Region XI Head Start During the COVID-19 Pandemic: New Supports for Staff

The American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey 2019 (AIAN FACES 2019) is a study describing the children, families, and programs in Region XI Head Start. In 2019, there were about 145 Region XI Head Start programs across the United States. These programs served about 20,000 children, and most of those children were AIAN. AIAN FACES spring 2020 data collection began in late February, but most programs were shut down by mid-March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The AIAN FACES study team, with advice from members of the AIAN FACES Workgroup, created a survey based on COVID-19 and collected data from program and center directors from June 2, 2020 to July 17, 2020.

Region XI Head Start children’s programs provided many supports for professional development and day-to-day operations for their staff during the COVID-19 pandemic that were not provided before. Most programs provided professional development (for example, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC)) including on distance learning and virtual teaching strategies.

Region XI Head Start children’s programs encouraged staff to engage in many new or increased supports to improve their well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most programs encouraged personal health and safety (for example, social distancing, use of mask and gloves).

Region XI Head Start children’s programs provided many new or increased supports to improve staff retention during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most programs provided administrative leave.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional development including on distance learning and virtual teaching</th>
<th>91%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technological support or equipment</td>
<td>74%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of video platforms for communication</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<tr>
<td>OHS MyPeers virtual learning network community</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12%</td>
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Encouraging personal health and safety | 96%
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Providing informational resources for staff | 73%
Checking in with/connecting with staff more frequently | 67%
Offering professional mental health consultations | 54%
Offering virtual staff social events | 12%

Administrative leave | 87%
More flexible hours | 46%
Part-time/reduced work schedule | 31%
Revised sick leave policy | 17%
Other | 6%
Pay reduction to avoid lay-offs | 5%