

Tanana Chiefs Conference Prenatal to Five Head Start Program Updates

Report to the Public

August 2024

Enrollment:

Children Served: Funded Enrollment 180

Children Served:	88
Income Eligible Children Served	31%
Categorically Eligible Foster Children	8%
Categorically Eligible Public Assistance	11%
American Indian/Alaska Native children served	76%
Average Monthly Attendance	75%
Children up-to-date on immunizations	81%
Children receiving preventive dental care	33%
Children receiving well child checks	30%
Children with disabilities	3%

Families Served: 87

Services Provided:

Comprehensive early childhood education services were provided to children birth to age five, focused on the individual learning styles of children while incorporating Athabascan culture, creative arts, literacy, language development and communication, science, math, physical health and development, as well as social skill competence.

- All educators use the *Creative Curriculum*TM for Infants Toddlers and Twos or Preschool, depending on the age of the children. This is supplemented with the Partners for a Healthy Baby curriculum in the home based setting. Assessments on children's progress are conducted and aggregated three times each program year using Teaching Strategies Gold, which showed children had considerable growth in literacy and mathematics. Teachers plan individualized and group activities focused around the child's social/emotional and cognitive growth to prepare them for elementary school. We work with five local education agencies throughout our region to ensure expectations are met for kindergarten and that transitions to elementary schools are seamless. Teachers, teacher aides and Family Visitors are actively working towards meeting the minimum requirements for their respective positions, which is an Associate degree in Early Childhood Education for teachers, or a Childhood Development Associates Certificate for teacher aides and Family Visitors. All staff receive a minimum of 15 hours of continuing education each year. In 2023-2024 all staff were brought to Fairbanks for a week long training. One in August and one in November.

- Collaborative agreements exist with all local education agencies, as well as public health and Indian Health Service to assist the program in providing services in health, nutrition, dental, hearing & vision screenings, mental health, disabilities, training & technical assistance, parent groups, transition services from Head Start to the public schools, and family services. Health and dental screenings were higher this program year compared to the previous year in the pandemic.
- In a typical school year, parents participate in socializations, family fun nights, parent activity nights, Policy Council, and Parent Committee meetings. They provide volunteer hours in their communities to include volunteering in the classroom, hauling fuel for the Head Start buildings, and shoveling snow. Due to coming out of the pandemic, no socials or gathering during the regular school year was available. The summer program allowed for outdoor socials that was created specifically in each community. There were 7 classrooms open and 2 home visiting communities open this school year.
- The program has enrolled all children in monthly subscriptions for Hello Highlights (0-3), Highlights (3-5) and National Geographic for preschool children to increase types of print, to engage children in the joy of reading, and to provide fun ways parents and children to have enjoyable shared reading activities. All families were to be enrolled in Ready Rosie, and will have opportunity to enroll into the North Start Imagination Library in the new school year. These services will continue as well as the implementation of Zoo Phonics to continue to work on literacy skills program wide. The program shared Ready Rosie in group socials/family fun nights, as well in town hall meeting.
- The 2024 Community Assessment was sent to all open TCC Head Start programs and the program received 8 back. These were sent via mail, email, and fax. Sites showed there 152 children in the communities that CA's were sent from. This also was a factor in asking for an enrollment reduction. The program is asking to reduce funded enrollment from 180 to 140 with keeping the current funding level to support current staff wages and program operations. The enrollment reduction is being submitted with the new grant application.
- Nenana, Tok, Tetlin, and Northway will have playgrounds installed by the end of October 2024. This has been a three-year project that is finally being completed. The partnerships with schools and Native Councils have been really great to work with to provide these play areas for the communities.

Staffing:

- There remains to be about 12 vacancies ending the school year. This is a reduction of about 10 vacancies from last school year. Some of these vacancies are currently in the hiring process and the program expects many of these to be filled early in September.
- All positions are village based educator positions.

Financials:

EXPENSES:

Salary	\$800,003.88
Wage Related Taxes and Insurances	\$65,024.52
Fringe Benefits	\$760,208.26
Contractual	\$49,653.37
Travel	\$126,615.89
Equipment	\$42,423.71
Program Operating Costs	\$65,688.64
Utilities	\$37,496.05
Leases	\$48,039.32
Program Supplies	\$120,060.64
Indirect Expense	\$311,979.51
TOTAL:	\$2,427,193.79
Remaining balance:	\$869,677.21 to spend by 11/30/24

SOA-Alaska Child and Adult Care Food Program (included in above) reimbursement	\$24,105.09
Non-federal match	\$0.00 Waiver

Procurement Card amounts (included above) \$224,977.20 Dec 2023-Aug 2024.

Grant Funding FY23-24

FY23 Carry Over Request	\$970,229 Approved
SOA – State of Alaska Head Start	\$455,841
DHHS-Office of Head Start	\$3,296,871

New Program Year:

For the upcoming 2024-2025 program year, the program is going to focus on hiring staff in the inactive sites to reach being fully staffed, increase enrollments, and focus on raising the health screenings for children. The program still struggles with reaching the full enrollment requirement due to the workforce shortage. If the program does not reduce enrollment slots or reach 180 enrolled slots, the consequences could be losing funding up to \$1,796,584. The major challenge with being under enrolled is due to staffing. The program is submitting a plan to the Office of Head Start (OHS) stating hiring & staff retention would be a priority, as well as

reducing slots from 180 to 140. The program continues to plan these events for the locations needing staff.

- The program will continue to work on staff qualifications through university classes and CDA's. This is a direct result of the Federal review June 2021 and the FA2 in May 2023. Both showed staff qualifications as a priority
- Family service staff will work with families on goal setting and quarterly updates. This will assist families with resources for their families. This is also an area of concern from the FA2 in May.
- Lead assessments will be conducted in each site per the Head Start Performance Standards. The FA2 showed the program was non-compliant in this area due to not having all screenings completed. The program is working with OHS and TCC's Compliance department to complete this by October 2024.
- Hiring and retaining current staff. Offering increased support, coaching, and more travel to the sites will support staff in their communities.
- The program will be in the first year of the new 5-year grant, so the program has created new goals for monitoring for each component area. They will be aligned as much as possible with TCC's strategic plan & goals. Food security is a priority for TCC as a whole. Head Start wants to support this goal as much as possible with sustainable food activities like gardening & canning, or berry picking for jams.
- In November 2024, the program would like to hold another 3-day an in-service for staff to have additional training.

Rural Vacancies:

- Nenana
- Allakaket
- Huslia
- Tok
- Nulato
- Grayling
- Northway

USDA NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint>, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.