



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: {{item.number}}

Agenda Date: September 24, 2024

In Control: Head Start Policy Council Meeting

DEPARTMENT: Department of Human Services

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Melody Woosley

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Correspondence – ACF-OHS-IM-24-03 Affirming the Use of Indigenous Knowledge to Meet Curricula and Assessment Requirements in American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Programs

SUMMARY:

This item presents the following from the Department of Human Services (DHS) Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership programs for action by the Head Start Policy Council.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Head Start (OHS) partners with Tribes and Tribal organizations to administer the Head Start program for children ages birth to 5 and their families. Through nation-to-nation relationships, OHS engages in open discussions with

Tribes to understand how to support their Head Start programs. Through this nation-to-nation dialogue, including consultations, listening sessions, and ACF's Tribal Advisory Committee (TAC), Tribal leaders have emphasized the importance of Indigenous Knowledge, language, and culture in designing Head Start programs.

A central purpose of American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Head Start programs is to enhance opportunities for young children and their families to engage in Native cultural activities, and to expand opportunities for exposure to Native languages. Native language and culture cannot be separated from Indigenous Knowledge.

In December 2022, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) with the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) released guidance to federal agencies on incorporating Indigenous Knowledge into federal research, policy, and decision making. The inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in Head Start programming, including curricula and developmental assessments, is vital to Tribal children, families, and communities. OHS stands in reverence for Tribes as they determine how language, culture, and traditional practices are embedded in AIAN programs. Tribes must determine the curriculum and assessments that will meet the priorities of their communities.

This Information Memorandum identifies how AIAN Head Start programs can meet the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (the Performance Standards) related to curricula and assessment in ways that center Indigenous Knowledge and Tribal sovereignty.

ISSUE:

Rules and regulations for the Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Start-Child Care Partnership grants as set forth by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) require the Head Start Policy Council to review programmatic actions to oversee certain key responsibilities.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no anticipated impact to the general fund as a result of these actions.

ALTERNATIVES:

The review of the items included in this memorandum are required for program compliance with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services rules and regulations for Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Head Start- Child Care Partnership programs.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff will present a briefing on this item subject to possible action by the HSPC Committee. Staff recommends review and approval of the items included in this memorandum.