

**National American Indian and Alaska Native  
Head Start Collaboration Office**



**NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

2013 Survey Results



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**



NATION  
AMERICAN INDIAN & ALASKA NATIVE  
HEAD START COLLABORATION OFFICE

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*This document was produced in cooperation with the Office of Head Start (OHS), under contract #HHSP23320120000C by the National American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Collaboration Office. A draft version of this document was reviewed by the NAIANHSCO Advisory Council following a two-day advisory meeting where results of the needs assessment were analyzed and recommendations were made for the NAIANHSCO 2012-2016 Strategic Plan. No official endorsement by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is intended or should be inferred.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The National American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Collaboration Office (NAIANHSCO) would like to thank each and every member of the Advisory Council for her/his efforts and dedication in guiding the Collaboration Office's work.

From February 20, 2013 to February 21, 2013 the NAIANHSCO Advisory Council analyzed the data collected through the NAIANHSCO needs assessment survey. This analysis resulted in a series of recommendations for the development of the 2012-2016 NAIANHSCO four-year strategic plan.

Our most sincere appreciation to the members of the NAIANHSCO Advisory Council, listed below:

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS (continued)**

Thank you to all the American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) grantees and delegates who participated in this year's needs assessment. Thank you to Karen Heying from the Office of Head Start (OHS), Judith Sikora - Director, HQ Programs, Early Care and Education, Policy and Practice, U.S. Education and Workforce Development: from FHI 360, Kevin Skolnik - Program Officer for both Collaboration Offices; American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start (AIAN HS) and Migrant & Seasonal Head Start (MSHS).

The NAIANHSCO Advisory Council's membership is drawn from national, state and local governments, and other American Indian and Alaska Native-based organizations. Membership is also drawn from the diverse geographic regions of the country where AIAN HS programs operate and where AIAN HS families are living and working. AIAN HS grantee representation also reflects the diversity of regional locales, as well as organizational structures/sponsorship and Head Start program options. The diverse membership of the Advisory Council ensures that the voices of AIAN HS and low-income children and families are represented in all policy making and planning decisions.



**Mission Statement:**

The National American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Collaboration Office is committed to assisting Head Start grantees in developing collaborative partnerships to improve the quality of life for American Indian and Alaska Native children and families.

**Vision statement:**

A commitment to collaboration, to cultivate a strong educational environment for all AIAN HS communities by shaping the future while preserving the past through Native American and Alaska Native cultures, languages, beliefs and values.

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT DESIGN****Purpose of the Assessment**

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (Head Start Act) requires that the NAIANHSCO conduct a needs assessment of American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start grantees that addresses the needs “with respect to collaboration, coordination and alignment of services, and alignment of curricula and assessments used in Head Start programs with the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework and, as appropriate, State early learning standards.” *Head Start Act Section 642(B)(4)(A)(2)(i)*

The Head Start Act also requires that the NAIANHSCO use the results of the needs assessment to develop a strategic plan. This plan will outline ways to assist and support American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start grantees in meeting the requirements of the Head Start Act for coordination, collaboration, and transition into and alignment with K-12 education. Also, under the scope of work created by OHS, the NAIANHSCO facilitates collaboration among Head Start agencies and state and local entities, as charged by OHS in the Region XI Office in the following areas of priority:

**School Transitions**

- To foster seamless transitions and long-term success of Head Start children by promoting continuity of services between the Head Start Child Development and Learning Framework and state early learning standards including pre-k entry assessment and interoperable data systems.

**Professional Development**

- To collaborate with institutions of higher education to promote professional development through education and credentialing programs for early childhood providers in states.

**Child Care and Early Childhood Systems**

- To coordinate activities with the state agency responsible for the State Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program and resource and referral, to make full-working-day and full-calendar-year services available to children. To include Head Start Program Performance Standards in state efforts to rate the quality of programs (Quality Rating and Improvement System, or QRIS) and support Head Start programs in participating in QRIS and partnering with child care and early childhood systems at the local level.

### Regional Office Priorities

- To support other regional office priorities such as family and community partnerships; health, mental health, and oral health; disabilities; and support to military families. Other special OHS and Administration for Children and Families (ACF) initiative requests for HSSCO support should be routed through the OHS Regional Offices.

The NAIANHSCO is also tasked with the annual update of the needs assessment and strategic plan.

## **SURVEY INSTRUMENT AND METHODOLOGY**

As outlined in the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Sec. 642B(a)(4)(B) the Director of the NAIANHSCO is tasked with developing a strategic plan, based on the findings of a national AIAN HS collaboration needs assessment, that will:

“Enhance collaboration and coordination of Head Start services by Head Start agencies with other entities providing early childhood education and development (such as child care or services offered by museums), health care, mental health care, welfare, child protective services, education and community service activities, family literacy services, reading readiness programs (including such programs offered by public and school libraries), services relating to children with disabilities, other early childhood education and development for limited English proficient children and homeless children, and services provided for children in foster care and children referred to Head Start programs by child welfare agencies, including agencies and state officials responsible for services; ... assist Head Start agencies to develop a plan for the provision of full working-day, full calendar year services for children enrolled in Head Start programs who needs such services; assist Head Start agencies to align curricula and assessments used in Head Start programs with the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework and, as appropriate, state early learning standards; and enable Head Start agencies to better access professional development opportunities for Head Start staff, such as by working with Head Start agencies to enable the agencies to meet the degree requirements, ... including providing distance learning opportunities for Head Start staff, where needed to make higher education more accessible to Head Start staff; and enable the Head Start agencies to better conduct outreach to eligible families.”

In November 2012, AIAN HS and EHS programs were invited to complete a comprehensive needs assessment survey detailing the extent of their involvement with various community partners and the achievement of representative tasks related to the following priority areas of collaboration: Child Care; Community Services; Education: Head Start Transition and Alignment with K-12, and Head Start and Pre-K Partnership Development; Family/Child Assistance; Family Literacy Services; Health Services; Professional Development; Services for Children Experiencing Homelessness; and Services for Children with Disabilities.

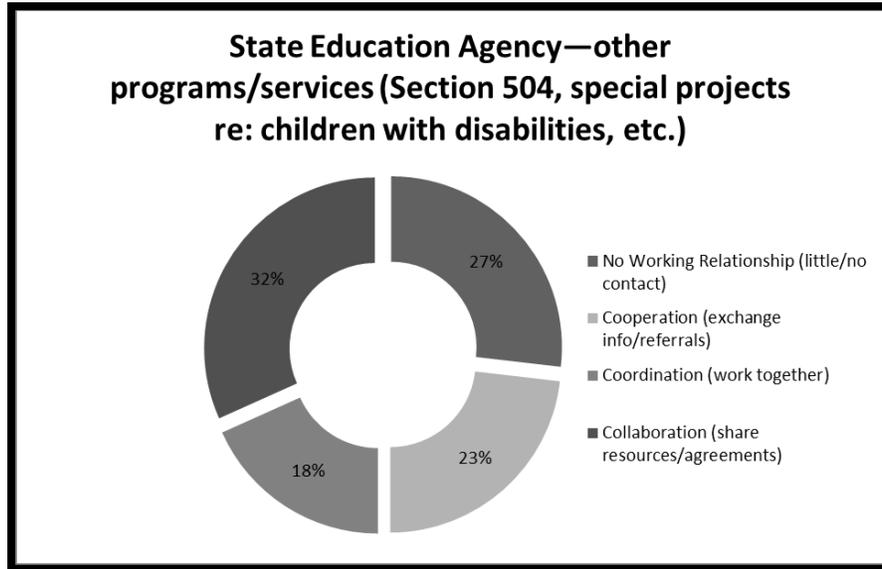
The design and development of the NAIANHSCO needs assessment was a collaborative effort between OHS’s Region XI Regional Program Manager, T/TA Manager and the NAIANHSCO Director. The survey questions were defined based on past NAIANSHCO and HSSCO needs assessments, OHS Risk Management meetings, and T/TA data.

A web-based online survey (SurveyMonkey) was used as the primary means of data collection. Data collection was conducted from September 19th until December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012. A total of 94 grantees (and their delegates) participated in the survey. This represents 61% of all AIAN HS grantees. The data presented in this summary is an aggregated report of all responding grantees and states, and is reported as a region; AIAN HS Region XI. There were a total 57 questions on the survey (this excludes questions about contact information).

## SUMMARY OF DATA

Results are based on self-reported survey data. Results are organized by the specified priority areas. In addition, data from the Program Information Report (PIR) is referenced to support the interpretation of survey data.

### PRIORITY: SCHOOL TRANSITION



*Graph 1*

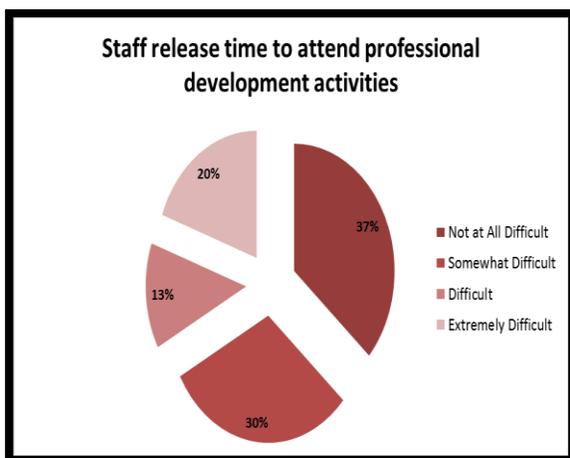
Partnerships/Collaborations in the area of disabilities: Graph 1 shows that 50% of the survey respondents reported that they had either little to no working relationship or only some cooperation (exchange of information and/or referrals) with state education agencies that offered services to children with disabilities.

In addition, 40% of the grantees reported they had difficulties with the LEAs coordinating support services for children and families (i.e. transportation).

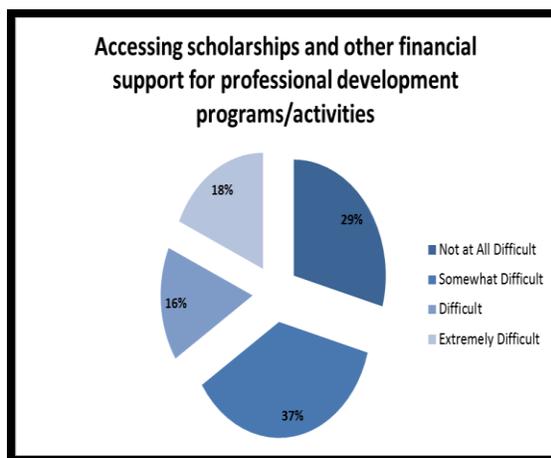
The 2011-12 PIR indicated that Region XI (AIAN HS) grantees served 2,544 (12%) of children with a disability who had an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP).

## PRIORITY: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Graphs 2 and 3 (below) indicate 63% of staff had difficulties with obtaining release time from their jobs to attend professional development activities, and 71% had difficulties accessing scholarships and other financial support to assist with the cost of securing a degree.



Graph 2



Graph 3

In the 2011-12 PIR data, only 31.8% of AIAN HS preschool classroom teachers met the degree/credential requirements of Section 648A.(2)(A) (BA or higher - ECE/related).

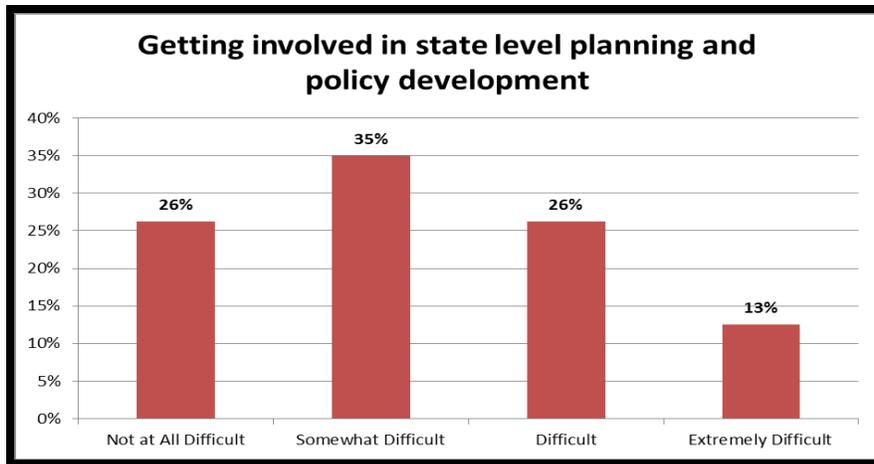
The 2011-12 PIR also indicates that 71.2% of AIAN HS preschool classes had at least one teacher that meets degree/credential requirements of Section 648A.(3)(B) (AA or higher - ECE/related).

Thirdly, the 2011-12 PIR shows that 84.1% of AIAN HS preschool classroom assistant teachers had a CDA/equivalent or higher, or were enrolled in a CDA or ECE degree program.

In the white paper “Improving the Skills and Credentials of Migrant, Seasonal and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start teachers: BUILDING FROM WITHIN,” (02/2010) teaching staff in AIAN HS are shown to have had difficulty pursuing college degrees and professional training due to limited access to higher education institutions; since the majority of staff live in very rural communities. They also had difficulties with transferability of college credits from one institution to another.

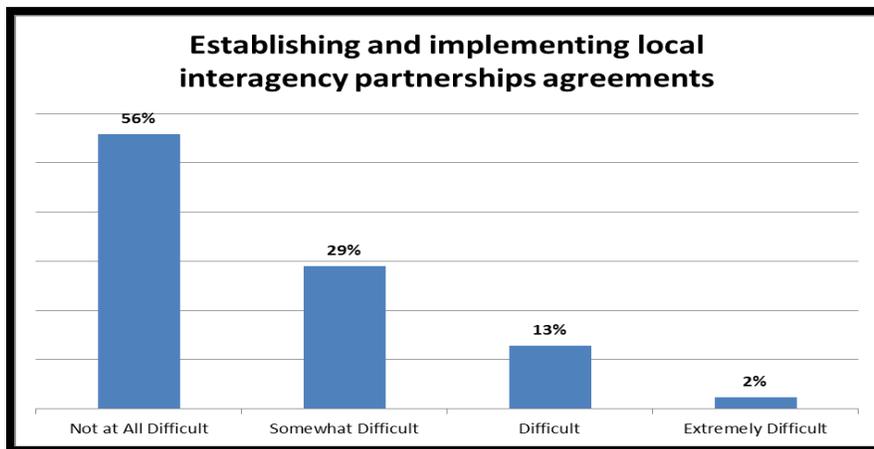
## PRIORITY: CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS

Partnerships/Collaborations: The graph below (Graph 4) indicates that 74% of AIAN HS grantees who responded experience some degree of difficulty in engaging in state-level planning and policy development activities. This is also evident in the number of grantees reporting little to no working relationship with state agencies. This is evident in each one of the areas of priority (see each priority area for more detailed information).



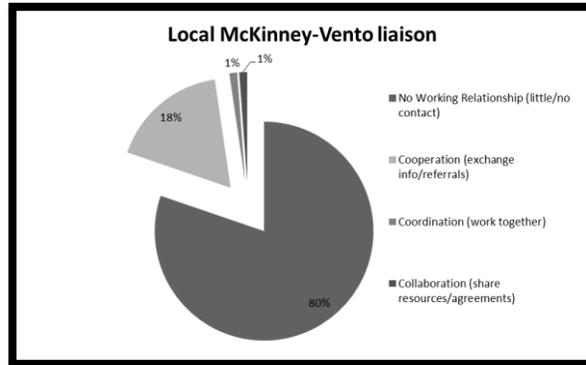
Graph 4

Partnerships/Collaborations: AIAN HS grantees seem to have had more success in engaging with local agencies than with agencies at the state level. 56% of the grantees reported they did not have any difficulties establishing and implementing interagency partnership agreements at the local level. (See graph 5, below)



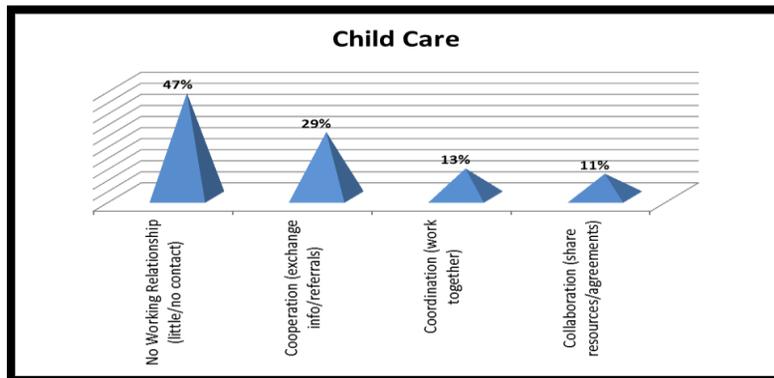
Graph 5

Partnerships/Collaborations in the area of homelessness: According to the PIR of 2011-2012, AIAN HS grantees served 1,686 (23%) of families who were experiencing homelessness. However, 80% of the AIAN HS grantees that responded to the NAIANHSCO needs assessment survey reported that they had no working relationship with their local McKinney-Vento representatives.

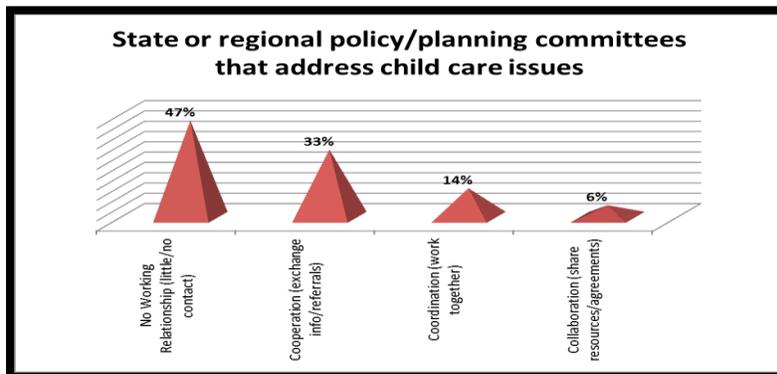


Graph 6

Partnerships/Collaborations in the area of child care: It is interesting to note that in the two graphs below, 47% of AIAN HS grantees reported that they had no working relationship with state child care agencies. The same percentage of respondents indicated they are not involved in planning and/or policy development with regards to child care issues. This number may improve upon establishing better understanding and working relationships with Indian Child Care (ICC) as well as changing this from state child care to ICC. Most tribes have no state childcare in their area.

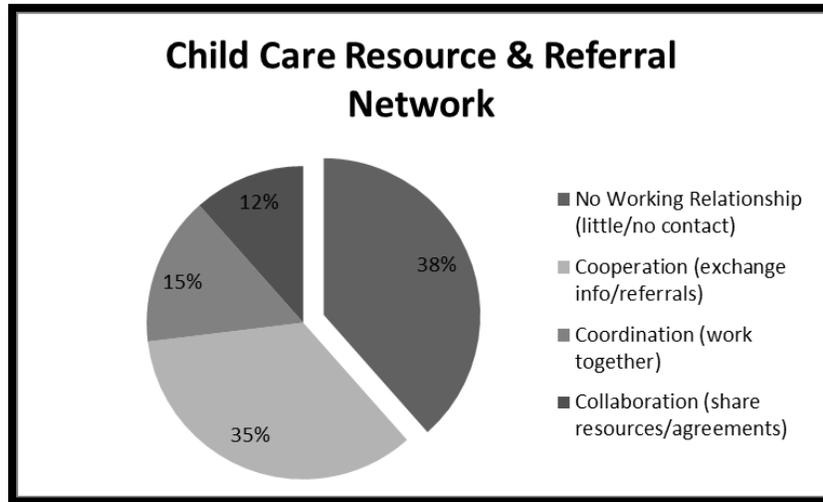


Graph 7



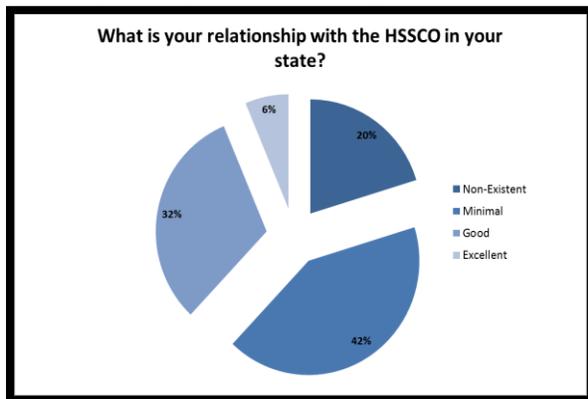
Graph 8

Partnerships/Collaborations in the area of child care: 62% of responding AIAN HS grantees had some level of working relationship with their local Child Care Resource and Referral Network (CCR RN). Although 62% of grantees had some working relationship with CCR RNs, 38% of respondents reported having no working relationship.

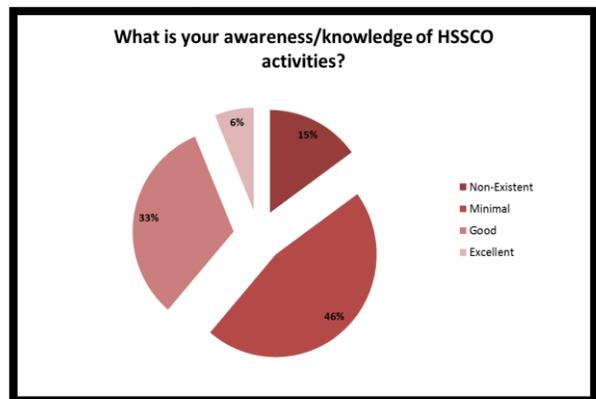


Graph 9

Establishing a working relationship with state level establishments: It is imperative for AIAN HS grantees to establish a working relationship with the HSSCO and its director, since the HSSCO serves as the point of contact and conduit for information regarding collaboration activities, initiatives, and resources that advance early education and family services in the state. The graphs below (10 and 11) depict the need for strengthening the relationship between HSSCOs and the AIAN HS grantees.

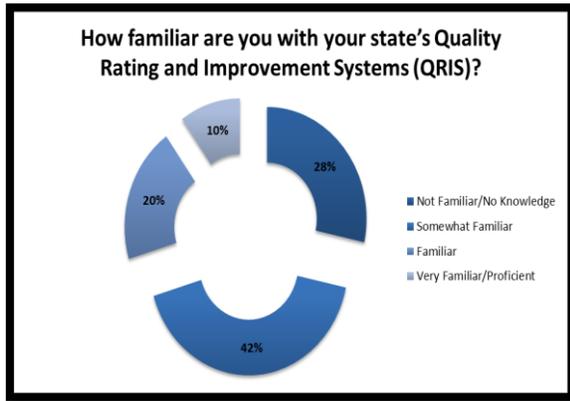


Graph 10

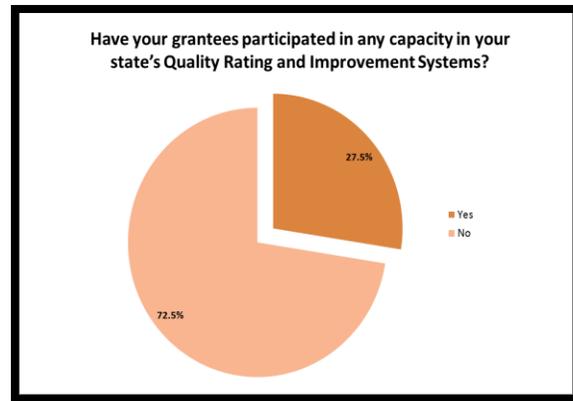


Graph 11

“The Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) [serves] to assess and improve the quality of early care and education programs for children ages birth to five and older” (CHILD TRENDS: EARLY CHILDHOOD HIGHLIGHTS Volume 1, Issue 1 Volume 1, Issue 1 April 22, 2010 May 10, 2010)



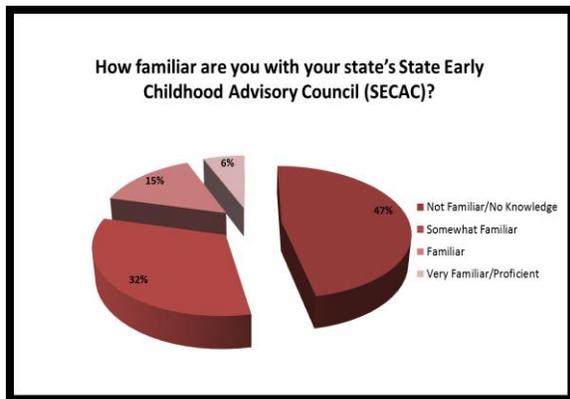
Graph 12



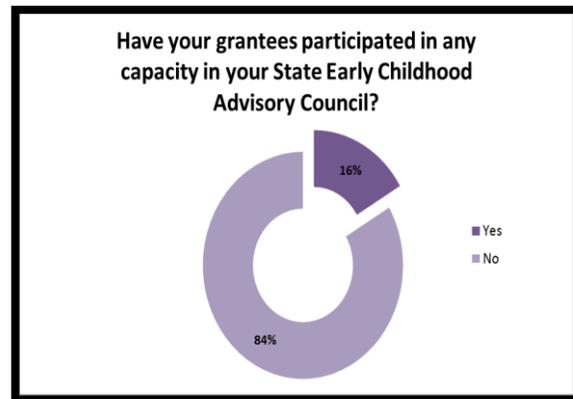
Graph 13

The graphs above (12 and 13) demonstrate that AIAN HS grantee respondents had little to no participation in their state's QRIS process. 72.5% of respondents indicate that their grantees have not participated in any capacity in their state's QRIS systems (Graph 13). Additionally, Graph 12 shows that 28% and 42% of respondents are “Not Familiar” and only “Somewhat Familiar” with their state's QRIS systems, respectively. AIAN HS grantees have an opportunity to establish a workable QRIS that would still maintain a language and cultural foundation.

The same can be said about the AIAN HS grantee knowledge and engagement with the State Early Childhood Advisory Council (SECAC). Graph 14 shows that 47% of grantees responded with a rating of ‘Not Familiar/No Knowledge’ regarding their familiarity with their SECAC. Furthermore, Graph 15 illustrates that 84% of respondents reported that their grantees have not participated in any capacity in their SECAC.



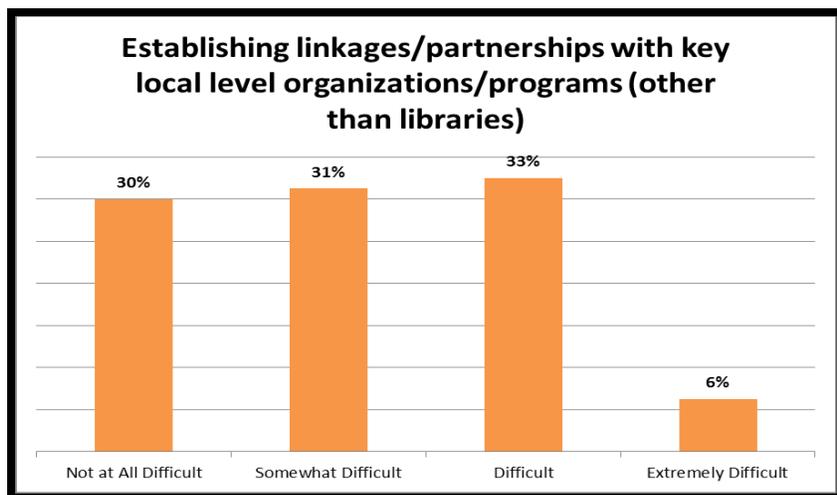
Graph 14



Graph 15

## Priority: Regional Priorities

Partnerships/Collaborations in the area of literacy: 70% of AIAN HS grantees that responded had some degree of difficulty establishing partnerships with local organizations that provide literacy services to the community. The grantees also reported that about 70% have had difficulty with partnerships at the state level with agencies such as the Department of Education's Title 1, Part A Family Literacy Program and with the Even Start Family Literacy Program.



Graph 16

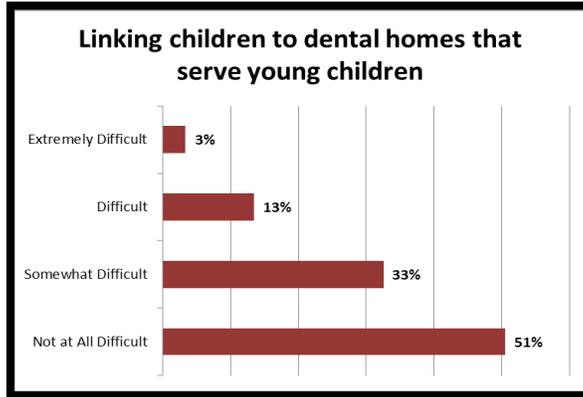
## Partnerships/Collaborations in the area of health:

The year 2012 PIR indicates that of the 21,216 children enrolled in AIAN HS grantees:

- 18,592 (88%) children had health insurance by the end of the enrollment year. Of those 18,592 children, 15,364 (83%) were enrolled in either in Medicaid, CHIP (or Medicaid/CHIP combination) or state-funded insurances.
- 14,715 (69%) received their health care from Children Indian Health Services (CIHS).
- 19,883 (94%) of the children had continuous access to health care by the end of the enrollment year.
  - 17,949 (85%) of AIAN HS children were up-to-date according to a relevant state's EPSDT schedule.
- 18,706 (88%) of the children had continuous access to dental care by the end of the enrollment year.
  - 18,295 (86%) of AIAN HS children received dental preventive care.
  - 17,230 (81%) of AIAN HS children completed oral health examination.
- 2,006 (9%) of AIAN HS children had an individual mental health assessment.

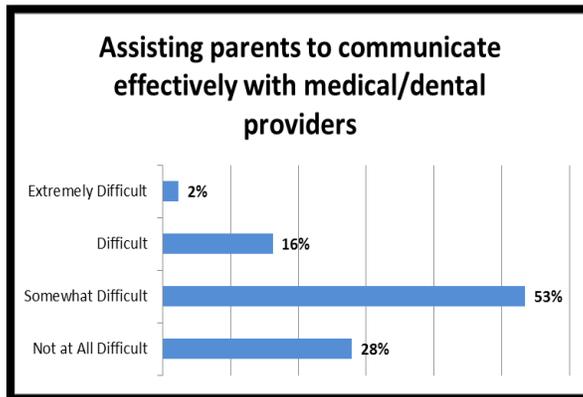
Partnerships/Collaborations in the area of health services and assistance to parents:

49% of the AIAN HS grantees reported having difficulty linking families to a dental home that served young children (Graph 17). Transportation to medical and dental providers is extremely difficult for some families. Some families live as far away as 50 miles from the nearest dentist who accepts Medicaid as payment. For AIAN HS families living in Alaska, their homes may be several hundred miles from the closest dental or medical provider.



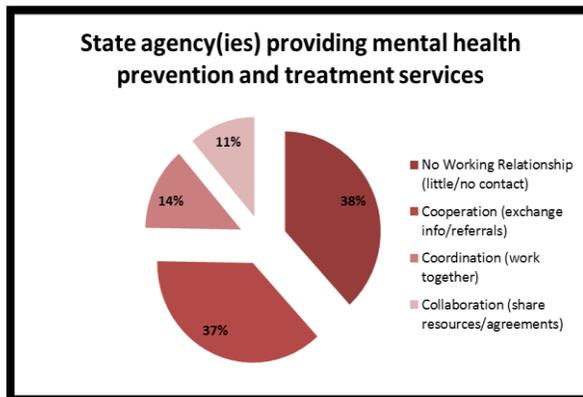
Graph 17

71% of the AIAN HS grantees reported having difficulty assisting parents communicate effectively with medical and dental providers (Graph 18).



Graph 18

38% of the AIAN HS grantees reported having no working relationship with state mental health agencies (Graph 19).



Graph 19

## SUMMARY

Upon reviewing the needs assessment, it is apparent there is a huge disconnect between the AIAN HS grantees and state programs. This may be higher than normal due to not having an AIAN HS Collaboration Director in place for over a year. So, a priority of this office will be to bridge that gap and help establish workable relationships between the AIAN HS grantees and HSSCOs in each of the 26 states. Some are currently working together, but the majority of these relationships are not yet established.

Another area that is apparent in this assessment is the lack of collaboration and working relationships between the AIAN HS and ICC. The previous NAIANHSCO needs assessment survey focused on state child care, which for the most part is not a part of AIAN HS communities. Only a small percentage of AIAN HS grantees are active in areas that have local or state subsidized child care facilities. Those that have ICC normally have not yet started a working relationship or have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Graphs 7 and 8 show that 47 percent of AIAN HS grantees reported that they had no working relationship with state child care agencies. The same percentage of respondents indicated they are not involved in planning and/or policy development with regards to child care issues. The next needs assessment must address the issue concerning ICC in more depth in order to present a more accurate picture of working relationships between AIAN HS and ICC. The benefit of AIAN HS and ICC working together is that it would bring about better high quality environments for both programs. This would impact the community as a whole in a very positive way. Understanding the benefits of working and collaborating with ICC would see an improvement in the child care percentages.

A Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early and school-age care and education programs. Similar to rating systems for restaurants and hotels, the QRIS awards quality ratings to early and school-age care and education programs that meet a set of defined program standards. By participating in their state's QRIS, AIAN HS grantees can embark on a path of continuous quality improvement. Even providers that have met the standards of the lowest QRIS levels have achieved levels of quality that are beyond the minimum requirements to operate. Currently, 23 states have a statewide QRIS with all five elements. Graphs (12 and 13) demonstrate that 72% of AIAN HS responding grantees had little to no participation in their state's QRIS process. AIAN HS grantees have an opportunity to establish a workable QRIS while maintaining their language and cultural foundation. QRIS would improve quality in AIAN HS grantee programs, while providing new opportunities, such as higher reimbursement rates linked to the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) subsidy system, quality grants, merit awards, loans linked to quality ratings, and priority given to applications for practitioner wage initiatives, scholarships, or other professional development supports. The NAIANHSCO will assist programs in collaborating with their HSSCO to find out if their state has a QRIS system and if so, how to implement it. For states without a QRIS system, the NAIANHSCO can help identify other sources that may help in achieving a QRIS system for their programs. This collaboration and implementation could bring about a higher standard and quality to classroom practices and overall program implementation.

In addition, issues continue with LEAs. 40% of the grantees reported they had difficulties with the LEAs coordinating support services for children and families. Because this happens at the local level and it is normally done through the local school system, each is individualized and it takes an individual approach in order to work through any issues between the AIAN HS grantee and the school LEA representatives. The NAIANHSCO will continue to support individual programs in this endeavor. This is also an area where good relationships with HSSCO would be beneficial to the grantee.

According to the 2011-2012 PIR, AIAN HS grantees served 1,686 (23%) of families who were experiencing homelessness. However, 80% of the AIAN HS grantees that responded to the NAIANHSCO needs assessment survey reported that they had no working relationship with their local McKinney-Vento representatives. This is an area that needs more information sharing with the grantees. Helping grantees to understand more about the homelessness act, would be beneficial to the program, while maintaining cultural sensitivity on this subject.

## **NEXT STEPS**

- The two areas missing from this needs assessment are School Readiness and Language/Cultural Preservation, which will be addressed in the needs assessment update in November 2013.
- Based on the results of this year's needs assessment data, the NAIANHSCO Advisory Council developed goals and objectives for the 2012-2016 NAIANHSCO strategic plan.
- The NAIANHSCO Director is developing the annual work plan based on the goals, objectives and implementation activities set forth in the 2012-2016 strategic plan.
- The results of the needs assessments will be provided to each respective respondent/grantee. AIAN HS grantees may use results of the needs assessments to reflect upon indicated areas of strength as well as potential areas for improvement.
- This report will be forwarded to the OHS Collaboration Office, AIAN HS Region XI office, Head Start State Collaboration Offices, the AIAN HS Region XI Training and Technical Assistance Team, the National Indian Head Start Directors Association and will be made available to the general public.
- For 2013-2014 Update: The NAIANHSCO Advisory Council will advise suggested activities to be included on the needs assessment survey (during the June 2013 Advisory Council meeting) such as: School Readiness and Language/Cultural preservation.



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HEAD START COLLABORATION OFFICE

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For questions regarding this report, or for a copy of the NAIANHSCO strategic plan and annual work plan, please contact Micker Richardson and/or Kevin Skolnik:

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