ask the National Centers to work on this. When she was a director, she found the 5-year planning document helpful and a guide to continuous improvement. Head Start offers direct services, but it is important to reflect on the systems Ms. Wells mentioned that concern data, evaluation, fiscal responsibility, management, and communication. Dr. Enriquez said that her premiere program in El Paso went through DRS and overcame their deficiency. Although this was a difficult period, thinking in terms of systems was helpful. They prepared a strategic plan and overcame the problem. It is true that this may force the director to commit time on weekends to write and prepare a plan.

- *Captain Bialas* thanked Ms. Wells for her hard work for the last 14 months and agreed that her program had challenges. He appreciated her efforts to build systems and develop a strong foundation.
- *W.J. Strickland*: When there are new directors, there needs to be a dialogue about collaboration with Tribal leadership and Tribal administration to ensure the leaders learn how to support the new director. There is a 40 percent turnover rate for new directors in Indian country. There must be work to sustain directors, the management team, and teachers.
- *Captain Bialas* said he had met with a Tribal leader who was unaware of Head Start requirements. Education is critical for Tribal leaders, and he is discussing how best to address this need at OHS.

E. Budget and Funding Issues—RXI AIAN Participant Comments

- *Joel Valentin, Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe*: Wellness initiatives are crucial to success and well-being of children and families, and funds are needed for those services. Pediatric dentistry is important, and funds are not adequate for necessary dental care. Funding for transportation is needed. The Tribe also needs child care grants. The program starts at 9 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m., though most parents work until 4:30 or 5 p.m., which complicates picking up children.
- *Mary Ellen Fritz, Chugachmiut Tribe*: There are 227 impoverished children in the Head Start program. There are problems with drugs, alcohol, and addiction. Head Start serves those with the greatest needs. There should be the capability to increase the number of staff to avoid overburdening existing staff. All Tribes need improved funding because the old grants have not kept pace with need. Ms. Fritz asked if the Tribes could do a survey and present it to Captain Bialas. They all share issues that concern funding and teacher credentialing.
- *Viola Wood, Fort Peck Tribes*: Tribes are struggling to meet unfunded mandates in the regulations.
- *Marcy Maki, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation*: Ms. Maki echoed Ms. Fritz about the need for more funds. The Tribes should stand together for more funding for Head Start. Regarding the proposed HSPPS, the Business Chairman for Confederated Tribes of Chehalis said the Tribes cannot meet more requirements without more funds.
- *R. Cyndi Pyatskowitz, College of Menominee Nation*: The college collaborates with Oneida Tribe and other Tribes to send students to a TCU. The Head Start grants for TCUs ended, and now students cannot afford to attend. The college offers CDA classes that role into A.A. and B.A. degrees, but working parents and other students find it difficult to pay to attend. She hopes funds for Tribal colleges will resume.

Budget and Funding Issues—OHS Responses

- *Captain Bialas* observed that the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe faces challenges like many other communities due to the need for wraparound care. Captain Bialas offered to follow up so he and the Tribe can work together on whether the Child Care Development Block Grants could be helpful to the Tribe. He advised that Tribal leaders should take the message to Congress about lack of funds. Captain

Bialas also noted that there is an opportunity to submit an emergency one-time funding request for Tribal Head Start needs, such as failing buses. Every program can submit this request once each year. OHS receives requests and cannot promise funds. However, if Tribes do not submit, they cannot be considered for available funds. (Funds that are available are offsets from programs that have not spent their dollars.) Captain Bialas said one program with asbestos and mold received funds in a few weeks due to the scope of their emergency and the fact that the problem posed a health hazard.

- *Captain Bialas* said the funds survey proposed by Ms. Fritz is a good idea, and he will take this question back for consideration at OHS.

F. Miscellaneous—RXI AIAN Participant Comments

- *Communication with Tribal Leaders: Sheldon King, Northern Cheyenne Tribe:* The Tribal leaders are not informed about Head Start by their Head Start Director, who is not present at this meeting. They need more communication from the Head Start Director because they believe children should come first. They will follow up with the Head Start Director to ensure communication improves.

Miscellaneous—OHS Response

- *Communication with Tribal Leaders: Captain Bialas* will ensure Mr. King is provided with information on program governance and the requirements that specify the Director should report to the council on fiscal and other matters. Program Specialist Lula Howard will provide him with this information.

Conclusion

Captain Bialas thanked Tribal leaders for traveling and attending the consultation. He said he appreciates their words and wisdom. He also thanked Marcy Maki for her enthusiasm, and recognized Viola Wood and another Tribal member because they represent over 90 years of experience with Head Start. He thanked Ms. Wood and the rest of the Board of Directors of the Northwest Indian Head Start Coalition for their support and for hosting the consultation. He recognized Dr. Yazzie-Mintz and expressed appreciation for her report on the fund and Tribal colleges. Captain Bialas also thanked Dr. Enriquez for her support for RXI and the OHS staff for working with the programs. He noted that, although there are many great challenges in RXI, there also are successes to report. He concluded by saying he appreciates the support of Tribes for Head Start and feels energized every day by his work for RXI. Mr. Strickland offered the closing prayer.

Summary of Requests, Recommendations, and Action Steps

Following is a summary of requests and recommendations from AIAN participants, OHS responses to questions, and action steps resulting from the Tribal Consultation discussion.

RXI AIAN Participant Comments, Recommendations, and Questions

Language Revitalization and Culture

- *Omaha Tribe*: The Tribe wants to include Omaha language immersion as part of the Head Start curriculum for the Omaha reservation and supports this approach for other reservations. Mr. Morris urged OHS to follow the White House initiative on language preservation and to help programs interested in language revitalization. He is interested in Head Start offering assistance to Tribes revitalizing languages, identifying technical tools to support this effort, and making the tools available to programs. Programs also need access to data and information about how best to proceed to revitalize languages.

Consultations

- *Nez Perce Tribe*: There are important meetings of the National Congress of American Indians and NIEA, and there should be Head Start consultations and forums at those meetings. There could be breakout sessions at those meetings covering what Head Start means to Tribes. The Tribes also could use the meetings to talk about the meaning of government-to-government consultation. There is another coalition in the Northwest that provides an opportunity for sessions of this type.

Teacher Qualifications and Compensation

- *Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Fort Peck Tribes, and Chehalis Tribe*: Because current T/TA funding is unchanged, funding levels are not adequate to train, compensate the teaching staff adequately so they are retained, or offer incentives. They asked for more funding to help teachers become certified.

Training for New Directors and Council Members

- *Cankdeska Cikana Community College Head Start*: Programs could benefit from core packages that can be individualized. What is needed is a systemic component on policies, procedures, and regulations to help new directors implement the program. Programs also need information about how to recognize staff and, periodically, how far the program, children, and families have advanced.
- *Nez Perce Tribe*: OHS should offer in-service training for people who are new to Tribal councils.

Budget and Funding Issues

- *Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe, Chugachmiut Tribe, and Fort Peck Tribes* agreed that available funds are inadequate to meet the need for services, and grants have not kept pace with needs.
- *Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe* expressed a need for wraparound funds and a child care grant to address that need.
- *Chugachmiut Tribe* asked if Tribes could do a survey and present it to Captain Bialas to summarize funding concerns.

Miscellaneous

- *Northern Cheyenne Tribe* Tribal leaders are not informed about Head Start by their Head Start Director, who was not present at this meeting.

OHS Responses and Action Steps

Language Revitalization and Culture

- *Dr. Enriquez* noted that OHS places value on home language while students learn English. It is an additive approach. Children grow up learning both languages. OHS supports this approach in the new HSPPS. Without language, culture ceases to exist. She said she will examine the documents shared by Mr. Morris.

Consultations

- *Captain Bialas* is interested in addressing the Tribes' concerns about consultation location. Other venues are possible, and he is reaching out to organizations on the east coast, too. He agrees that NIEA is a good contact. OHS will continue to explore and find the best consultation venues.

Teacher Qualifications and Compensation

- *Captain Bialas* said they see these problems across the entire Region, and OHS will continue to try to assist the Tribes.

Training for New Directors and Council Members

- *Dr. Enriquez* will ask the National Centers to work on core packages for new directors on policies, procedures, and regulations to help new directors implement the program.
- *Captain Bialas* agreed that education is critical for Tribal leaders, and he is discussing how best to address this need at OHS.

Budget and Funding Issues

- *Captain Bialas* advised that Tribal leaders should take the message to Congress about lack of funds.
- *Captain Bialas* offered to follow up so he and the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe can work together on whether the Child Care Development Block Grants could be helpful to the Tribe.
- *Captain Bialas* noted that there is an opportunity to submit an emergency one-time funding request for Tribal Head Start needs, such as failing buses.
- *Captain Bialas* said the funds survey proposed by *Chugachmiut Tribe* is a good idea, and he will take this question back for consideration at OHS.

Miscellaneous

- *Communication with Tribal Leaders: Captain Bialas* will ask Program Specialist Lula Howard to ensure Northern Cheyenne Tribal leaders are provided with information on program governance and program requirements. This information

specifies that the Head Start Director should report to the Council on fiscal and other matters.

Tribal Consultation Participants

Federal Staff and National Contractors

| Last Name | First Name | Position | Organization |
|------------|------------|---|---|
| Arrington | Lakisha | Program Specialist | Office of Head Start (OHS) |
| Bialas | Robert | Regional Program Manager, Region XI | OHS |
| Brocato | Robin | Program Specialist | OHS |
| Enriquez | Blanca | Director | OHS |
| Ferguson | Janaye | Program Specialist | OHS |
| Gardner | Valerie | Program Specialist | OHS |
| Howard | Lula Ann | Program Specialist | OHS |
| Kindred | Rhonda | Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator | ICF International |
| Mays | Willie | Grantee Specialist Manager | ICF International |
| Natrall | Marie | Senior Writer/Training Specialist | ZERO TO THREE |
| Rouvier | Ruth | Senior Research Associate | National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness |
| Schultz | Janet | Consultant | Danya International |
| Strickland | W.J. | Senior Program Specialist | OHS |

RXI AIAN Tribal Leaders and Representatives

| Last Name | First Name | Title | Organization |
|------------|------------|--|---|
| Antoine | Carrie | Administrative Assistant | Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation |
| Charley | Taiah | Family Community Partnership Specialist | Quinalt Indian Nation |
| Fritz | Mary Ellen | Head Start Director | Chugachmiut |
| Headswift | Benji | Tribal Council Member | Northern Cheyenne Tribe |
| Hopkins | Pearl | Tribal Leader | Nez Perce Tribe |
| Jensen | Caitlin | Head Start Collaboration Office Director | Washington State Collaboration Office, Department of Early Learning |
| King | Sheldon | Tribal Council | Northern Cheyenne Tribe |
| Klecan | Sara | Policy Council | Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe |
| LaFontaine | Rose | Acting Director | Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians |

| Last Name | First Name | Title | Organization |
|------------------|-------------------|--|---|
| Madsen | Pat | Director | Lower Brule Indian Reservation |
| Maki | Marcy | Head Start Director | Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation |
| Miller | Merrie | Tribal Council Representative | Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe |
| Morris | Rodney | Tribal Council Member | Omaha Tribe |
| Moses | Scott | Tribal Council | Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS) |
| Pfefferkorn | Veda | Family Services Specialist | Nez Perce Tribe |
| Pyatskowitz | R. Cyndi | Teacher Education Chairperson | College of Menominee Nation |
| Ralston | Katie | Disabilities Specialist | Quinault Indian Nation |
| Raya | Patricia | Head Start Director | Quinault Indian Nation |
| Smith | Carlos | Tribal Council | CTWS |
| Snow | Eloise | Tribal Council Member | Northern Cheyenne Tribe |
| Sullivan | Tyson | Director | Cankdeska Cikana Community College Head Start |
| Taylor | Carmen | Dean of Academic Affairs | Aaniiih Nakoda College |
| Valentin | Joel | Tribal Council Member | Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe |
| Vanderpool | Jan | Executive Director and Tribal Representative | Chugachmiut |
| Wells | Roxanne | Director | Cankdeska Cikana Community College Head Start |
| Whitepole | Mary | Tribal Council Representative | Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe |
| White Temple | Patricia | Education Director | Nez Perce Tribe |
| Wimberley | Phyllis | Deputy Director and Tribal Representative | Chugachmiut |
| Wood | Viola | Head Start Director | Fort Peck Tribes |
| Yazzie-Mintz | Tarajeen | Senior Program Officer | American Indian College Fund |
| Young | Alma | Director | Fort Belknap Indian Reservation |