

**OFFICE OF HEAD START
TRIBAL CONSULTATION
REPORT**

**October 19, 2016
Fairbanks, Alaska**

Report

Presented by

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Office of Head Start

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Introduction

As required by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Tribal Consultation Policy and Section 640(l)(4) of the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, in 2016, the Office of Head Start (OHS) planned three Tribal Consultation sessions for the purpose of better meeting the needs of American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) children and families. The consultations take into consideration funding allocations, distribution formulas, and other issues affecting the delivery of Head Start services in Tribal geographic locations.

OHS is committed to consultation with Tribes during 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 such input into its decision-making process related to all matters that significantly affect Tribes and Region XI (RXI) AIAN children and families.

The 2016 schedule follows:

March 7, 2016	Albuquerque, New Mexico
June 8, 2016	Arlington, Virginia
August 8, 2016	Airway Heights, Washington
October 19, 2016	Fairbanks, Alaska

By Notice in the *Federal Register* dated September 1, 2016, OHS notified RXI AIAN leaders of a Tribal Consultation for Tribes in RXI on October 19, 2016, in Fairbanks, Alaska. This meeting was held in Fairbanks in conjunction with the 50th Annual Alaska Federation of Natives Annual Convention. The following report reflects introductory remarks by OHS followed by testimony and recommendations of RXI AIAN leaders and representatives. (There are separate reports for each Tribal Consultation listed above.)

Introductory Remarks

Ms. Mary Ellen Fritz, Tribal Board Member, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, offered the invocation. Following this, Ms. Anne Shade, President of the Alaska Head Start Association, welcomed participants to the meeting.

Ms. Frances Majestic, Director, Program Management Division, greeted participants, and the participants introduced themselves.

Following introductions, Ms. Angie Godfrey, RXI AIAN Regional Program Manager (RPM), thanked participants for attending the consultation and emphasized that the federal staff consider the consultation a listening session.

Ms. Majestic expressed her appreciation for the invitation to Fairbanks. She said she was happy to represent the OHS Director, Dr. Blanca Enriquez, who regretted that she was unavailable to attend this consultation. Ms. Majestic added that she started with Head Start as a parent in the State of Michigan and views Head Start as full of possibilities for children and families. She noted that she would provide an update from OHS on important issues, expressed an interest in hearing participants' comments, indicated she would raise concerns to leadership, and stated her interest in working as a partner with Tribal representatives to solve problems.

Ms. Majestic explained that she briefly acted as RPM before Ms. Godfrey. Her OHS updates at this meeting were on issues considered critical from a national perspective.

- *Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS)*
 - The newly rewritten standards have been released. This represents a major undertaking and is the largest rewrite of the standards in the past 40 years. The release involved a formal process of proposed rulemaking and comment analysis. The final rule is explained in the preamble to the regulations and includes responses to comments. The goal of OHS for the new standards was to set a high bar for future quality for Head Start and Early Head Start.
 - The new standards reflect effective practice based on research and offer a roadmap to grantees to support professional development and use of curricula in Head Start. They stress strong parent engagement, health services, child safety, and full-day/full-year programs for children. An effort was made to simplify requirements and reduce administrative burden. The previous Standards were lengthy, and included information added periodically. The new Standards are realigned and presented in plain English with better organization. The language of the standards also clarifies regulations for Tribal grantees by discussing service areas and stressing language integration.
 - OHS is busy preparing for issuance. All grantees received two hard copies of the new standards. OHS is hoping to send a hard copy to every center in the country. In addition, there will be training in each Region. The training for RXI AIAN is in December in Chandler, Arizona, at Wild Horse Pass Hotel. There also will be webinars on the third Wednesday of each month, and they are open to anyone who is interested in participating. There will be many resources on the ECLKC. Refer to the ECLKC page dedicated to the updated Standards (<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/presenting>) to find PDFs of the HSPPS, the Preamble, timelines, answers to frequently asked questions, and short videos that introduce the Standards. These resources are intended to support planning and help staff to learn and integrate the standards. This work is supported by the National Center for Program Management and Fiscal Operations (PMFO).
- *Duration of Services*
 - The U.S. Congress is interested in providing children with more time in Head Start and Early Head Start and appropriated funds (\$294 million) for duration grants. The funds are a down payment to support increased time in programs. OHS used the data submitted on grant applications to determine eligibility for the funds.
 - There were 700 applications, and the process of determining allocations based on slots was complex. Slots were assigned based on a formula intended to increase

hours: 1,020 hours over 8 months at a minimum for Head Start, and 1,380 hours for Early Head Start. The proposed HSPPS on this topic were more prescriptive than the final rule, which allows grantees to decide how to array the allotted hours for increased time. The startup funding will be awarded soon. In addition, the final HSPPS allow the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to change the date for full implementation of full-day/full-year services. Ms. Majestic advised grantees to consider their long-term plan for increasing hours.

- *Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnerships*
 - For the first set of partnerships, \$500 million was awarded to 275 programs. Soon \$135 million will be made available for new grants. The grants will be awarded between January and March 2017. The Administration for Children and Families supports expanding high-quality operations to assist working families by offering full-day/full-year services that partner with existing child care programs. This partnership will ensure that families have comprehensive services, as well as additional benefits such as new training opportunities, materials, and quality improvements.
 - On March 31, 2016, 14 grants were awarded to AIAN recipients. In Alaska, three Tribes received grants. The latest announcement closed on August 24, 2016, and awards are expected in early 2017. The funding amount is \$3.5 million for RXI AIAN grants.
- *FY 2017 Monitoring System*
 - Dr. Enriquez, OHS Director, has issued a letter to explain that OHS is interested in examining and modifying the monitoring system to make improvements. A limited number of reviews will be conducted this coming year. This includes Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS™) CLASS; Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA); and reviews of certain EHS-CC Partnership grants. Protocols will be available in November 2016, and reviews will begin in January 2017. OHS also will conduct follow-up and targeted reviews. OHS is interested in comments about the monitoring system.
- *Disk Availability*
 - Ms. Majestic noted that at a previous meeting, a participant requested disks of training materials. Grantees and Tribal leaders should reach out to OHS if they need materials. For example, there are videos on the ECLKC, and they are downloadable. However, if a grantee does not have the capacity to download video files, the staff at the ECLKC can be reached by toll-free phone at 866-763-6481 Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.– 6 p.m. eastern time or by email at HeadStart@eclkc.info. Items can be sent by mail upon request instead of streamed online. If there is an email requesting training webinars, the ECLKC can put them on USB flash drives and send them by mail to those who request this service.

After Ms. Majestic spoke, Ms. Godfrey introduced herself and stated that she is happy to have the opportunity both to speak and to listen.

Although some issues may be statutory in nature and beyond the purview of OHS, leadership will consider the issues raised and strive to solve problems. Ms. Godfrey also thanked Thrivalaska for providing the meeting space and IMPAQ for providing support. She expressed appreciation for the support of the Fairbanks Native Association; recognized Valerie Gardner, Program Specialist from OHS; and noted that Mr. Mike Richardson, Director, AIAN National Head Start Collaboration Office, was in attendance at the consultation.

Testimony and Comments of RXI AIAN Participants

A. Facilities—RXI AIAN Participant Comments

- *Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments*: In December 2013, their facility burned. They are struggling to expand services and are seeking funds for a Head Start center, child care services, and behavioral health services.
- *Cook Inlet Tribal Board*: There is a need to follow up to replace facilities and offer lead abatement. It is helpful that OHS recognizes the needs, but \$69 million would only offer renovations, not rebuilding. She added that Mr. Bruce Chandler, an OHS TA consultant, recently showed a PowerPoint with unsafe facilities. Ten of the 14 structures on the slides were facilities in Alaska. This needs to be addressed.
- *Fairbanks Native Association*: Funds are needed for facilities. They have 80 children in two classrooms because they offer two part-day sessions for Head Start children. The building was constructed in the 1950s and was built as a garage. They need funds to expand.
- *Metlakatla Tribe*: The Tribe had a successful experience with building a facility. They obtained an Early Head Start grant and were able to obtain a property and erect a building in just a few months. The grant worked wonders for the Tribe, allowing them to hire teachers and stay open year round.
- *Kawerak, Inc.*: The Tribe has 10 remote locations and needs funds for new facilities in some locations.
- *Kenaitze Tribe*: They have a big community and need a larger building to serve their children. They have run a successful Head Start program for many years and have 57 Head Start children. They do not have enough space to expand to include more children.
- *Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Inc. (APIA)*: Space is needed to accommodate the latest requirements for expanding beyond half-day programs.
- *Cook Inlet*: Their facility requires \$3 million for renovation. In more remote areas, this renovation of the same type of facility would be even more costly

B. Health, Drug Addiction, and Behavioral and Mental Health Services—RXI AIAN Participant Comments

- *Chugachmiut*: The tribe submitted written testimony noting that their Tribal communities do not have resident dentists, mental health clinicians, ophthalmologists, audiologists, dietitians, or other specialty providers to serve children and families. Providers must fly to the communities to offer services, and it is hard to obtain follow-up service.
- *Cook Inlet Tribal Council*: Children are coming to Head Start from high-need families dealing with substance use. Teachers may not be able to address this and need assistance. Substance use disorders have reached an epidemic level in Anchorage. A lifestyle involving substance abuse can lead to the abuse and neglect of children.
- *Kenaitze Tribe*: Heroin and methamphetamine problems affect their families. Many die due to overdoses. There is a need for mental health services for families.
- *Bristol Bay Native Association and Alaska Head Start Association*: Children under 5 years of age are not covered by their behavioral health services. They need flexibility to provide these services in rural and remote Alaska. It is expensive to fly someone to these areas from Anchorage.
- *Kawerak, Inc.*: There is a need for behavioral services to ensure children do not hurt teachers.

C. Alaska Cost of Living and Funding—RXI AIAN Participant Comments

- *Chugachmiut*: The tribe submitted written testimony to explain that their communities are remote and cost of living is high in these areas. The Head Start grant is 21 years old and underfunded; the Tribe contributes to the Head Start program. Their duration grant application was submitted in May 2016, and they hope funding will offer them some relief. They added that the Tribe wants to compact Head Start funds and apply full indirect rates. The Tribe has a federally negotiated indirect rate but cannot apply this to Head Start due to lack of funding and because there is a 15 percent administrative cost limitation.
- *Cook Inlet Tribal Council*: Costs of service have risen, and more children are eligible. The state has lost oil revenue, and jobs have been lost. Alaska issues are unique, and they are grateful that Ms. Boykin is so responsive. They appreciate receiving waivers due to their special circumstances.
- *Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc. (RurAL CAP)*: Their sites are remote, and there are unfunded requirements in the standards. Fingerprinting could cost RurAL CAP up to \$100,000. A plane ticket to meet fingerprinting requirements costs \$700. They do not know how to bear the costs.
- *Cook Inlet*: Child Care Partnership startup funding has made a difference in their child care partnerships. They have hired 20 teachers and provided Child Development Associate (CDA) credential training, offered first aid training, provided education on Program Performance Standards, trained on the Program Information Report and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Child and Adult Care Food Program, and offered teachers training on curricula. This has been a tremendous opportunity.

D. Teacher Qualifications and Training—RXI AIAN Participant Comments

- *Cook Inlet Tribal Board:* They are not able to find infant and toddler specialists who have earned CDAs. The community is growing, and it takes 8 to 10 months to get CDA training in place. There are no systems to grow credentials, only Head Start. If there are no waivers for this requirement, they will be out of compliance.
- *APIA:* Few teachers have the CDA credential, and some teachers with language expertise do not have the required certifications for teaching in the classroom. The Tribes should be able to certify their own teachers and inform the government who is qualified to teach.
- *Bristol Bay Native Association and Alaska Head Start Association:* The CDA credential is required by the HSPPS, and the lack of waivers for this requirement causes a problem. In addition, a teacher mentor/coach has been with them for 15 years and is trying to earn a bachelor of arts degree. However, she is not qualified for the position, and it is difficult to find someone qualified for teacher mentor/coaching in a rural area. This teacher is performing well and is culturally competent.

E. CLASS—RXI AIAN Participant Comments

- *Fairbanks Native Association:* CLASS is not culturally appropriate for Alaska Tribes and should be suspended until a culturally appropriate assessment is found. CLASS should be used as a professional development tool instead. Also, programs want feedback on their scores so they can design teacher training.
- *Tanana Chiefs Conference:* This tool is not appropriate and she agrees with the recommendation to suspend it until a better tool is found. Collaboration with the National Indian Head Start Directors Association and other Tribal entities could help to locate a better tool.
- *APIA:* It is wrong to use CLASS for punitive purposes. There should be research to determine the best tool to assess AIAN children or flexibility allowed for Tribes in their use of the tool.
- *Fairbanks Native Association:* CLASS should not be used. In Alaska, native children communicate with facial expressions and eyebrows and reviewers are not familiar with this culture. The reviewers spend only 20 minutes in class and then score teachers. There is no individual feedback, only steps such as placement in the Designation Renewal System (DRS) and the requirement to compete for continued Head Start funding. The tool hurts programs and families and, as a result of CLASS, some good programs are assigned to DRS.

F. Duration of Services

- *Tanana Chiefs Conference:* More flexibility is good, but the Tribe is concerned about Early Head Start and the requirement for 46 weeks duration. Many parents are involved in subsistence living so will be absent at times, and the Tribe will be out of compliance inability to conduct home visits.
- *Kawerak, Inc.:* Staff will be working longer hours and longer days. This means they need a third person in classrooms for lunch breaks. Increased funding is needed for quality. In addition, families take children with them to camp for their subsistence lifestyle. The tribe hopes they will be able to locally design programs to accommodate the needs of the subsistence lifestyle.

- *APIA*: They are concerned about full-day/full-year requirements and worried about how to manage if funding does not increase.
- *Fairbanks Native Association*: The duration requirements do not fit Alaska Tribes. They need respect for their subsistence lifestyle and should not lose services if they are out of compliance with duration requirements.

G. Miscellaneous—RXI AIAN Participant Comments

- *Tribal Consultations*
 - *Kenaitze Tribe*: The consultations are good opportunities for tribes.
 - *APIA*: Hold the Tribal Consultations at the facility hosting the Alaska Federation of Natives conference.
- *Transportation—Kenaitze Tribe*: Their low-income families need transportation. There is no bus system, and they live far from school.
- *Income Guidelines*
 - *Tanana Chiefs Conference*: The income guidelines should be modified so families in Alaska qualify under a different income standard. Many are over-income, and living costs are extremely high. The interior is the size of Texas, and a plane ticket can cost \$900–2,000. A gallon of milk can cost \$12. There should be a regional cost differential for the state. Anchorage does not have the same living costs as Alaska interior communities.
 - *Fairbanks Native Association*: Federal poverty guidelines do not reflect Alaska wages. They should be changed or amended to accommodate Alaska families who are considered over-income and ineligible for Head Start services.
 - *Bristol Bay Native Association and Alaska Head Start Association*: Tribes are trying to align with the requirements of the Child Care and Development Fund grant to gain more eligibility for parents. This topic should stay on the table for Head Start.
- *EHS-CC Partnership*
 - *Audrey Hudson, Metlakatla Tribe*: They appreciate Early Head Start and have a partnership with a cooperative out of Sitka, Alaska, to offer child care while parents are subsistence fishing. The families’ livelihoods depend on fishing, and these cooperative services are appreciated.

Ms. Godfrey presented some information that integrates feedback from previous consultations.

- *Additional Funding Opportunities*
 - *Duration Grants*: A total of 55 applications are under review for the grants.
 - *Early Head Start Expansion*: A total of \$5 million is available for AIAN Early Head Start expansion. These funds were relinquished by AIAN programs. A funding opportunity announcement (FOA) will be available at Grants.gov. Interested parties may register to be alerted when the FOA is announced. OHS encourages AIAN grantees to apply for the funds.

- *RXI Monitoring Data*
 - The data collected are used to plan support for programs. One example is that as a result of monitoring findings, OHS is working with the PMFO on a fiscal consultant initiative. This project provides a consultant to work with programs on fiscal matters; the initiative is getting a great response.
 - The top area of noncompliance was code of conduct, which usually involved a finding that a child was left alone. We are working with programs to address this issue.

- *Preservation of Language and Culture*
 - OHS issued a language report to support program integration of language into Head Start/Early Head Start: *A Report on Tribal Language Revitalization in Head Start and Early Head Start* (available at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/states/aian/pdf/report-tribal-language-revitalization.pdf>).
 - There have been two sessions on Making It Work! (The National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness offers this resource to support work with AIAN preschoolers on language. This can be accessed at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/making-it-work>.)
 - The Collaboration Office offers support for language in classrooms. Recently, 40 programs self-reported that they are using Tribal language in classrooms, and this is good news. Ms. Godfrey also noted that she has learned that some Tribal leaders do not understand that OHS supports the use of Tribal languages or that this support is referenced in the Program Performance Standards.
 - OHS also is interested in supporting curriculum development to help AIAN programs.

- *CLASS Monitoring and Reviewers*
 - There will be fewer reviews in FY 2017 to support time to align the system with the new Standards.
 - OHS is working to increase the number of AIAN reviewers. And to participate in the training of reviewers to ensure a better of AIAN programs.

- *AIAN Facilities Assessments*
 - The facilities assessment was sobering, and the PowerPoint slide provides details about concerns due to age and severe weather. To support a response to the seriousness of the concerns, the T/TA Network has two facilities consultants who visit sites to identify issues.
 - The report was sent to the U.S. Congress in June 2016 and includes a statement that it will cost \$69 million to renovate facilities. This funding is not in current budgets. Ms. Majestic noted that she will be following up on the status of the report.

- *Teacher Qualifications*
 - The AIAN Collaboration Office and RXI TA staff are working with Tribal colleges and other institutions of higher education to identify courses for Head Start and Early Head Start teachers. Ms. Majestic stressed the need to hire people who can perform the work and get them on a path to certification. Programs should demonstrate that they are striving to accomplish that. The new HSPPS will help programs.
 - OHS is reviewing suggestions to include language as part of the credentialing process for AIAN Head Start and Early Head Start teachers. OHS plans to strengthen its partnership with the Administration for Children and Families' Administration for Native Americans, which offers language grants. OHS also has a staff member working on these issues.
- *Enhancement of Mental Health Services in RXI*
 - There will be a cohort of five to seven AIAN programs who will participate in a discussion of enhancing mental health services and discovering resources and improving access to mental health services.
 - The planning team includes the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness, RXI TA staff and program specialists, and the cohort of five to seven AIAN programs.

Ms. Godfrey stated that she is aware how important it is for OHS to be responsive. She welcomes comments to help OHS define the work with tribes.