

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Tribal Early Childhood Working Group
Questions for Tribal Leaders**

Statutory Authority:

The H.R. 1865, Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020, became Public Law No: 116-94 on December 20, 2019:

“Native American Programs: Funded at \$56 million, an increase of \$1.5 million over the FY 2019 level and directs that funds support \$12.5 million for Native American language preservation activities, including not less than \$4.5 million for language immersion programs. ACF is encouraged to convene a working group of federal early childhood program administrators, tribal early childhood stakeholders, and tribal leaders to examine coordination issues that may be impacting early childhood initiatives in tribal communities.”

Background/Introduction:

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) works closely with tribes to identify obstacles to collaboration and systems improvement, and to help them develop and carry out strategies that are in line with tribal community values, traditions, and priorities. Tribes often struggle to work across traditionally siloed programs to build stronger early childhood systems to support their youngest and most vulnerable citizens. For instance, although the COVID-19 pandemic has been an “equal opportunity crisis,” the impact will be felt more deeply in some communities than in others. Tribal communities are particularly vulnerable due to existing health disparities and, in many cases, poor resources and infrastructures. Effective coordination of early childhood programs at the tribal level has the potential to better address child, family, and community needs during this challenging time. To support this type of coordination as well as be responsive to the specific legislation noted above, ACF’s Administration for Native Americans (ANA) and the Office of Early Childhood Development (ECD) is forming the **Tribal Early Childhood Working Group (TEC)**.

Purpose and Scope:

In support of the legislation, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is convening a stakeholder work group to examine coordination issues that may be impacting early childhood initiatives in tribal communities. An ACF team, led by the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) and the Office of Early Childhood Development (ECD) will be identifying members who can be a part of TEC.

ACF would like to solicit feedback directly from tribal leaders on barriers and opportunities regarding synchronizing early childhood initiatives in their communities. Here are proposed questions:

1. What would an ideal early childhood system look like in your community?
2. What are the factors that make it easier to coordinate across early childhood programs and initiatives and develop stronger early childhood systems in tribal communities?

3. What makes it difficult to coordinate across programs and initiatives in tribal communities? These might be legislative, administrative or other issues.
4. What could the federal government do to make coordination and systems building easier (technical assistance, monitoring, funding, etc.)?
5. How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the ability to provide services for young children?
6. What other resources about the pandemic would have been helpful to communities to mitigate impact?
7. In the future, what discussions need to be had to make certain communities are prepared in the event of a health crisis or natural disaster?

Responses are being solicited through the ACF Annual Consultation June 10, 2020 and the HHS Regional Tribal Consultation Sessions.

Written Responses may be submitted by August 11, 2020 to anacommissioner@acf.hhs.gov or within 30 days of the HHS Regional Tribal Consultation to: Consultation@hhs.gov