

**OFFICE OF HEAD START
TRIBAL CONSULTATION
REPORT**

**August 7, 2017
Spokane, Washington**

Presented by

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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 2017, the Office of Head Start (OHS) planned two Tribal Consultation sessions for the purpose of better meeting the needs of American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) children and families. There also will be an October 2017 consultation scheduled in Alaska, as well as a November 2017 consultation on Head Start concerns as part of the broader Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Tribal Grantee Consultation in Washington, DC. 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 2017 schedule follows:

March 14, 2017	Albuquerque, New Mexico
August 7, 2017	Airway Heights, Washington
October 2017 (exact date to be announced)	Alaska
November 2017 (exact date to be announced)	Washington, DC

By Notice in the *Federal Register* dated February 10, 2017, OHS notified RXI AIAN leaders of a Tribal Consultation for Tribes in RXI on August 7, 2017, in Airway Heights, Washington.¹ This meeting was held in conjunction with the Northwest Indian Head Start Coalition's 27th Annual Conference. The following report reflects introductory remarks by OHS followed by testimony and recommendations of RXI AIAN leaders and representatives. (Each Tribal Consultation listed above will have a separate report.)

Introductory Remarks

Ms. Angie Godfrey, RXI AIAN Regional Program Manager, opened the Tribal Consultation and introduced Ms. MaryEllen Fritz, Chugachmiut Head Start Director, who offered the invocation.

Two Northwest Indian Head Start Coalition (NWIHSC) board members—Ms. Viola Wood, NWIHSC President and the Head Start Director with Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes, and Ms. Nancy Martin of the Winnebago Native American Head Start program and NWIHSC

¹ The *Federal Register* notice can be found at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/02/10/2017-02799/tribal-consultation-meetings>.

Secretary, welcomed Tribal leaders on behalf of the NWHSC. They thanked Tribal leaders for their attendance.

Ms. Majestic welcomed participants to the consultation and thanked them for attending. She related that she has been attending consultations for about six years and that she really likes doing so. OHS wants to know what they can do to help RXI AIAN, as well as AIAN children in RXI and other Head Start and Early Head Start programs. She informed meeting participants that their testimony becomes part of the written report on the meeting. She then presented brief updates from the OHS central office.

- Ms. Ann Linehan, Acting Director of OHS, wanted to attend this consultation, but she was unable to do so. Ms. Majestic was pleased to attend in her place. Ms. Linehan believes that Indian programs have great ideas and are implementing good programs.
- The 2018 federal budget proposal out of the U.S. House of Representatives keeps Head Start intact, financially and as a program. This does not decide the budget, but it is a very positive beginning.
- As they get toward the end of the fiscal year (FY), there is an opportunity for one-time funding. The deadline is fast approaching. Funding is available to meet health and safety needs of critical importance, such as asbestos removal, mold in classrooms, nonfunctioning children's toilets, or vehicle breakdown. Because OHS knows they will have funding from programs that have ended for one reason or another, they released a grant opportunity for \$5 million. Last year they set aside \$5 million for health and safety needs in Indian programs and also offered additional funding for programs. They will provide updates as available to RXI AIAN.
- Under-enrollment is an issue in some RXI AIAN programs, as it is in many programs in all Regions. OHS is implementing the process described in the Head Start Act for under-enrollment. If money is recovered from under-enrollment situations—for example, if programs experience under-enrollment and cannot redesign services or shift funding or services—then the funding will go to existing programs. As with the allocation within the appropriation, if it comes from AIAN programs, it will go back to Indian Country.
- Ms. Linehan recently sent a letter to Tribal leaders and Head Start directors about monitoring. In it, she discussed continued implementation of the updated *Head Start Program Performance Standards* (HSPPS) and monitoring in FY 2018. When the HSPPS came out, there were specific compliance dates. Ms. Linehan discussed pieces in the compliance table that would not be looked at in monitoring in FY 2018.

Testimony and Comments of RXI AIAN Participants

A. Early Head Start Expansion Grants

- *Omaha Tribe of Nebraska*: The Tribe administered a survey to assess the need in their community for Head Start and Early Head Start services. Results showed a strong community need for Early Head Start services.
- *Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation*: The Tribe suggested that OHS continue to offer Early Head Start Expansion grants.

B. Tribal Language and Culture

- *Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation:* The Colville Business Council set a priority goal to teach their Tribe's children the Salish language, which has three dialects. Their Head Start program offers a good opportunity to work toward this goal. However, because most of the Tribe's Head Start teachers are attempting to fulfill educational qualification requirements, they do not have the time to obtain language certifications or otherwise develop their language skills and proficiency. The Tribe suggests that OHS collaborate with the Tribe to develop alternatives to the current regulations to facilitate employment of qualified Salish speakers in the Tribe's Head Start program. They also suggest that OHS maintain local control and flexibility to preserve distinct cultures within RXI AIAN.
- *Lummi Nation:* The Lummi Nation almost lost their language and culture. In the past, it was prohibited to use their language and practice traditions. Their culture, history, and language build self-pride and a sense of who they are and where they come from. They want to continue working with OHS to develop culture, language, and history as part of their Head Start programming.

C. Infants and Children with Disabilities

- *Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation:* The poverty rate on the Colville Reservation is significantly above the national average, and many of their young children come from economically disadvantaged homes. The Tribe estimates that approximately 12 percent of children identified as eligible for Head Start by the Tribe have some type of disability. The high poverty and disability rates make it even more important to provide all of their eligible children with access to Head Start.
- *Three Affiliated Tribes:* In the last few years, they have had to submit for a disabilities waiver, as they are finding it very difficult, not only in their public schools and their Tribal schools, but also in their Head Start service area, to find individuals who can conduct the testing necessary to identify children in need of special services. They have struggled over the last couple of years. They have been approaching their Tribal Council for funding, which the Council is gladly providing, but they ask why OHS is not helping. She asked whether OHS could provide support to help Tribal programs build capacity within their own agencies, provide training and TA, or in other ways help address this issue.

D. Facilities

- *Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation:* The Tribe suggests that OHS create opportunities for grantees to apply for funding for renovation or construction of facilities.
- *Lummi Nation:* The Tribe needs expansion of its facilities. They are at capacity with their current facilities. They have had to turn students away.
- *Chugachmiut:* Thee tribe is glad to hear that facilities are still being considered and reported on, as in rural and remote Alaska many Head Start facilities are not in good condition. OHS sent facilities expert to Alaska to do an inspection of all of the facilities, and he developed a great report. She thanked OHS for sending him and asked that OHS let them know of any follow-up. They have problems with mold in their facilities in Alaska, as well as a number of facilities past their useful life.

E. Teacher Qualifications and Funding

- *Chugachmiut*: They want to make sure there is funding to supplement teacher salaries as they move forward with higher education qualifications, so they do not lose teachers to school districts.

Three Affiliated Tribes: The tribe likes the emphasis on highly qualified teaching services and are committed to it, but they have continued funding concerns. How can they keep their staff after making an investment in their professional development?

F. Mentoring, Training, Support, and Monitoring

- *Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation*: The Tribe suggests that OHS provide increased opportunities for onsite technical mentoring, training, support, and monitoring. They also suggest that OHS ensure Native American representation on the federal review team for the Tribe's Head Start program.
- *Chugachmiut*: Money should accompany the new mentoring initiative. In rural and remote Alaska it is unrealistic to send people to programs for mentoring. Something synchronous and online like the ECLKC would help their rural and remote programs to be able to participate.
- *Three Affiliated Tribes*: There was a concern brought up about the need for Native reviewers. In their recent monitoring for CLASS, there were things that did not make sense to the reviewer. The Tribe explained some of the dynamics, and that opened up communication between the Tribe and reviewer, which helped.

G. Miscellaneous

- *Submission of Written Testimony*
 - *Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, and Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation*, submitted written testimony at the consultation.
- *Federal Budget, OHS, and RXI AIAN*
 - *Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation*: Referring to what has been written about the Administration's budget proposal for 2018, Ms. Williams expressed concern about a reduction in funding of 10 percent.² If the funding for their Tribe's Head Start program is reduced by 10 percent, Ms. Williams said, this will amount to a reduction in funding of at least \$125,000 annually. They will be unable to meet the demand for services on the reservation; they already do not have funding to serve all age-eligible children in their service area. Overall quality of family and community partnerships would diminish. The Tribe presents suggestions to OHS including that OHS help identify additional sources of funding to meet the Tribe's needs and help generate data to communicate the impacts of reduced Head Start funding on Native children.
- *Enrollment*
 - *Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation*: The Tribe has identified 221 children living on or near the reservation who are eligible for and would benefit from Head Start. However, the Tribe's Head Start program is currently only

² U.S. Office of Management and Budget. (2017, March 16). *America first: A budget blueprint to make America great again*. Retrieved from <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BUDGET-2018-BLUEPRINT/content-detail.html>

funded for 115 slots. They suggest that OHS collaborate with them to provide access to early learning opportunities for the age-eligible children in their area whom they cannot serve. They also ask that OHS prevent the loss of vital enrollment slots in Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

- *Need for Reports Back to RXI AIAN Regarding Follow-Up on Consultations*
 - *Lummi Nation*: RXI AIAN needs reports back on follow-up on their input and suggestions.
- *Exemption from State-Level Requirements*
 - *Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation*: The Tribe suggests that OHS uphold the government-to-government relationship by exempting AIAN programs from state-centered requirements.
- *Assurance of Cultural Appropriateness of Research-Based Requirements*
 - *Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation*: The Tribe suggests that OHS ensure that “research-based” requirements are culturally compatible with AIAN communities.
- *Funding for Additional Family Service Workers*
 - *Lummi Nation*: Lummi Nation is concerned about funding for family service workers—as noted in Head Start Act, 648A(c)(2), caseload maximums should not be exceeded so that family service workers can be effective.³ They have one family service worker who is overloaded with cases. They need funding for another family service worker.
- *Indirect Cost Rate*
 - *Chugachmiut*: Tribal leaders would like OHS to look at the indirect cost rate and the tribally negotiated, federally approved indirect cost rates to be applied to the Head Start programs. It costs a lot to run high-quality Tribal Head Start programs, particularly in light of the existing 15 percent indirect cost rate limitations.
- *Emphasis on Data-Driven Monitoring*
 - *Three Affiliated Tribes*: She recently attended the OHS-UCLA leadership seminar, and eye-opening Program Information Report (PIR) data were presented. She has been talking with her Program Specialist, and her Federal Program Manager about how to emphasize the importance of the PIR by increasing the focus on data in-data-out. This is reasonable because OHS seems to be going to a data-driven monitoring system in accordance with the new HSPPS.

Ms. Godfrey briefly discussed some of the areas that the region has started to address, and told the participants, that they would review all comments to look for other areas to improve service and communication with Tribal Head Start programs.

- *Issues from Previous FY 2017 Consultations*
 - *Preservation of Language and Culture*
 - RXI AIAN headquarters staff are working with the TA system and OHS language specialists and partnering with other agencies such as the Administration for Native Americans to strengthen how OHS supports

³ Head Start Act, p. 104, https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/HS_Act_2007.pdf.

language immersion and other forms of language in their programs. They are continuing look at program assessments to see what programs want in terms of language.

- *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®), Monitoring, Reviewers*
 - Many at Tribal Consultations said reviewers were not sensitive to programs, had never been in AIAN programs, and were not respectful. The regional office is working with the monitoring contract to recruit monitors for RXI AIAN. She encouraged participants to identify people who could be referred to the contractor so they can recruit more appropriate reviewers.
- *RXI AIAN Facilities*
 - OHS completed the report, which included funding recommendations, and it went to Congress 1 year ago. OHS
- *Teacher Qualifications*
 - Ms. Godfrey noted that programs must meet requirements for teacher qualifications in Head Start and Early Head Start programs. She added that OHS is committed to serving children. If programs are under-enrolled, it should not be because they do not have qualified teachers. She urged Tribal Consultation participants to let OHS know their recruitment, hiring, and professional development plans. She acknowledged that this area is difficult. She encouraged Tribal Consultation participants to work closely with their program specialists and others at OHS on issues in this area.
- *Enhancement of Mental Health Services in RXI*
 - The National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness, one of the TA centers, will be working with an RXI AIAN cohort of 11 programs for a year, supporting their work around mental health services, substance abuse, domestic violence, and child behavior, and giving them resources and support to continue beyond that year.
- *Research to Support the Work of RXI*
 - AIAN Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES)
 - AIAN FACES research used CLASS and trained the reviewers in an RXI AIAN classroom for several days. They also adapted their tools for Tribal programs. OHS would like these modifications used more broadly with monitoring.
 - The very first findings of AIAN FACES are being released by the research team, who will be reporting on them.