



**Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
Office of Head Start (OHS)**

In-Person Tribal Consultation – Summary Report

**August 15, 2022
Spokane, Washington**

OHS Representatives

- **Tala Hooban**, Deputy Director
- **Heather Wanderski**, Program Operations Division Director
- **Todd Lertjuntharangool**, Regional Program Manager, Region XI American Indian Alaska Native (AIAN)

Greeting and Introductions

Tala Hooban, Deputy Director, welcomed attendees, and expressed her excitement to attend today's Tribal Consultation. Deputy Director Hooban provided some background on herself stating she has worked with tribal home visiting, emergency preparedness, as well as the unaccompanied children program. She also thanked the Northwest Indian Head Start Coalition for providing a platform for tribal leaders to provide testimony to OHS and also thanked the Kalispel tribe for providing this beautiful venue for us to meet.

Heather Wanderski, Program Operations Division Director, welcomed attendees, and expressed her excitement to attend today's in person consultation. Division Director Wanderski stated she is originally from Pennsylvania and spent 18 years at OHS's Chicago Office before transitioning to the Director of Program Operations at OHS.

Todd Lertjuntharangool introduced himself and also introduced Mr. David Kadan, Grants Management Officer for the Office of Grants Management (OGM). Mr. Mike Richardson, National Collaboration Director, and Mrs. Nicole Terry, Technical Assistance Manager, and Ms. Lula Howard, Program Specialist.

Transcript from OHS Informational Overview/Presentation (Handout)

National Overview

Todd Lertjuntharangool:

The Office of Head Start funds early child development programs which serve nearly a million children and their families each year. The majority of programs provide services to three and four-year-old children. We do also have a growing number of programs who are serving infants, toddlers, and pregnant women in Early Head Start programs.

FY2021 Tribal Consultations

The Office of Head Start facilitated three virtual Tribal Consultation sessions. Virtual due to where we were in the pandemic, being in person was a significant challenge. Across those sessions, we heard from tribal leaders and some of the main priority areas that they brought up were around eligibility. A lot of that having to do with the statutory requirements for eligibility for the Head Start program, staffing, concerns around

staffing, which included credentialing and also included staff salaries and budgets. Facilities, we heard from trouble leaders on the need for new facilities to support healthy environments for children and families, and certainly a big priority for culture and language and the inclusion of culture and language in our Tribal Head Start programs.

Program Operations

I wanted to provide a summary of our regional enrollment for the last program year, or school year. From the table on the screen, you can see that between September of 2021 and May of 2022, our enrollment in both Head Start and Early Head Start did fluctuate. Programs stayed between 70% and 80% for the most part. This is a testament to the hard work of our programs and so we certainly want to acknowledge the amazing work they've done in ensuring 7 or 8 out of 10 children in their community who needed service had a service provider to go to. We also can see that enrollment and certainly operations in terms of in-person and virtual service did correlate with when there were increases in cases and new COVID-19 variants that came out.

FY21 Funding Update

In 2022, Office of Head Start tribal programs were awarded a total of \$311 million. That figure included the \$6.3 million increase for COLA and just under \$2 million for quality improvement. One thing that's not listed on here that I do want to also make note of is that the Office of Head Start also did receive a \$2 million increase to support tribal colleges and universities around the country. And so... hopefully we continue to see appropriations for that and increase appropriations to support the workforce for tribal Head Start program.

COVID Appropriations

The next slide is a Snapshot on the COVID specific appropriations that we received. This includes the CARES appropriations that we received in 2020 and the CRRSA and the ARP or American Rescue Plan funding that we received in 2021. With these, our tribal programs received just under \$19 million for CARES, \$6.5 million for CRRSA, and \$26 million for ARP. And then that third column on the right, you're going to see the percentages of the drawdowns or the actual liquidations of those at the national level. So, one thing we are working to do right now is really support programs in making sure they understand how they can utilize those funds to apply them as current needs arise. These particular figures, again, noted by the asterisk are as of May of 2022.

What have we been up to in 2021?

Many of the areas we have focused on over the past year were driven by what we heard in consultations in 2021. This past winter, the Office of Head Start's Region 11 did engage in our annual regional needs assessment. And that assessment for folks who may not be aware is really just a review of ongoing data sets that we collect at a national level. This includes things like tribal consultation's testimony. It includes the program information reports or the PIR that our programs submit. It includes monitoring data, training, and technical assistance data. It also includes our AIAN FACES data collection and also our collab office needs assessment. And what we typically do is we bring together these various data sets and we review those to extract the highest needs and most urgent priorities of our tribal programs around the country. One thing that was unique about what we did this past winter was the first time that we actually had several directors from AIAN programs around the country, participate in discussions with our team internally, and so a big thank you to the National Indian Head Start Directors Association (NIHSDA) for facilitating that and really working to ensure that we implement a more meaningful partnership and make use of how our directors can provide input so that the way we respond to those needs is more accurate and targeted to what our programs are experiencing. That needs assessment did identify priorities for us for the coming year. The three larger

ones were around fiscal, around staffing, and around eligibility and enrollment. We know that we're going to be seeing a lot of resources and time allocated toward those areas in the coming year. I think by mid-August, we're hoping to get out our events booklet, which will cover the calendar, the full calendar year from August through June of 2023. It will cover all the different TA clusters, all the different training events that will be happening around the country that are based from that needs assessment that was completed. So again, big thank you to the NIHSDA Board for their support.

Before I ended, I did want to ensure that I made note of the next OHS tribal consultation session. That virtual session will take place on Wednesday, September 14th.

Meaningful Consultation with Sovereign Nations

Stan Coriz: Santo Domingo Pueblo

It is a privilege to be at this table to be able to speak if at just a minuscule amount of the stuff that we have done within our programs. I am the program coordinator for the Santo Domingo, early childhood learning center. It consists of a Head Start, an early Head Start program. We serve 214 families there in Santa Domingo Pueblo in New Mexico, blessed with a fairly new building. It is 12 years old, but I get constant reminders that it looks like it just got built yesterday. And I have evidence of that. So, on that note, our community has had the Head Start program for over 50 years in Santo Domingo.

The program has elevated out community's connection with one another. We aim to provide a world class quality early childhood program that is embedded in tradition, culture, and the language of Santo Domingo, Pueblo. We promote the wellbeing and safety of all children through health, nutrition, and other services to enroll children and families. So, with that, the Santo Domingo early childhood learning center continues to persevere and provide quality responsive services to the children, families, and community, as we've navigated the last couple of years throughout the pandemic.

During the pandemic, while a stay-at-home order was in effect, our Head Start center was looked at as a hub in the community as our closest city access to food is approximately 30-35 miles away. The Head Start center had semi-trailers parked in the parking lot and we were doing food deliveries, distributions, and taking care of our community. This was accomplished with the support of our Program Specialist, Donald Wyatt.

Our teachers, they're making sure that our buildings are ready to welcome our children back into our facilities. To date, SDCLC currently has close to 50% of employees who have returned to school on a positive note. During the pandemic that helped out some of our teachers, as mentioned 50% is a lot. 13 employees in our program have received Associates of Arts, bachelors and master's degree and all holding onto the dream that they will appropriately and equitably be compensated for those achievements. It is imperative that OHS pay equitable salaries to our teachers, cooks, custodians, bus drivers, and specialized jobs.

The pandemic's impact of displaced families and uncertainty is reason enough for continuity and consistency for our children and families. So, the advocacy and action on this that we are requesting us to allow AIAN Tribes to determine categorical needs and inclusivity, continue to prioritize, but not exclude and not term out our children and families.

The mental health of our staff is a priority to us. We met with our teachers right now and they are stressed about getting their assessments completed, doing the necessary paperwork and getting data uploaded into

ChildPlus. We are brainstorming ways we can help them transition data from Teaching Strategies to ChildPlus.

Meaningful Consultation with Sovereign Nations
James Naranjo of the Santa Clara Pueblo

Good afternoon. James Naranjo, Lieutenant governor from Santa Clara Pueblo. Santa Clara Pueblo, we live maybe 30 miles north of Santa Fe. We live right along the Rio Grande. We have approximately 56,000 acres of beautiful country from 5,000 feet all the way to 10,000 feet. Santa Clara, we're not a wealthy tribe. We do have a small casino and a golf course and a few little gas stations, but we're rich in our culture. We're rich in our language. We're rich in our heritage, but we're really rich in our children and that's what brings us here today is to protect our children and to protect our unborn.

Our Pueblo is surrounded by Hispanic communities. Our children, we took over our own community school up to sixth grade from early childhood to sixth grade now so we can implement our language and implement our ways. But then after sixth grade, our children leave to 10 different middle schools, public schools, private schools. Education has been a challenge across the state of New Mexico.

The state of New Mexico has increased salaries for teachers so now all districts and education programs are fighting over teachers. We cannot compete with Los Alamos and Santa Fe and we lose teachers to those neighboring towns. This is happening across all the workforce in the state including law enforcement and paramedics. We have persevered the last two years and Friday was the first time that we've celebrated our Feast Day, where it was open to our community. We had our traditional dances after two years.

The Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, Attendance (ERSEA) requirements do not take into consideration the general impacts of poverty and how the current eligibility policies frame the exclusion of some Native American children based on their family economic status. Current research of the OHS policy directly include higher quality early childhood education and a stronger indicator for changing the trajectory of minor children and that fall behind academically generation after generation. An important consideration to the living educational gaps is to eliminate the eligibility barriers defined in the family social economic status of American Indian children.

On many of the reservations, there are not institutions higher learning where potential employees can obtain AA or BA in early childhood education. Head Start employees obtain a degree they can seek employment with the local school systems in their early childhood programs for higher paying wages. Due to inequity of funding levels, Tribal Head Start programs are unable to compete with the wages of other schools and the ECE programs and lose staff resulting in vacancies.

In closing, the suggested OHS actions is to create opportunities for grantees to supply the funding for new reservation and construction of facilities, and create a streamlined tribal specific process for facilities, improvements, and renovations. Many times, required for improvement, they are either not applicable or not available due to trust land status of their tribes. Thank you all for listening to me and hearing me.

Josh Sanchez: Deputy Tribal Administrator of the Santa Clara: To follow up I'd like to ask OHS is in regard to the recent webinar on teacher incentive pay. The question is, does OHS have any plans to have regional workshops within the different regions so that Tribal Head Starts can be better trained on how to go about

creating their internal policies? So that way they can have access to be able to use to either the COVID funds or unused grant funds, to be able to facilitate a higher entrance wage for new employees or retention wages for their employees.

Meaningful Consultation with Sovereign Nations

Mary Ellen Fritz, Aleutian Pribilof Island

I'm here on behalf of the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association. Our tribal president is the president of 13 tribes, he's been in leadership for over 40 years. He's an amazing, wonderful, praying, strong leader. He couldn't be here, so he gave me authorization to speak on his behalf, but I'd also like to recognize Bonnie Mierzejek.

Our first issue is tribes should determine eligibility for the Head Start program. Because of the income eligibility disparity that does not reflect the true cost of living in our tribal service areas and the rights of a sovereign nation, we want to determine how to best serve our own people. And we're requesting that the regulations be amended to reflect that tribes will set their own income and eligibility guidelines, kind of what our friends in New Mexico have already shared. Tribes should be afforded annual flexibility for the number of enrolled children each program year, based on the current community needs assessment with existing funding without penalty.

We wanted to make sure that tribes, the language gets taken out about DRS going to happen if tribes are chronically under enrolled. The population fluctuates each year in our tribal service communities, and we want to best determine how to spend our funds and determine the number of children served with our annual existing funding.

Federally approved tribal indirect cost rate should be granted in addition to, and not as part of the Head Start operating cost, and not taking into consideration the 15% administrative cost limitation. It costs a lot of money to operate the Head Start program and we want to make sure that the tribes know and can determine their own administrative costs without penalty. Tribes need increased funding to increase staff wages and benefits to be in parity with local businesses to be in competitive compensation for staff retention and program stability, kind of what was already mentioned by our friends in New Mexico.

Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) hasn't kept up with the cost of living and so our staff are considerably underpaid in Alaska. An entry level position holding signs up for construction, you could make \$30 an hour, or you can be a Head Start teacher for \$19 an hour in Alaska. So, we have really wonderful staff that have stayed with us because they love children, they love Head Start, but we need to pay them what they're worth.

Additionally, COVID has increased the cost of goods and services in Alaska. We have to have everything barged when the weather is good enough for the ships to be able to port or they have to be flown in by plane. And we were doing the annual cost of living grocery survey that we sent to our state of Alaska, and they asked if it was correct. So, we sent them pictures of what it cost to buy those goods and services in rural and remote Alaska. It's unbelievable, it was \$80 for a box of diapers, \$110 for a can of Enfamil. It's incredibly expensive in Alaska.

We should not need to submit waivers for staff qualifications when we can demonstrate staff are making adequate annual progress on their professional development plans. Also, Native language speakers have a

PhD in their Native language, and we should not have to get a waiver because they don't meet Head Start requirements for teachers.

Our other issue is tribes determine the membership of their tribal council and boards of directors. When Head Starts reauthorized, we want the language taken out that lists the requirements for Head Start tribal councils. We don't believe the Office of Head Start or any other entity should determine who sits on a tribal council.

We want tribes to monitor their own assessment of quality of services and be exempt from undergoing federal reviews. We want to submit our own monitoring reports and then have that same trust level that we're administering the right services for our tribes.

Tribes should determine health requirements for their tribal service members and staff. Our tribe believes that each member can determine what is put into their own bodies. We'll receive the recommendations, but they choose what is put into their bodies for vaccines, medications, procedures, and tests. And we thank you for this opportunity to have this consultation.

Meaningful Consultation with Sovereign Nations

Joshua Bagley, Vice Chairman of the Squamish Tribe

Good afternoon. I am Joshua Bagley, the vice chairman of the Suquamish tribe. The Suquamish tribe has spent decades prioritizing our tribal citizens' education from the very youngest to our elders. The tribe operates the Marion Forsman-Boushie Early Learning Center, which was built in 2007. It serves 158 children in 13 classrooms annually. These classrooms include five Early Head Start classrooms, two Head Start classrooms, one Washington State funded early childhood education assistance program classroom, two infant classrooms, and two school age classrooms.

The Suquamish tribe allocates more than \$2 million annually to support the Early Learning Center. The tribe's Early Learning Center is a cornerstone of our community and its role in the lives of Suquamish children and families cannot be overstated. In fact, my three youngest children attended the tribe's Early Learning Center. As a parent, the ELC provided me with the opportunity to participate in my children's cultural education by helping their classrooms learn drum making and go on clam digs, as well as many other things, but the income eligibility requirements for American Indian, Alaskan Native, Early Head Start and Head Start programs excludes many Suquamish children from attendance. Of our 76 Head Start spots, only 46 are Suquamish or other American Indian, Alaskan Natives. The other 30 spots are currently filled by non-Indian children from the reservation and surrounding communities. Only 43% of these students meet the income threshold requirement for Early Head Start and Head Start.

Because of the Head Start income eligibility requirement, the tribe has turned to the Washington State Early Child Education Assistance Program, known as ECAP, to try and meet the needs for the Suquamish families. The ECAP median income eligibility is higher and we are therefore able to serve more Suquamish families. The tribe, however, funds 65% of this classroom's needs with tribal hard dollars, so we are in effect subsidizing our own program. This Suquamish tribe has worked tirelessly over the last half century to provide our tribal citizens through economic development opportunities. We have been successful, and part of our success is providing good paying jobs and benefits to our citizens. This success unfortunately means that some of our own Suquamish children cannot even attend their tribally operated early education

programs due to the federal income eligibility requirements. Because of the Head Start income eligibility requirements, the tribe has been forced to shift childcare development funding to provide in-home care for the Suquamish families who are over income.

This includes families whose parents work for the tribe and tribal enterprises. This is not ideal because it relies on family members providing in-home care, which is less stable childcare option for working families. The fact that the tribe must subsidize state and federal funding and establish a new in-home care programs because our families are over income and cannot attend Suquamish operated Head Start programs is unacceptable and a breach of the United States trust responsibility. The United States promised free education to the Suquamish tribe when we signed The Treaty of Point Elliott. The United States has failed to deliver on those promises. The success of our tribal members cannot and should not negate the United States' trust responsibility.

It is critical that our Indian children benefit from culturally relevant early childhood education and services. The Suquamish tribe urges Secretary Becerra to change the eligibility enrollment for tribally operated Head Start programs so that all American Indian and Alaska Native children are eligible to attend tribally operated Head Start programs without income requirements. Tribally operated programs like Suquamish Tribes Program provide culturally relevant lessons and activities and also provides tribally centered community for our youth. As I said before, at our Early Learning Center, children learn our language and have the opportunity to learn drum making and go on clam digs. These cultural activities are not offered at other local Early Learning Centers or other Head Start programs. It is so important that our children are positively exposed to education early in their lives, and that it is culturally centered early education.

So again, the Suquamish tribe asks the United States fulfill its trust responsibility and that Secretary Becerra change section 6645D.2 of the Head Start Act to provide that all American Indian and Alaskan Native children are categorically eligible for Head Start programs. The Suquamish tribe will submit a written comment to Health and Human Services on this issue.

Meaningful Consultation with Sovereign Nations

Sam Perry, Chairman of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee of the Nez Peerce Tribe

My name is Sam Penny, I'm Chairman of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee, which is the governing body of Nez Perce Tribe. We're located about two hours south of here, a little over a hundred miles and you'll come to the Nez Perce reservation. For the Nez Perce Tribe, as mentioned from the previous speakers we have a treaty of 1855 and within that treaty, it talked about the over 13.2 million acres that the Nez Perce Tribe utilized throughout that area. So, some of the things that we've been doing over the last couple years, because of the COVID we've had several meetings and consultations with various federal officials all by Zoom over the last couple years. But during those meetings with other tribal leaders, including myself, we always have to remind the federal government about not only the federal trust responsibility, but the memorandum for the heads of executive departments regarding tribal consultation and strengthening government relationships.

The tribal consultation strengthening nation relationship American Indian, Alaska Native Tribal Nations are sovereign governments recognized under the Constitution of the United States, treaty statutes, executive orders and court decision. It is the priority of my administration to make respect for tribal sovereignty and

self-governance committing to fulfilling federal trust and treaty responsibilities to tribal nations, and regular, meaningful, and robust consultation with tribal nations' cornerstones of federal Indian policy.

A paragraph further down says to this end executive order 13175 of November 6th, 2000, charges all executive departments and agencies with engaging in regular, meaningful, and robust consultation with tribal officials in the development of federal policies that have tribal implications. And I think from the comments you heard, what we're talking about certainly has tribal implications for the Nez Perce tribe. As far as COVID, we were closed from end of March 2020 to July 2020, when Early Head Start reopened. Head Start began in September of 2020 due to the pandemic. Classrooms were closed as necessary; this was due to exposures and staff and or children testing positive. Our program for the past two years has worked closely with Tribal Health, which is our clinic, the Nimiipuu Health and local school districts. Our Nimiipuu Health provided guidance and we work closely with contract tracers.

The Nez Perce tribe appreciates the Office of Head Start recognizing wage and staffing challenges that programs experience nationwide, especially for those programs in Native rural communities. At this point in time, many tribal programs, schools, local businesses are competing for workers. Being able to provide appropriate competitive wages and benefits is vital to the success of our program. And then on eligibility criteria, according to the Head Start performance standards, an Indian tribe means any tribe, band, nation, pueblo, or other organized group or community of Indians, including any Native village described in Section 3C of Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act or established to such an act that is recognized as eligible for specialist programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.

The Nez Perce Tribe appreciates allowance for Indian tribes to enroll to more than 10% of its enrollment with participants whose family incomes exceed the low-income guidelines who are not categorically eligible. However, the allowance still excludes families and children who did not meet income eligibility requirements, despite being eligible for special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians. As a result, not all tribal families and children are able to benefit from our Head Start program and our deprived of our unique array of comprehensive services that provide support and early intervention. Equally important that tribal families and children that do not have the opportunity to receive services through Head Start miss out on services that are vital to tribal efforts to preserve Native language and culture.

Today we have our Head Start director with us, Jenny Oman, and she handed me a note about current eligibility requirements for tribal American Indian, Alaska Native programs are 51% income eligible, foster care, homeless, public assistance, TANF, SSI, SNAP, which was just added then 49% over income. For non-tribal programs, 90% income eligible, foster care, homeless, public assistance, TANF, SSI, and SNAP, 10% over income. Also allowed, 30% of enrollment can be 100% to 130% of poverty guidelines. Of course, on facilities, many American Indians, Alaska Native Head Start programs operate out of the oldest buildings on their reservations. Lack of adequate physical pH facilities hinders the ability of these programs to meet the very specific health and safety needs of young children. Without the necessary physical infrastructure, programs struggle to furnish the foundation of success for American Indian, Alaska Native Head Start.

Meaningful Consultation with Sovereign Nations

Deanie Smith, Head Start Director for the Confederate Tribes of Warm Springs.

My name is Deanie Smith. I am the Head Start director for the Confederate tribes of Warm Springs and I'm also fairly new. January was a year for me. It's been a challenge, to say the least, to learn and to help move our program forward. I agree with everything that people have been talking about, the things that our tribe is finding challenging are a lot of the similar things that people had talked about. I also believe that the COVID pandemic was really detrimental to our tribe and to everything about our program as far as the number of children, as far as classrooms, qualified staff. Rather than repeating everything that everybody said, I'd like to add to and the one thing that I wanted to talk about was the Confederate tribes and their tribal sovereignty.

Tribal sovereignty is a relationship, is based on a relationship between the United States government and tribal tribes. And so I really wanted to focus on that and that relationship for us is not good. So, we've been struggling in a lot of areas in our relationship with the federal government and trying to figure things out and move through this new era. I believe that there's a lot of support that our tribe could use, and I believe that as a Head Start person that you represent the United States government and I feel that the relationship seems to be lopsided sometimes and that we're always having a lot of restrictions, and everything placed upon us in our programs. If you understand treaty, treaty and education was written into our treaty. Education is something that we have as a privilege, or you would say a treaty obligation.

In our treaty, it was written that there was going to be a schoolhouse and a teacher provided on our reservation to serve our kids and to serve our people, to improve our quality of life. And so when we see those words and they're written into the treaty, those things are really, really hard to visualize right now in our situation and the way that things are for us on the reservation and our communities, our education. We struggle and it's hard to see these things going by without the importance and the criticalness of improving our lives, our lives on the reservations. We do struggle like everybody else. And so when I think about the treaty and the trust responsibility of education being placed in our treaties, we also have, through that process of providing education, if you understand the process of assimilation, assimilation and how they treated us and how they wanted us to improve our life by education.

I feel that we need things like the Native American Language Act. That's still an act that is good. Why aren't we utilizing that? And why aren't we enforcing that throughout our education? The act says that you have to teach in their native language. You have to provide them with culturally relevant curriculum. You have to do these things in their native language, in their culture. So, it's a start to putting things back that were just taken. And so in closing, I'd just like to say education has never been pleasant for native people and we struggle. How do we make it pleasant? I've served on the education committee. I've served throughout our community, and we struggle to get past that second level of belonging and being loved and being accepted. How do we know that we matter? How do we know that we're loved? How do we know these things? Because it's not always shown in these relationships. So that's why I say our relationship with the federal government, we're hurting and we're struggling, but those are some of the things that I just wanted to highlight.

Meaningful Consultation with Sovereign Nations

Dean Swan, Tribal Council Member for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe

My name is Carol Dean Swan. I'm a tribal council member for the Coeur d'Alene tribe, also a tribal council representative for our early childhood learning center, Head Start. The Coeur d'Alene Tribe Early Childhood

Learning Center (ECLC) houses all early childhood programs for the Coeur d'Alene tribe. ECLC provides comprehensive services in areas of education, disabilities, mental health, health, nutrition, and family services to over 102 qualified children, ages six weeks to five years old, and their families. I actually echoing. I'm rather new to the tribal council as well as to a member of the point policy council. I wish my director was here with me today, but just going over just a little briefly, I do echo a lot of what tribal leaders are saying here today. We are experiencing basically the same issues with staffing, funding, language, cultural revitalization as many are experiencing. Teachers are feeling unappreciated, underpaid, and understaffed. We had quite a few losses of teachers following the pandemic, more so with the vaccine mandates that our tribe required. Several just didn't feel that it was in their area to get the vaccine.

We appreciate the funding that we get, but we also are still facing lack of funding for staffing salaries. The tribe had actually got creative with a lot of our dollars and increased staff minimum wage to \$15, revisited their incentives to try to increase those incentives to get more staff. But we still share the same common issue of staffing. Also, too, with Coeur d'Alene is income requirements, income eligibility. A lot of our own tribal members are not able to access the center just because of income eligibility requirements. Our facility is really new. It's actually not under about around 10 years old, but it's also, our population has grown. Our facility is smaller now and so we had to actually get creative with our space, put our students into our gymnasium area, create classrooms in different areas. And so that's been quite a challenge in itself. As many experiences, the cost of goods and services have increased, making it challenging as well just for kitchens, kitchen, food, to nutrition. And so those are some of the things that I'm bringing forth and I appreciate your time and I thank you for the consideration of hearing us out.

Meaningful Consultation with Sovereign Nations

Cheryl Fryberg, Director of the Betty J. Taylor Early Learning Academy, Tulalip Tribes

My name is Cheryl Fryberg. My Indian name is Swiated. I represent the Tulalip tribes as the Director of the Betty J. Taylor Early Learning Academy that serves children ages birth to five. Currently, we have 265 slots that serve ECAP early Head Start childcare in Montessori. The Tulalip tribes are a federally recognized tribe and the Tulalip reservation is located at the mouth of the Snohomish River, just north of Everett. At the present moment, we have a growing population of tribal members with approximately 5,200 members. We are here to advocate for our tribal early learners. The National Indian Head Start Director's Association (NIHSDA) put out a policy brief outlining categorical eligibility for tribal Head Start programs. Tulalip tribes is in support of advocating for categorical eligibility of American Indian Alaskan native children to attend tribally operated Head Start, Early Head Start programs.

Many AIAN programs struggle to serve their own tribal members due to outdated eligibility requirements and it is crucial to support NIHSDA in ensuring that all AIAN children are able to benefit from a culturally relevant early childhood education. Education is a federal trust and treaty responsibility, and equitable policy changes are needed now more than ever. We believe that our children deserve a healthy, supportive, and culturally relevant educational experience. They deserve to have curriculum and quality materials that reflect who they are and provide a sense of self identity.

Programs that are funded in part are wholly funded with federal dollars, should be brought out to the tribes with more flexibility, as I've heard other leaders hear say. The tribes that have treaties say that they will be granted an education and we have seen the outcomes of the existing industrial education that our children are

provided. We already know that that doesn't work, but we also know that Head Start has 50 years of experience with early learners and their reports say that if your child gets to go to Head Start, they're better in K-12, they're better in college, they're better in career, and in life. Our native children should have that opportunity. They should be able to be automatically, I don't like the word categorical, they should be automatically eligible for our Head Start or any of our federal education programs

Meaningful Consultation with Sovereign Nations

Tonya Garnett, Vice President of the Fairbanks Native Association Board

My name is Tonya Garnett. I'm the Vice President of the Fairbanks Native Association (FNA) Board. I've been serving on this board, on the board of FNA, for four years now. During the last four years, I've had the privilege to really dig into the Head Start program and supporting the goals, the overall goals and the school readiness and the objectives of our program. As tribal leaders, we're grateful for the opportunity to take part in this consultation.

We are hopeful that, as tribes provide the feedback and the comments here today on our concerns working with the American Indian Alaska Native programs and identifying areas of concerns, that the Office of Head Start will take action to ensure positive outcomes from our concerns, so that our concerns are heard and acted upon and that we feel that this consultation is done in a meaningful way and basically just that we're heard and that our concerns are addressed or, at least, feedback given.

I want to state that we still firmly support our past remarks on the HHS poverty guidelines that are used to determine income eligibility for participation in Head Start and early Head Start programs. Based on OHS priorities and the statement that equity is at the core of the Head Start's principles and philosophies with a fundamental belief that all children, families, and communities, including those who have been adversely affected by persistent poverty, racism, and bias should have the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential. It is important to recognize that the current guidelines do not work for Alaskan families, as they do not consider appropriately the high cost of living for Alaska residents, related to housing, food, and heating fuel.

Many families do not qualify, based on the current guidelines. Yet they live in poverty, unable to afford basic needs, such as safe and healthy housing and nutritious foods. We would ask again that OHS works collaboratively with Alaskan programs to create poverty guidelines that address the cost of living in Alaska, ensuring that children in need are able to access Head Start and receive services that promote healthy families and successful learning and development for young children. In regard to COVID, I want to start by thanking the OHS for the additional funding and flexibility that has been given, as we all work to respond to children and family's needs, while at the same time, ensuring our Head Start employees were safe and healthy.

Returning to regular routines for staff and families, following remote services, has been a slow process. We continue to work with families who find it worrisome to complete medical visits that allow children to get vaccinated or keep up on well child checks and immunizations. The impact of COVID-19 on Head Start families we serve are, parents and family members trying to return to work, or school are finding it difficult, with a number of businesses that are closed during the pandemic and lack of public transportation to get to school and work for themselves and their children.

We would recommend that OHS continue to offer funding opportunities with the unspent funds to ensure high quality facilities for Head Start children and families in Alaska, along with continuing to work to improve wages for Head Start teachers, to ensure stability in the workforce, and ensure classrooms can open and children in need can be served. I really hope that we are heard and that we receive updates and our feedback on our concerns. Some new and some have been the same, such as the income and the high cost of living.

We want to set them up for success and not failure. And so, it's so important to our communities, and especially in uncertain times that we've faced in the last several years with the pandemic. I really feel that we should build on our strengths and their positive parts of our community, such as the Head Start program.

Meaningful Consultation with Sovereign Nations **Silver Little Eagle, Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council**

My name is Silver Little Eagle. I represent the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council. I'm also the liaison for the Head Start. I ask for this time and space to address our needs. I'd like to start with my community's specific needs. Number one, we'd like consideration to waive the in-kind cost that is required by our program. The Northern Cheyenne Tribe asks that the non-federal match be waived altogether. Annual non-federal match for our tribe is \$350,000. We are in a small rural community, and we don't have the profit that other tribes make to assist Head Start programs. With under enrollment, we had to close one of our Head Start centers, who was one of the centers that contributed the non-federal match.

If we had to pay back, this would be financially devastating. And also, on the topic of under enrollment, I'd like to emphasize the impact that COVID has had on our Head Start program and still has. Because of the trauma, families in our communities are still wary of sending their kids to Head Start. Our center received \$187,000 of COVID funding, which wasn't enough to do what we wish we could have done, which was purchase dividers and social distancing measures for our classrooms. Instead, we utilized the money for masks and other preventative measures. So, a question that we have is, is there another round of funding that's going to be available?

Another issue is transportation. Our reservation is approximately 500,000 acres, when five communities within our reservation. Most youth that attend Head Start travel the 20, 30 miles to our in-town Head Start centers. It's strenuous on the Head Start transportation staff to pick up those who live in our most rural areas of the res. It's also strenuous on our program because individuals need CDLs to operate the Head Start buses. And once the individuals get their CDLs, it's very difficult to have the CDL bus drivers stay at Head Start. Because there's other entities and programs who pay much higher for those who have CDLs.

We're asking for consideration for waivers, regarding Head Start transportation, to have the ability to work with local, federal, tribal, and private schools to help transport our children. This is a difficult process for us, due to the liability. Our Head Start buses are required to have the harness. We ask for a waiver to work with the school system to do without the harness, while at the same time, protecting our children. And the third issue is, which I've heard around table, is the need for funding increases. I'd like to emphasize the importance of increased funding for our tribal centers. Currently, the funding received isn't enough to assure that our youth are receiving quality services. Our teachers aren't paid enough. They're not receiving the adequate wage that they should be receiving for what is required of them, which is an associate's or bachelor's degree.

We also requesting funding for mental health resources. Head Start is a place of safety for our children. So it's important that our children are in a safe place to grow and learn, especially those who already experience the firsthand trauma at home. We'd also like to see funding for language and culture and structures to revitalize our Cheyenne language. We lost 30 fluent speakers to COVID. So that puts us around 200 speakers, and they're mostly elders. So, I think that is our most urgent problem and a problem that is easily fixable, if we can structure this language and culture program. Those are the concerns that I have from our Head Start program. I'm grateful that we're all here advocating for our future leaders. And I like to keep that in mind when I go places, that this is all for those that are in Head Start, those future leaders. We have the tools now to make a better pathway for them. And that starts here.

Meaningful Consultation with Sovereign Nations

Boots Pond, Board of Trustee at Large for Tribes of The Umatilla Indian Reservation

My name's Boots Pond. I am a Board of Trustees member at large for The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), located in Mission, Oregon, just outside of Pendleton, Oregon. So the CTUIR consists of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla tribes. Now myself, I'm in my second term. And this term, I was delegated to be the Chair of Education and Training Committee, as well as the Board Delegate for the Head Start Policy Council.

So, these are the concerns that our tribe has. One, pay for our Head Start staff. The recent webinar from the ACF, the Admin for Children and Families, stated that the national average for teacher pay is over \$68,000. While we appreciate our grant, we believe that competitive pay for all of our staff is necessary, in order to remain competitive with nonprofits, school districts, and other early learning for profit providers. To remain competitive, higher salaries also includes bonuses, retention, and signing bonuses. Also, private schools are coming into play too, and that's going to be something that's going to be in the near future.

Our concern is that two years ago, we were over income in our enrollment by about 63%. This was due to a couple of factors, but we feel that all of our tribal children and their family should be considered eligible, regardless of their incomes. Or it would be possible to raise the income eligibility threshold to a higher percentage for tribal communities. The COVID-19 pandemic, that began, not last year it says, but 2020 caused us to have low enrollment. Parents could not send their children to our program in accordance with tribal closures, etc. We canceled classes in the last school year from September 2021 to March 2022. We finished a year with 31 students. We feel they did well, but we are all learning to teach by distance and families were adapting.

We look forward to continuing our important work together with the OHS for the successes of our enrollees and their families for this year and in the classes in the future. Before I end, just want to state that I've attended a lot of graduations since I returned back home in Oregon from Michigan. A lot of them, those kids, year by year, it seems that it's difficult for them to remain seated, to remain focused. It is something that we're going to be facing in the near future. We just need to prepare the best way we can. I hope that this consultation can be a starting point for all that. And again, thank you all

OHS Remarks and Responses to Testimonies given

Tala Hooban: Thank you to everyone for the testimony and taking the time out to be here. We really appreciate it, and we really liked hearing from you all. It wasn't easy, but it's really, really helpful to hear it.

Regarding eligibility, we heard everyone pretty loud and clear. I've only been here since March, and I've heard you mention it in other tribal consultations. Just so you know, the Office of Head Start has submitted a proposal to see if we can allow tribal children to go to tribal Head Start, regardless of income. I don't know how that's going to work and if it's going to pass. This is only a proposal, so I cannot speak to whether it is something that may come to fruition.

Heather Wanderski: I think what MaryEllen said is it's very important for us to be able to hear this testimony and understand that. I think what Tala sharing is that we hear you, we are advocating for you on the inside, but there's only so much we can do when it's around the legislation itself. As you have an opportunity to engage with your Congressional leadership, that would be really impactful and powerful to have both ends working together to try to get this.

I hear very clearly that it is a desperate need in your tribal programs, and it would be an amazing thing for our children and families. Again, I think we want to make sure not to overstate. It is a big thing for us to be able to say that we are able to submit a proposal, but it's not a guarantee. Nothing's a guarantee until we finally see it in writing. But do know that we are advocating for that piece because we absolutely see that, and we've heard you very clearly on that piece.

Todd Lertjuntharangool: I do want to just also acknowledge we have a lot of Head Start directors in the room. I know that the Head Start program is a very tough program to run. It's a very tough grant to administer, and the fact that eligibility has been a hot topic for these last few years consistently from tribal leaders, I think, speaks to something that I'm very proud of is that you all feel like Head Start is that program you want serving your children and your families. That makes me very proud, and I think that's a testament to the amazing work our directors do. Again, it's a very tough program to run, but kudos to all of you around the country who have worked so hard to make Head Start that program. Thank you.

Tala Hooban: Another thing is wages, salaries and staffing. It's a nationwide problem. I know that's not helpful to hear. But also know that we also have a proposal to get extra funding, to make the teachers and make Head Start staff at a pay parity, make them equal pay to early childhood educators. So hopefully that'll help with keeping folks employed with your tribes. I think it's really important, and we're trying really hard to push that one. That one was an aggressive, aggressive ask, a lot of money. So again, I don't know if that will pass either, but we requested both of those things this year.

Heather Wanderski: I just wanted to say, the reason why we moved forward with asking for additional funding for staff wages was because we know, and we watch, and we see what's happening in Congress. We had hoped that we would see an increase in Head Start staff wages through the Build Back Better a proposal that was out there. But it sounds to me based on what I'm reading and hearing on the reconciliation that's happening in Congress, that it doesn't include any funding for early childhood education.

That said, we understood that that was going to be a potential issue. So again, in the same vein as the eligibility piece, wanting to still move forward with putting a proposal out to Congress, separate and outside of that, to say we really do need to see additional funding in our budget for increases to staff wages. But again, I think that's us working internally. If there's any way that you can help on the back end with your Congressional representatives to, again, reemphasize and support that would help tremendously too. I think

we saw that it was not going to work through what we had hoped. So, we took a different avenue by which to advocate in that behalf.

Tala Hooban: We don't know the timeline of when, hopefully, that's going to pass. In the meantime, what can you do to retain staff? It's the incentives, it's the bonus pay, it's the things you heard about in that webinar that - I don't remember when we had it - to keep it going, to put the Band-Aid, as you would say, on it, until we have extra wages, because right now, we don't have any extra money to provide.

Heather Wanderski: I'm hearing clearly, particularly from our Alaska tribes, but also, I think generally, and I think you had made mention of negotiating an increased cost per child, just because of the cost of operations and that the cost-of-living adjustments are not meeting the needs of what was required, not only for just ongoing operations, but very clearly the wages. In light of at this moment, if we don't have any funding for staff wages, and right now it's a hope, and we're pushing for it internally, but if it doesn't come to fruition, we want to make sure that we are talking with you all about what you can do within your existing budgets.

I know that it conflicts with what I'm hearing you say is a need, but I do want to make note that you could look to re-negotiate or talk to us about what your budgets. There may be an opportunity to reduce your funded enrollment in order to use that cost savings to support an increase in staff salaries for your Head Start program staff and also cover what I hear are significant increased costs in your ongoing operations and your budget.

I want to open up that door. I know it's not the best option. I know the last thing you want to do is take away another potential opportunity. But if that is really where we need to have some conversation, we welcome, and we want you to be open to exploring that as a possibility, because we do have the ability, within the Head Start Act and within our regulations. To be able to do that. It is another option that is out there. But I want to put that out there, because like I said, I know it's not a favorite option. The preferred option, obviously, would be to increase staff salaries, but through increased funding from Congress. But if that doesn't happen, that's another possibility for our programs.

Todd Lertjuntharangoon: I'll say, we know that's not the preferred option, and we know that it's not necessarily applicable to every grant recipient and to every program around the country. But we certainly know that it has been applicable to some. We've had some success with some programs in terms of really reviewing their community eligibility and proposing a different scope for their program that allows them to reallocate funding and really focus on some of those staff salary increases. Where it is applicable, it's an effective option. It results in tangible changes for those employees and those staff. I'll give an example, Typical Head Start classroom, you're talking between salary, fringe, supplies, utilities, you're pushing over a hundred thousand dollars operation cost for one Head Start classroom.

We have worked with those programs where, even prior to the pandemic, they were unenrolled, and when they really reviewed their community assessment data, that same number of eligible children and families wasn't there. What they did and, in some cases, it worked out well, because they already had two vacancies for that classroom. What they did is they just didn't fill those vacancies, and they took that salary and that cost of operation for that one classroom and really reallocated that across their remaining program.

There are a lot of different ways we can really view that. There are a lot of different ideas we can talk about around program design. Sometimes, too, it's reallocating slots from one classroom into the other classrooms and finding a way that we can, again, a real tangible way for us to reallocate those dollars and apply them to the other existing staff that are there.

We know that the cost of living and that increase, especially over the last two years, has been so rapid. It's really difficult to keep that up. But also at the same time, we want to make sure that our programs are always thinking about those ways to maintain what is most important and that operation for the eligible population that is there. Again, that's not an applicable option for every program, but certainly for some of our programs, it has been, and we've had some really good dialogue and some really good outcomes by exploring that.

Tala Hooban: One of the questions we got is will we get more money for COVID? That's not something that's on our radar. I don't know what's in queue in Congress regarding COVID relief, but you can ask for one-time funds for health and safety. That would also include facility asks. Asbestos is not something we want in the school that we're teaching our Head Start kids or any, really, kids. So, anything that you need from that, that's one of the ways we can get around it for now. But then just continue working with the regional office about how to fill out the 1303's too for facility requests.

Heather Wanderski: I would say and encourage programs that there's not a limitation. Certainly, if you have a need, whether it be for, health and safety needs. But I include facilities in that. I include additional supports for social distancing. I know somebody mentioned dividers in classrooms, supports to social, additional increases that weren't covered by their COVID funds that they received. So, if there's still a need for additional funding to be able to support that, and those are really one-time needs, it's not ongoing, then I think that program should feel encouraged to apply.

The application is not a guarantee of funding, because there's not a pot of funding or allocation from Congress that specifically allows us to address these needs. What it is that our ability, if there's another program out there who didn't spend all their funds, we're able to re-capture those and re-purpose them to other programs. That gives us an ability, and we generally are able to support a lot of the requests that come in, and we do prioritize them. But certainly, if there is a long-term facility need, and we know that a facility is aging out, and it's 40 years old, and it's reached its lifetime, and you are supporting it, and you're saying, we've got an opportunity here by which we can build a new facility," we are encouraging you to apply for that. We want to see that because we know that facilities are continuing.

It's not just for our tribal programs. That's national, and I want to say that I think that just given the age of our Head Start program, you can imagine that a lot of our facilities are significantly aged out, and we're seeing a big increase. It probably means that the better outcome would be to invest in a new facility and is probably more, at some points, more cost-effective at this point to invest than it would be to continue to operate in a facility that is just not going to last much longer.

Todd Lertjuntharangool: I will say and acknowledge that certainly the pandemic has made every facility project a lot more challenging. We know that those bids are not lasting as long. We know that the cost of materials, the actual construction or work, major renovation, is basically climbing while the project is being done. These have added significantly to the challenges that come with the facility projects.

Lieutenant Governor, I believe it was you that talked about a 1303 or facility project specific to Region XI. We don't have one specific to Region XI, but we have been able to support several programs with facility projects. And what we have learned is that every one of our AIAN programs is different in terms of the sources we go to for certain information and documentation. So what's important to us really is just to make sure that if that facility need does come up, that that conversation happens with the appropriate parties, both from the tribe and from the Office of Head Start so we can at least lay forth a plan that is going to give us the shortest route to potentially getting an application in and up for consideration that could potentially be approved to begin a project.

Heather Wanderski: You talked about the increasing costs. I know that that is problematic right now with the rise in cost, but I don't want that to discourage a program from applying. If at the time of your application, you submit, and you have a solid budget, because it's based on estimates. You don't know until you actually go out to bid what it's going to come in at in those projects.

But if we agree and approve for a facility application, we know we are making an investment already. And if there are increased costs, certainly we have provided additional funding to programs who need it because the original budget, as time goes on, as it takes a long time to get the contractors that you need in order to do the work, by the time you get them, all the costs have increased for the materials, the supplies, everything that you need to fulfill that that we have seen programs come in and say, "The project has stayed the same. The costs have increased." Explaining that, we've been able to secure additional funding for those initial investments that we intended to back.

So absolutely, I don't want that to be a discouragement to any program, to think that I would start this and that I would have an unfinished building or something to that effect, because once we've made an investment, we certainly don't want to have a half-finished product out there. We certainly want to be able to support that. Know that that we can support that as well.

Tala Hooban: Just a couple of people asked about waivers, waivers specifically to transportation and the safety features when partnering with public schools. That is something that you can actually request. I don't know if you all knew about that.

Question: *With the harnesses, do we have to provide the harnesses to get put in? Do we have to pay for them? Are they required on that public school's bus?*

Heather Wanderski: No, we have a waiver authority for that. You would just have to apply for a waiver specific to that requirement and the performance standard. Yeah, we have one for the safety harnesses. We also have a waiver for the bus monitor requirement as well.

Tala Hooban: Waiving the non-federal match. I know a couple of you asked about that. Right now, with the pandemic flexibilities, you can input \$0 in your SF-424. It's only good right now until the public health emergency expires, which is due to do so on October 13, 2022.

David Kadan: One thing I wanted to remind everyone, we're quite liberal with waivers. Even after the flexibilities are over, if you request a waiver, we evaluate it, and I have not disapproved a non-federal share waiver. I don't recall disapproving a non-federal share waiver. You must request it though. We can't be magicians and just issue a waiver. And not only request a waiver when your auditors are there awaiting

confirmation whether or not you have the waiver. We are quite flexible. We approve waivers, understanding that the resources are not quite there anymore.

Tala Hooban: One of the things we talked about, but I failed to say in my opening, is just how hard COVID hit pretty much everybody. I know people talked about coming back to normal, but I think now it's a new normal, versus normal, what normal was to us pre two years ago. One of the things you all mentioned is mental health supports, and we understand that. Actually, one of the things we're looking at too, is providing more mental health supports for our teachers. That's kind of a long-term project, and so it should hopefully stay one of our priorities in Head Start. We're also working with Indian Health Service on everything health related. And so that will be one of the topics that we discuss with them. It's a partnership. The first thing they're starting with is a partner to talk about vaccine availability in September for the under-five, but Todd can probably speak to this much nicer.

Todd Lertjuntharangool: We did have some brief dialogues with the Indian Health Service about that. They're fully aware too, of the need for that resource. We are starting off really focused on just that initial rollout for the vaccine for the children under five. And we're hoping to do a town hall or webinar September together, but from there, we're going to be really trying to, hopefully, tackle all these other health related challenges and needs that our program is experiencing. I'm hoping that we can coordinate a little bit better and really target some of our effort and our work to create some more tangible outcomes and resources and provide those supports for our programs.

Tala Hooban: We heard a few of you say something about tribal research, and how more research is needed. It's something we definitely agree on, and it's something we're going to take back and see how we can work on in the future. Related to that, with monitoring, there is going to be an AIAN pilot for class. I'll let Heather or Todd speak to this one more, because it's really exciting.

Todd Lertjuntharangool: We heard some folks here talk about it today, also, in terms of the need for AIAN observers to be able to implement that tool for the purpose of monitoring. One thing that we did, and these were our plans prior to the pandemic, I mean, we've done our best to carry them on through the pandemic is to explore other options for how we implement class in AIAN.

We did do a lot of announcements to try to recruit observers from AIAN communities, and that really didn't result in the type of outcomes that we had hoped. We went a step further and said, "Why don't we just provide the training to AIAN staff, and get AIAN staff certified, and have it so that one, they could potentially serve as those observers, and also that there's a potential option for maybe them doing their own class observations for their own programs and submitting those scores for the purpose of monitoring."

So, about the past two years, we've been implementing that pilot. I think we're on about our third cohort now. In the last cohort, we did train them on the way our monitoring system does those observations. We had that cohort implement that and do their observations and submit them. They weren't for the purpose of monitoring because we weren't utilizing CLASS last year at monitoring, but it gave them that chance to really, put that skill set to the test and do it in a way that where we monitor.

We've seen some great outcomes from that. We got great feedback, the programs that participated really enjoyed it. Additionally, as folks mentioned, it became a great resource for them, for their professional development, because those CLASS reliable staff became a great resource that they could use to do those regular observations that support their staff. We're hoping to see multiple ways that this benefits programs.

Again, and we're hoping that's something that can continue. It is something that we've done, that tangible action we've taken to try to be responsive to what we've heard from tribal leaders in the past.

I'll add quickly, some of you might remember, I think it was 2021. It might have been 2020, when we did that one AIAN expansion, opportunities specifically for AIAN programs for zero to five. And that was in the neighborhood of a little over \$14 million. I think it was \$14.4 million that had been recaptured in past years. We only awarded about \$7 million of that. We knew we had another \$7 million that we had to go back out for. But the reason we couldn't do it last year is because... Some of you may remember that we received our final appropriation late in the fiscal year, and we rely on that so that we know of all the competitions we have to run. So we wait on that appropriation so that we know how many competitions we have to do, and we try to coordinate them all.

Unfortunately, that appropriation came so late in the year that it was too late to run a competitive process, really for anything within Head Start. We're hoping to do that this fall and this winter, to take that approximately \$7 million that was left over, plus a few other programs that have since relinquished or are no longer grant recipients and put that pot back out for competition. I know we said it last year, too, that we were hoping to do it last fall and last winter, but the reason we couldn't do it because our appropriation just came so late in the fiscal year.

Lieutenant Governor James Naranjo: I have one comment for Santa Clara. And I know it's hard for you all to advocate, but we can, and we need your support. And when we have these issues, and our priorities, we can give to Congress, and we can advocate on these issues. When Congress comes to you, that's all we ask is, yes, this is the support that these tribes need. And that's what I want to express because Governor Chavarria is very vocal in Washington. So is Governor Moquino and his staff, and all the Pueblos, the 19 Pueblos of New Mexico, we're here to support. And the more leadership we have advocating on our priorities with your support, I think, a lot of these things can be accomplished together. Thank you.

Todd Lertjuntharango: Lieutenant Governor, please do give my best to Governor Chavarria. I've enjoyed a great relationship with him over the years, and he's certainly somebody who has always supported Head Start. He's also somebody who really understands, I think, the bureaucracies of government-to-government, and also some of the limitations of both sides. So, I appreciate that type of relationship, that type of understanding, and that type of commitment. So please give him my best when you get back to New Mexico.

One thing that I encourage all our tribal leaders, all of our Head Start directors around is, when you see opportunities for those partnerships and collaborations with other ACF programs, what I would do is get on the phone with office of Head Start, get on the phone with that other program office and say, "I'd like to set up a meeting with everybody together, and let's talk about how we make this work, and how we can really maximize the benefit of all these programs and all these funding streams.

I really wish we would see that more. I always encourage our programs to do that, especially with other ECE programs, childcare, home visiting, to get everybody on the phone together so we can talk about it. On the federal side, that willingness to partnership and collaborate is there. So that's what I'll say is on the federal side, we can get our staff together to really facilitate a dialogue that will find the best route to get through that, and benefit everybody who is falls under those funding streams.

Closing

In closing remarks, Mr. Lertjuntharangool, Mrs. Wanderski and Mrs. Hooban reminded everyone of the September 14th Virtual Tribal Consultation. This will be the last Tribal Consultation of the year. Mr. Lertjuntharangool shared that OHS will provide a formal written response on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center website. He thanked everyone once again for their participation and their testimonies and closed the meeting.