

## Topic 10 – Open Topic Strategy Circle

### *Examples of success*

- Important to have tribal representation on state early childhood advisory councils to foster good state-tribal relationships. In one state this helped open a channel for increased funding to flow to tribes. Individual tribes can also benefit from cultivating a positive relationship and open communication with state agencies.
- Process for referrals from the administrators of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families is working well in one tribe.

### *Barriers to success*

- Minnesota Early Learning Scholarships have a low take up rate in one reservation. There may be issues regarding paperwork burden, families' resistance to revealing income, or they may be worried about losing other public benefits. CCDF funds are paid to centers and cover most costs. Parents make a co-pay of \$30 per month per child. This year only one family with a \$149 co-pay applied for scholarships.
- There are few providers.
- Off-reservation providers have needs, and they aren't eligible for training and other assistance when funding goes to the tribes.
- How to obtain sustainable long-term funding for early childhood development training. For some tribes a large share of education budget (35% to 40%) is for transportation. Need to learn how to set up a revolving fund.
- Red Lake language immersion school is available for children age 3 to age 5, but children are not eligible once they reach kindergarten.
- In one tribal community the Head Start program feels threatened by the success of a local language immersion early childhood development program; they are worried that the immersion program will compete for funding.
- The tribal council in one tribe won't authorize tribal child care program to apply for funding. The council says that children and elders are key, but don't follow through.
- Hard to educate tribal councils; they think they know better. They think that Head Start is babysitting. In one tribe even when the federal Head Start representative came for a review, only two council members showed up.
- Some providers have to turn families away (place on waiting list) due to lack of funding and inadequate facilities. CCDF can authorize funding for a facility, but there is a long time lag.
- Too much office work for the director due to limited funding. This burns out management.
- Tribal computer network is not reliable or fast.
- Sometimes tribes take over state programs, such as child care assistance, without fully understanding the resources required to administrate it.

*How communities can address barriers*

- To encourage attendance at training programs, offering incentives helps. Food is good, but not enough; door prizes work better. Even then providers often fail to complete the mandated hours of training. It is a practical necessity to let that go.
- Build relationships with state officials.
- Enjoyed networking at the conference and learning from others. The field is evolving from a health and safety focus to including health and safety but also focusing on early childhood development.
- Elect more women to the tribal council to help advocate for young children and family issues.
- Work more with the National Congress on American Indians and tribal chair organizations to elevate issues regarding young children and families.
- Consider coordinating site visits to providers with other support organizations, like the Boys and Girls Clubs.
- Increase funding for early childhood development programs.
- More funding for tribal computer infrastructure.