

**HEAD START
TRIBAL CONSULTATION**

**April 3, 2012
Billings, Montana
Region VIII**

DETAILED FINAL REPORT

Presented by:
Yvette Sanchez Fuentes, Director
Office of Head Start

Introduction

Pursuant to the Department of Health and Human Services Tribal Consultation Policy and Section 640 (1)(4) of the Head Start Act, in 2012 the Office of Head Start (OHS) is convening six Tribal Consultation sessions for the purpose of better meeting the needs of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) children and families, taking into consideration funding allocations, distribution formulas, and other issues affecting the delivery of Head Start services in their geographic locations.

OHS is committed to meaningful consultation with Tribes through which elected officials and other authorized representatives of the tribal governments have the opportunity to provide meaningful and timely input prior to 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 AI/AN 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 AI/AN children and families.

The 2012 schedule is as follows:

February 15, 2012	Petoskey, Michigan
March 22, 2012	Phoenix, Arizona
April 3, 2012	Billings, Montana
May 4, 2012	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
October 15, 2012	Portland, Oregon
October 17, 2012	Anchorage, Alaska

By Notice in the Federal Register, dated March 6, 2012, OHS notified AI/AN leaders of a Tribal Consultation for Tribes in Region VIII on April 3, 2012, in Billings, Montana, immediately prior to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services consultation on April 4–5, 2012. The following Report reflects comments and recommendations raised by AI/AN leaders and representatives; comments and responses from OHS; and areas identified as requiring additional follow-up as discussed at the Tribal Consultation. (Separate reports for each Tribal Consultation will be issued following each of the dates listed above.)

Participants

Office of Head Start: Ross Weaver, Director, Quality Assurance Division; Sharon Yandian, Early Language Specialist; Debra Hedin, Regional Program Manager, Region VIII. Additional OHS staff participated via conference call. (See Appendix for detailed listing.)

Tribal leaders and Tribal representatives: (See Appendix for detailed listing.)

Introductory Remarks

The Tribal Consultation session began with opening remarks from Director Yvette Sanchez Fuentes via video.

Discussion/Comments of AI/AN and OHS Participants

Ross Weaver, Director, Quality Assurance Division, OHS, extended Director Sanchez Fuentes' regrets for being unable to attend in person. He also affirmed the Director's goal that Tribal Consultations will improve communication and relationships with AI/AN grantees and support programs in providing improved services to Native children and families.

A. Communication – OHS Comments

- At the OHS Central Office and Region XI, there has been an effort to improve communication between Program Specialists and grantees. Programs are encouraged to reach out to their Program Specialist and Fiscal Specialist. If they are unable to reach their Program/Fiscal Specialist, programs are encouraged to contact the Acting Regional Program Manager, Camille Loya, who is trying to implement a process to improve communication. Programs can also call OHS at 202-205-8573. Messages left there will be relayed to the Acting RPM.

B. Facilities – AI/AN Participant Comments

- Ft. Belknap has a new facility and an old facility that was affected by floods last year. The program would like funding assistance to build a new facility.
- Crow Tribe Head Start's wait list is increasing yearly. Existing facilities are unable to meet the enrollment need.

Facilities – AI/AN Recommendations to OHS

- Provide funding for construction of new facilities to accommodate additional enrollment.

C. Transportation – AI/AN Participant Comments

- Transportation is a burden for the Blackfeet Tribe even though Head Start facilities are on the reservation. Communities are 30-40 miles apart. Transportation had been part of the Head Start budget before budget cuts. This is a burden due to the cost of fuel.
- A few years ago, programs were told not to use transportation as an in-kind expense as before when parents transporting children to/from the center counted as in-kind.
- Tribal programs are having problems with transportation for their children. Ft. Peck Tribes Head Start is not able to hire a bus driver and does not have transportation for one center. This affects attendance. It is a hardship on parents. Parents are not meeting what they are required to do such as work and college.

- Crow Tribe Head Start does not provide transportation for full-day programs. Parents who are working and going to school have no access to transportation for their children to go to school.
- Isolation and distance between Head Start centers creates wear and tear on vehicles.

Transportation – AI/AN Recommendations to OHS

- Make transportation costs part of the Head Start budget to ease the burden on parents and Tribes.
- Provide funding for maintenance, repairs, and replacement of buses.
- Allow programs to count mileage incurred transporting children in rural tribal communities toward Non-Federal Share.

Transportation – OHS Responses

- OHS acknowledges that transportation is a challenge for tribal and rural programs. In this economy, it is unlikely that OHS will have additional funds available for transportation.
- Prior to the current transportation regulations (45 CFR 1310), parent time and mileage bringing their child to and from the Head Start center counted as Non-Federal Share. Under the current regulations, children must be transported in a vehicle that meets standards set by the U.S. Department of Transportation for transporting children. That changed how transportation could be viewed as an allowable cost.

D. Fiscal Issues– AI/AN Participant Comments

- Non-Federal Share is becoming more difficult to meet. It is hard to compete for donations within the community. Local businesses have limited resources.
- Tribal Head Start programs need help addressing fiscal issues. Tribal staff do not understand Head Start grants. Tribal accountants and comptrollers are not versed in Head Start.

Fiscal Issues – AI/AN Recommendations to OHS

- Provide onsite T/TA for tribal staff in human resources and accounting.
- Provide T/TA for fiscal issues that are beyond the expertise of tribal fiscal staff.

Fiscal Issues – OHS Responses

- Programs that are unable to meet their Non-Federal Share are encouraged to request a waiver. OHS acknowledges that programs are struggling with Non-Federal Share, but it is part of the Head Start Act.

E. Language and Culture – AI/AN Participant Comments

- Blackfeet Head Start uses a curriculum based on the Blackfeet language. There are cultural elements that Tribes must address when selecting/developing curriculum. How can a culturally based curriculum qualify as research-based?

- Crow Tribe Head Start has strengths, but language preservation is not one of them. Half of all adults speak the Crow language, but only 1 percent of children can speak Crow.

Language and Culture – AI/AN Recommendations to OHS

- Provide more funding and assistance to help Tribes preserve and revitalize Native language within the tribal education system and community.
- Provide guidance to programs seeking to preserve language and culture.

Language and Culture – OHS Responses

- The OHS Tribal Language Report (available on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/mr/tribal/tlr>) was developed to assist OHS in learning about the successes, progress, and challenges of tribal communities that are in various stages of preserving, revitalizing, or reclaiming their tribal language. The report articulates OHS' commitment to support the integration of language and culture in all aspects of the program and to help make clear its important connection to school readiness. OHS has begun to implement the recommendations from the report.
- Ten years ago, 16 percent of children in AI/AN Head Start spoke their Native language as their first language. Now that number is down to 4 percent.
- OHS is exploring better ways to communicate that OHS supports language immersion programs as well as the full integration of culture and language into curricular programming. The *Head Start Program Performance Standards* support Native language efforts.
- OHS can help answer questions from Tribes.

F. Parent Involvement – AI/AN Participant Comments

- Programs do a lot for parents in terms of providing services and screenings. But parents do not always keep follow-up appointments for their children even when transportation is provided.
- The Tribal Council at Crow Tribe has had to help the Head Start program explain to parents that the program is required to follow Performance Standards with regard to issues such as transportation. Some parents refuse to abide by the policies and procedures, yet still want their children to attend the program. Parents have even threatened Head Start teachers and staff.

Parent Involvement – OHS Responses

- The Performance Standards for parent training that apply to transportation, safety, health, and child development are not meant to be the only topics that programs would find helpful. Individual programs should determine what parent involvement and education activities they need. Parents should have a meaningful role. This is how a program-specific parent education piece should be established.

G. Health – AI/AN Participant Comments

- Tribal Head Start programs are excellent resources in tribal communities and serve as the lead social service agencies providing health and dental services.
- Indian Health Service's (IHS) limited services are a challenge, especially with mental health. It is difficult to schedule appointments. In addition, one Tribe was told that the IHS mental health professional could only observe children in his clinical setting rather than at the Head Start program.
- There are some local services, but children need dental care and physicals for attending school. These services are just not available, even with IHS. Some programs have had to send parents more than 500 miles away to appointments.

Health – OHS Responses

- The OHS Federal Project Officer for the new Head Start National Center on Health, Marco Beltran, has met with IHS. He can provide information on the dental consultant for Region XI. Today's concerns will be passed on to him.
- OHS will look into the lack of onsite mental health observations with IHS.

H. Monitoring – AI/AN Participant Comments

- Monitoring reviews are a challenge when none of the review team members are from Native programs. Non-Native reviewers do not understand why certain things are done differently.
- One participant was told that review team members for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) were required to speak Spanish. If this is the case for MSHS, then there should be a similar requirement for AI/AN review teams to include members who are knowledgeable about tribal language and culture. [Editor's Note: MSHS review team members are no longer required to speak Spanish.]
- Review team members are required to have a college degree. Tribal people have the experience to conduct a review, but it is difficult for them to earn degrees on the reservations. This reduces the pool of review team candidates.
- Another hurdle is the use of computers during onsite reviews. At a Birth to Three Conference, there was discussion of returning to focus groups. This allows everyone to articulate what they are doing well and to ask reviewers to clarify questions. Native people may not understand the language being used and tend to just answer yes or no. Native reviewers could help programs better articulate their points and help reviewers understand the services that programs are providing.
- Focus groups are a good idea. Focus groups can help create a better understanding of the reviewer and help create an atmosphere where staff are not intimidated.
- Reviewers must remember sensitivity in Indian country. At one program's most recent review, the reviewers met with the tribal council but did not make eye contact because they were busy typing into their computers.
- The Head Start Act has a lot of information including indicators of quality. All staff need to know these indicators. Programs need to understand the importance of the Act and how it relates to monitoring.

Monitoring – AI/AN Recommendations to OHS

- Recruit and select more Native review team members.
- Ease the college degree requirements for review team members to enable more Native people to qualify.
- Consider focus groups for discussions, rather than reliance on computers, during onsite reviews to lessen anxiety and miscommunication.
- Develop a checklist instrument that programs can use to identify key quality indicators in the Head Start Act.

Monitoring – OHS Responses

- Head Start has more than 2,000 regulations, standards, policies, etc. A review team cannot assess all 2,000 in a week. This year, OHS focused on the standards, policies, and regulations that are key indicators of quality and that give OHS a better understanding of the program. If the review team doesn't examine something, that does not mean it is no longer important.
- OHS agrees that there should be at least one Native person on a review team of AI/AN programs. Unfortunately, OHS has not been successful in this regard.
- OHS staff have commented that there was a noticeable shift toward conversation and less reliance on computers during a recent monitoring review that they took part in.
- There is no longer a Program Design and Management (PDM) reviewer position. The PDM function is now being filled by the Federal Team Leader or Review Team Leader. OHS noted that many reviewers who reviewed PDM were Native and that has most likely contributed to the lack of Native people in the monitoring reviewer pool.
- A college degree is required for all reviewers. It is important to have the qualifications of the reviewer match those required of the Head Start staff. OHS did not realize the unintended consequences of losing AI/AN reviewers who would be eliminated from the reviewer pool. This is worth revisiting.
- Programs with recent and upcoming reviews are encouraged to notify OHS of how things went and what went well.
- As much as OHS believes that reviews should not be something programs prepare for, but should be a reflection of what a typical day looks like, OHS knows that reviews are stressful. The stress and anxiety may be lessened if teams asked questions. Computers are still part of the monitoring process, but there is a shift toward engagement.
- OHS is exploring ways to strengthen Federal oversight and working with local programs, including communication between grantees and the Regional Office.
- OHS is looking at a 360 approach and Federal oversight over a five-year period. For example in Year 1, OHS would build the relationship of grantees and the Program Specialist by bringing the Program Specialist onsite to get to know grantees and communities. Also in that year, OHS would have discussions with the governing body, management, and tribal and policy councils to get them engaged at an early point in the grant period.
- Programs are expected to abide by both the Head Start Act and the Performance Standards. The ECLKC has a monitoring tool that can be shared with staff to

explore the linkages between the Act and the Performance Standards.
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/mr/monitoring>.

I. **Designation Renewal System (DRS) – OHS Comments**

- DRS for tribal grantees has been put on hold because the training and technical assistance (T/TA) system is not in place. Moving forward without a T/TA system is not appropriate.
- The Head Start Act requires Head Start agencies to be awarded five-year grants instead of grants for indefinite periods. (See Sec. 638 of the Head Start Act.) The Act also required the Secretary to develop and implement a system of “designation renewal” to determine whether an individual Head Start/Early Head Start (EHS) agency is eligible to receive a five-year grant automatically or, instead, must compete for renewal of its designation as a Head Start/EHS agency.
- Re-competition does not mean you cannot get the award.
- New regulations at 45 CFR 1307 establish rules implementing the OHS Designation Renewal System. 45 CFR 1307.3 describes seven DRS conditions that make a Head Start/EHS agency ineligible for an automatic five-year grant:
 1. One or more deficiencies on a single monitoring review from June 12, 2009.
 2. Average scores falling below established thresholds on any of the three CLASS pre-k domains OR score on any of the three CLASS pre-k domains is in the lowest 10 percent nationally. Related to the latter, the lowest 10% will not be identified until all the CLASS reviews are completed by end of May or early June.
 3. Lack of established School Readiness goals as demonstrated by the requirements at 45 CFR 1307.3 (b)(1).
 4. Revocation of license to operate by a State or local licensing agency from June 12, 2009, where the revocation has not been overturned or withdrawn prior to issuance of a relevant FOA.
 5. A final determination of suspension by OHS since June 12, 2009.
 6. Debarment by other Federal/State agency or disqualification from Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).
 7. Determination by the responsible HHS Official that the agency is at risk of failing to continue functioning as a going concern based on reviews of agency audits.
- The special provision for AI/AN grantees in DRS can be found in 45 CFR 1307.6.
- Congress recognized that Tribes are sovereign nations. All AI/AN programs receiving notice of DRS are entitled to a period of consultation and a period within which to implement a quality improvement plan. After this period, the program will be evaluated against the seven criteria, and if determined to meet one of the criteria, will not automatically be awarded a five-year grant but will have to complete. The law includes provisions for Federally recognized Tribes regarding competition and the designation of an entity.

Designation Renewal System (DRS) – AI/AN Participant Comments

- One tribal program that was up for re-competition stated that being told that it was up for re-competition created a greater sense of urgency to meet marks of quality. Programs are grateful for some information, but also need T/TA to develop a quality plan to continue the Head Start grant in the community and to avoid re-competition as it sends a message to the governing board.

Designation Renewal System (DRS) – AI/AN Recommendations to OHS

- Provide more information on DRS.
- Provide more information and clarification on the quality standards for compliance.

J. School Readiness – OHS Comments

- School readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children, and schools are ready for children. AI/AN Head Start programs are the experts on their own children. What needs to be in place for children to be ready for kindergarten? How are we readying children for school?
- In thinking about school readiness, focus on how well children are doing – from the child’s perspective in terms of gains – and focus on parent engagement in terms of supporting families to continue children’s lifelong learning as well as being involved in the program to provide insight into their children.
- This is not new. What is new is that OHS is thinking of school readiness at all levels, not just with the teachers and education managers. It includes getting tribal leaders, policy council, and program leadership involved in adopting and aligning school readiness goals as well as monitoring how all children in the program are progressing as they move through Head Start.
- Michele Plutro, OHS Education Specialist, is on detail to Region XI to provide support and expertise on school readiness. She may not be able to go to the programs, but she is working closely with Program Specialists.
- Each Head Start agency is required to:
 1. Establish school readiness goals per the Head Start Act.
 2. Assess individual children’s progress in meeting the goals and individualize services to support each child’s progress.
 3. Aggregate and analyze data to help inform program improvement.
- School readiness goals must be established in consultation with parents.
- Once goals are established, programs are expected to:
 1. Make sure goals align with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, state early learning standards as appropriate, and local education agency (LEA) expectations.
 2. Implement a plan for achieving the goals.
 3. Assess the child’s progress on an ongoing basis and make sure they are making progress toward those goals.
 4. Aggregate and analyze data.
- Goals should be focused around the five domains in the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework:
 1. Approaches to learning

2. Cognition and general knowledge
 3. Language and literacy
 4. Physical development and health
 5. Social and emotional development
- Program Instruction ACF-PI-HS-11-04 is about school readiness goals and developing a plan of action. Data can be used to drive instructional strategies, curriculum selection, and professional development. The data enable continuous program improvement. This information can be included in programs' annual reports.
 - Establishing school readiness goals is one of the seven criteria for DRS. Next year, new criteria will go into effect. Programs will be assessed on two things: 1.) whether there is a school readiness plan; and 2.) whether the school readiness plan has been implemented and whether you are seeing progress. There is no minimum threshold for children.
 - Quarterly Data Collection Calls with the Program Specialist [See Attachment 1] are intended as an exchange of information. Region XI recently added a field specialist who might be on the call. This individual is not Federal staff but will support the T/TA system.
 - OHS is working with the National Center for Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness (NCCLR) to develop a hands-on tool specifically designed for AI/AN programs to support individual Tribes and Alaska Natives to connect their cultural, traditional skills, values, beliefs, and life ways to the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. This tool is called *Making It Work!* and was originally commissioned by the Regional Office to support AI/AN grantees' understanding of the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework and its connection to school readiness. A training component will be made available to all programs. OHS is conducting conference calls with those who have been part of the pilot. Other AI/AN programs are welcome to participate in the calls to discuss how it is going.
 - A School Readiness Supplement was sent to Head Start Directors from the Acting Regional Program Manager. It is a regional newsletter that has examples of school readiness goals and definitions, and is in response to discussions with programs during the data collection calls. A second newsletter is coming soon.
 - School readiness information can be found on the ECLKC at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/sr>.

School Readiness – AI/AN Participant Comments

- Northern Cheyenne Head Start is aligning with the state early learning guidelines for Montana. The Tribe works with LEAs on disabilities and legal obligations for public schools.
- How do you implement school readiness for children, birth to three? We do not teach them shapes and numbers. When they are born, we are meeting cues, needs, fostering independence, instilling trust.
- Northern Cheyenne Tribe works with Browning public schools to develop education goals and data aggregates.

- One participant had the opportunity to visit the Head Start American Indian/Alaska Native Research Center at the University of Colorado at Denver. The experience was very empowering. After listening to all of the data, it seems that tribal programs are about 15 years behind. Tribal people are not up to date on how research drives policy.
- Programs are still unclear about the four areas of school readiness support: establishing goals, planning and implementing, continuous program improvement, and tracking progress. Moving forward, knowing that this is part of the funding application, programs need T/TA to help clarify and develop school readiness goals.

School Readiness – AI/AN Recommendations to OHS

- Clarify school readiness for infants and toddlers.
- Provide funding to a university in each state to work directly with Tribes.
- Provide T/TA to help clarify and develop school readiness goals.

K. Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) – OHS Comments

- The T/TA contract was re-competed over the summer. A contract was awarded, but other applicants protested the decision. This is allowed under the rules of the contracting process, and a stop work order was issued.
- OHS provided an opportunity for programs to apply for supplemental T/TA funds, thinking that the stop work order would be resolved early in 2012.
- In February 2012, a new T/TA contract was awarded [See Attachment 2]. This was also protested, and another stop work order was issued [See Attachment 3]. The review and decision of the contracting process will be made outside of OHS. OHS does not have a timeframe for when this will be resolved.
- Money for supplemental T/TA is currently not available. With the stop order hold in effect, OHS may rethink this.
- OHS is working with the six National Centers to see how they can be more available to the tribal programs, along with experts at OHS who can work with the Region XI Program Specialists.

Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) – AI/AN Participant Comments

- There is no contractor providing T/TA, which tribal programs need for support in providing quality services.
- Applying for T/TA supplemental funding for staff/parent training is a burden due to the additional paperwork. Programs had to request carryover dollars, which added to the paperwork.
- The Ft. Peck Tribes were informed that CLASS/CDA training and certification would be rescheduled for Montana, but that has not happened yet.
- Native programs are concerned that they are behind regional Head Start counterparts. Training is needed for CLASS and Designation Renewal. Teachstone offers CLASS training, but the cost is \$4,000 plus travel expenses which could bring the cost up to \$7,000-\$8,000.
- Families need to be supported to help their children be ready for school. T/TA is critical for success.

- There is so much information coming at programs. Head Start is becoming more academic. T/TA is a part of that, and programs need communication from OHS.
- With no T/TA contractor in place, there is no one to help programs draft quality improvement plans.

Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) – AI/AN Recommendations to OHS

- Provide training for CLASS and Designation Renewal.
- Provide more information on the status of the T/TA contractor selection.
- Improve communication from OHS and Program Specialists regarding T/TA.

Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) –OHS Responses

- The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning offered a CLASS training that had to be rescheduled. That did not happen. OHS may explore another process for CLASS training. There might be cluster training. Programs could use T/TA dollars to hire a CLASS trainer.
- OHS can improve communication about CLASS trainings by looking into rescheduled sessions for Montana and by having the Regional Office notify programs of upcoming trainings.

L. Teacher Qualifications – OHS Comments

- It is difficult to find applicants who meet qualifications and to find people who are interested in working in early childhood education in rural areas.
- A challenge for tribal and rural programs is that once staff earn their degrees, they leave for jobs with higher salaries. It is a push/pull – wanting to improve the quality of teaching staff within your program and knowing that this makes them more attractive to other organizations.
- With regard to monitoring, if a rural program is struggling to hire qualified staff, the onsite review team will look for: 1) whether the program is able to show that it tried to hire someone with the required qualifications, but that a qualified person was not available so the program went with the most qualified applicant; and 2) whether the program has a professional development plan for that individual to get the required qualifications. Review teams will not be looking at whether a program is in compliance but rather how will this individual reach compliance through a professional development plan and training.
- It is important to keep track of those people whom programs have trained. If they move on to another job, let OHS know about this positive impact on the community.
- In Indian country, 75% of EHS teachers have CDA; 64% of preschool teachers have AA, and 27% of preschool teachers are in the process of obtaining CDA.

Teacher Qualifications – AI/AN Participant Comments

- It can take teachers three to four years to earn a two-year degree because they are working full time.

M. 2012 Budget – OHS Comments

- The President's budget includes a small increase for Head Start but not enough to address transportation and facility issues, and just enough for a cost of living increase. OHS realizes this is difficult for programs when they are facing additional qualifications and requirements.
- Occasionally, there is an opportunity for some funding for health and safety issues toward the end of the budget year.

APPENDIX

Tribal Consultation Participants

Federal Staff

First Name	Last Name	Position	Organization
Debra	Hedin	Regional Program Manager, RO VIII	Office of Head Start
Camille	Loya	Acting Regional Prog. Manager, RO XI	Office of Head Start
Janet	Schultz	Health/Monitoring Specialist	Office of Head Start (Contractor)
WJ	Strickland	Senior Program Specialist	Office of Head Start
Ross	Weaver	Director, Quality Assurance Division	Office of Head Start
Sharon	Yandian	Early Language Specialist	Office of Head Start

Tribal Leaders and Representatives

First Name	Last Name	Position	Organization
Pamela	Back Bone	Executive Director	Crow Tribe Head Start
Bill	Eagle Staff	Director	Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Head Start
Brenda	Guardipee	Parent Policy Board Representative	Blackfeet Early Childhood Center
Charles	Headdress	Tribal Leader	Fort Peck Tribes
Burt	Medicine Bull	Policy Council Chairman	Northern Cheyenne Tribe Head Start
Anita Jo	Old Bull	Chief Executive Officer	Crow Tribe
Blossom	Quisno	Grants/Contracts Specialist	Fort Belknap Indian Community
Rusty	Tatsey	Tribal Business Council Member	Blackfeet Tribe
Vonda	Wells	Director	Blackfeet Early Childhood Center
Andrew	Werk	Tribal Council Member	Fort Belknap Indian Community
Clyde	Wolf Black	Director	Northern Cheyenne Tribe Head Start
Viola	Wood	Director	Fort Peck Tribes Head Start
Alma	Young	Director	Fort Belknap Head Start



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Office of Head Start
1250 Maryland Avenue, SW
8th Floor
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Grantee Director and Program Staff:

It is hard to believe that another program year is half over. By now, you have probably had one or two conference calls with your Program Specialist to discuss your goals for children's school readiness. At the beginning of this program year, I asked every Regional Office to make it a priority to begin an ongoing dialogue with each grantee to learn about your school readiness goals and to hear about the progress your children are making throughout the year.

My goal is to ensure that Regional staff maintain an ongoing dialogue with grantees to better understand how each program is supporting children's learning, and in this process, to identify existing strengths and gain an understanding of the data grantees gather to inform program improvements as well as enhance professional development and to provide ongoing direction of training and technical assistance. These conversations provide you and your staff an opportunity to tell your story about the progress your children are making. This process also provides OHS with valuable information for understanding differences or trends in school readiness efforts within states, across states and nationally. As a result of these conversations, we expect Regional staff to work closely with our TTA partners to assist programs in getting support as needed.

Head Start's authorizing purpose is to promote school readiness. The 2007 Head Start Act specified that programs are to establish goals for children's school readiness. The Designation Renewal regulation that became effective on December 9, 2011 provided additional requirements related to child assessment, individualization, data aggregation and analysis and responsive program improvement. The Office of Head Start anticipates that the regular system of individualized calls will support grantees' efforts to institute systems and practices that yield the best possible child progress.

We also want to make sure that we are fully aware of the challenges you face, the innovations you implement and the successes you achieve.

If you have any questions, please contact your Program Specialist.

As always, I look to our Head Start programs to lead the nation in providing high quality early childhood education and also to our continued mutual efforts on behalf of children and families.

Sincerely,

/ Yvette Sanchez Fuentes /

Yvette Sanchez Fuentes, Director
Office of Head Start



ECLKC
Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center
A Service of The Office of Head Start
Toll-Free: 1-866-763-6481

[Login](#) | [Registration](#)

Award of Regions XI and XII T/TA and Collaboration Center

The Office of Head Start announces the award of a contract to FHI Development 360, LLC to operate a Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) and Collaboration Center for Region XI, serving American Indian and Alaska Native children and families, and Region XII, serving Migrant and Seasonal children and families.

The Center will operate under the leadership of a Project Director. Within the Center, each Region will be staffed by a Collaboration Director, a T/TA Manager, Early Childhood Education (ECE) Specialists, and Grantee Specialists. The ECE specialists will support local programs in work related to school readiness, including positive child outcomes; parent, family and community engagement; career development needs of staff; and, collaboration with others at the national, tribal, state and local levels. Grantee Specialists will work with grantees with findings identified through the federal monitoring process and other areas of concern.

Office of Head Start (OHS) | 1250 Maryland Avenue, SW | 8th Floor Portal Building | Washington D.C. 20024
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/> | 1-866-763-6481 1-866-763-6481 | [Contact Us](#)

To [manage](#) your subscriptions, please visit the [ALERTS MANAGEMENT](#) page on the ECLKC.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Office of Head Start
1250 Maryland Avenue, SW
8th Floor
Washington, DC 20024

Hello,

The purpose of this email is to provide you with an update regarding the Region XI and Region XII T/TA and Collaboration Office contract recently awarded to FHI Development 360, LLC. This contract is to provide TTA services for Regions XI and XII and to support the Head Start State Collaboration Offices (HSSCO) for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and American Indian/Alaska Native. ICFi has since filed a protest with the Government Accountability Office (GAO) regarding this award. A stop work order has been issued and therefore at this time and until the matter is resolved, FHI360 will not be providing any TTA and HSSCO services. Public information regarding this protest is posted on GAO's website at <http://www.gao.gov/search?q=B-406062>.

Please continue to submit your TTA requests directly to your program specialists. The OHS will be providing services on a limited basis through the use of federal staff and the TTA National Centers. Please submit any questions that you may have via email directly to your respective Regional Program Manager:

Camille Loya, Acting RPM Region XI

Camille.Loya@acf.hhs.gov

Sandra Carton, RPM Region XII

Sandra.Carton@acf.hhs.gov

During this unique and unusual time, the OHS is here to support you and we will do our very best to ensure that your needs are met so that you can continue to provide quality Head Start services to your children and families.

Thank you for the work that you do every day.

Yvette Sanchez Fuentes

Director, Office of Head Start

Protest Q & A

The following frequently asked questions are from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) website and are intended for a general audience. Readers should be aware that many of the rules for filing and pursuing protests, as well as the substantive matters of bid protest law, are complex, and these FAQs are not intended to address all possible issues and situations. Additional information is available at GAO's website: <http://www.gao.gov/legal/bids/bidfaqs.html#2>

Q: How do I get more information about a protest that has been filed?

You may [search our bid protest docket](#) by B-number, protester name, agency name, and solicitation number. The docket provides information concerning the filing date, decision deadline, the GAO attorney assigned to the protest, and the current status of the protest. When a decision is publicly available, a link to that decision is included in the docket search results.

Q: Can I get a copy of the actual protest, pleadings, or other documents provided by the protestor or the agency?

We don't release documents while a protest is pending. After a protest is decided, you may request access to information, including redacted protests. You can request this information [through our Freedom of Information Act process](#).

Q: What happens after a protest has been filed?

If the protest is not dismissed for procedural reasons, the agency must, within 30 days of the filing of a protest, provide a report addressing the protest arguments. The protester must file comments responding to the agency report within 10 days of receiving the report (failure to file comments will result in dismissal of the protest). After the comment period, GAO may request additional filings from the parties, conduct alternative dispute resolution, or hold a hearing. For more information, see our [Bid Protest Regulations](#) (4 C.F.R. § 21.3) and [Bid Protests at GAO: a Descriptive Guide](#), and this timeline of a bid protest.

Q: What is "corrective action"?

Corrective action is an agency's voluntary decision to address an issue in response to a protest. Corrective action can occur at any time during a protest. An agency's corrective action may involve a re-evaluation of proposals, a new award decision, an amendment to a solicitation, or other actions. We will typically dismiss a protest if an agency takes corrective action that resolves protest arguments or provides the relief sought by the protester.

Q: What are the possible outcomes for a GAO protest?

A protest is concluded when it is

- "withdrawn" by the protester,
- "dismissed" by GAO because the protest had a technical or procedural flaw (such as lack of timeliness or jurisdiction) or because the agency takes corrective action that addresses the protest,
- "denied" by GAO because we found no merit to the protest, or
- "sustained" by GAO because we agree with the protest arguments.

Q: What happens when GAO sustains a protest?

If we agree with a protester that the agency violated a procurement law or regulation in a prejudicial manner, we will issue a decision sustaining the protest and recommend that the agency address the violation through appropriate corrective action. The agency must then advise us whether it will comply with the recommendation.

Q: How long does GAO take to decide a protest?

We must decide a protest within 100 calendar days. We always seek to issue a decision as far in advance of the 100-day deadline as possible.

Q: Does GAO make its decisions publicly available?

It depends on what the decision was:

- We make public decisions that deny or sustain a protest and dismissals that address a significant issue.
- We do not make public routine dismissals of protests.

Q: When does GAO make its protest decisions publicly available?

It depends on whether the decision is subject to a protective order or not:

- If a decision is not subject to a protective order, it will usually be available on this Web site within 1-2 days.
- If a decision is subject to a protective order, the parties must agree to the release of a public version that redacts proprietary or source-selection-sensitive information. The preparation of a public version of a protected decision may take between a few days and a few weeks; however, occasionally, a decision may not be made public for months if other events, such as corrective action, would be affected by the release of the decision.

Q: What kinds of redactions does GAO make to a decision?

We seek to issue decisions that provide meaningful and transparent explanations for our rulings. Even if a protective order is issued for a protest, information in the public version of a protected decision will be redacted only where it is proprietary or is source-selection-sensitive. For example, evaluation point scores and adjectival ratings, unfavorable or adverse past performance information, and total cost or price generally will not be redacted from a decision.

Q: Where can I find a protest decision?

[You can browse our recent decisions.](#)

Or

[Search for new or older decisions.](#)

You can also find our decisions through outside commercial services such as Westlaw and Lexis.

Q: I know a protest has been decided, why I can't find the decision?

It depends on what the outcome was:

- If a protest is dismissed, we will not make the decision publicly available, unless it addresses a significant issue.
- If a protest is sustained or denied, you should find the decision on this Web site within 1-2 days after the decision date. If you don't find it, then we are preparing a redacted version which will be made public when available. (See [When does GAO make its decisions publicly available?](#))