



Title VI and Title III Grantee Collaboration Study

INTRODUCTION

The Older Americans Act (OAA) provides funding for state aging programs in 56 states and territories, as well as over 400 tribes represented by 281 tribal organizations and one Native Hawaiian organization.¹ Within the OAA, there is language that requires coordination between Title VI and AAAs/service providers with support from State Units on Aging (SUAs).^{2,3} In 2018, Administration for Community Living's (ACL) Administrator and Assistant Secretary for Aging, Lance Robertson, reiterated this requirement and advised SUA directors to support collaboration to meet the needs of tribal elders.⁴

While the OAA requires grantee coordination, it does not specify how grantees should work together and collaborate. As a result, ACL contracted with New Editions Consulting and their subcontractor, The Lewin Group (Lewin), to identify examples and best practices of Title VI and Title III grantee collaboration. The study addressed the following questions:

- ✓ **How do Title VI and Title III grantees collaborate?**
- ✓ **What are best practices related to Title VI and Title III grantee collaboration?**
- ✓ **What are facilitators and barriers related to Title VI and Title III grantee collaboration?**

- **Title VI grantees** must represent federally recognized Native American tribes, Alaska Villages, or Native Hawaiian Organizations. Title VI grantees provide home and community-based services such as nutrition, supportive, and caregiver services to eligible Native elders.⁵
- **Title III grantees** are state and community programs on aging, such as area agencies on aging (AAAs), provider agencies, and state units on aging (SUAs), that provide similar services to all persons aged 60 and older.
- **SUAs** are designated agencies located in each state that have planning and policy responsibilities and lead OAA activities.⁶

¹ Older Americans Act. (2020, July 21). Retrieved August 13, 2020, from: <https://acl.gov/about-acl/authorizing-statutes/older-americans-act>

² Compilation of Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended through P.L 116-131. (2020, July 21). Retrieved August 13, 2020 from: <https://bit.ly/33LkvHz>

³ Three sections relevant to grantee collaboration are: Sec. 306(a)(11) for Title III area plans, Sec. 614(a)(11) for Title VI applications, and Sec. 307(a)(21)(A) for state plans on aging.

⁴ As referenced in a letter sent by Lance Robertson on March 30, 2018 to the directors of SUAs.

⁵ Services for Native Americans (OAA Title VI). (2020, August 12). Retrieved August 13, 2020, from <http://bit.ly/30Pc11W>

⁶ Colello, K., & Napili, A. (2020, April 22). Older Americans Act Overview and Funding. Retrieved August 13, 2020, from: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R43414>

Exhibit 1. STUDY TIMELINE

Lewin took a multi-faceted approach to understand the nature of Title VI and Title III grantee collaboration. Steps included: collecting background materials; conducting an environmental scan; creating a collaboration framework; conducting subject matter expert (SME) phone interviews; reviewing Title VI grantee applications; fielding a regional administrator (RA) online survey; holding virtual site visits, which included phone interviews with representatives from Title VI grantees, AAAs/service providers, and SUAs; and analyzing and summarizing common themes. A timeline of study activities is shown in **Exhibit 1**.

Based on recommendations from SME interviews and background research, the evaluation team chose five case studies representative of various Aging Service Network contexts (e.g., single-planning and service area [PSA] versus multiple-PSA) and regions. The virtual site visit sample is outlined in **Exhibit 2**.

JAN. – MAR.
2020



EVALUATION
DESIGN

MAR. – MAY
2020



DATA TOOL
DEVELOPMENT

MAY – AUG.
2020



DATA
COLLECTION

JUN. – AUG.
2020



DATA ANALYSIS
(CONCURRENT TO
COLLECTION)

AUG. – SEPT.
2020

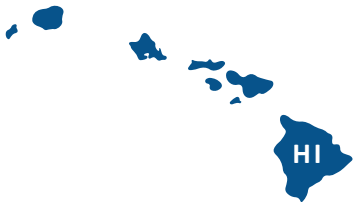


DATA
REPORTING

Exhibit 2. VIRTUAL SITE VISIT SAMPLE



PSA(S)	TITLE VI GRANTEE	AAA/SERVICE PROVIDER	SUA
Single	Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA)	Senior Citizens of Kodiak, Inc. (SCOK)	Alaska Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS)



PSA(S)	TITLE VI GRANTEE	AAA/SERVICE PROVIDER	SUA
Multiple	Alu Like, Inc.	Hawai'i County Office of Aging (HCOA)	Hawai'i Executive Office on Aging (EOA)



PSA(S)	TITLE VI GRANTEE	AAA/SERVICE PROVIDER	SUA
Single	Standing Rock Sioux Tribe	N/A	North Dakota Aging Services Division (ASD)



PSA(S)	TITLE VI GRANTEE	AAA/SERVICE PROVIDER	SUA
Multiple	Wyandotte Nation	Grand Gateway Area Agency on Aging (AAA)	Oklahoma Aging Services Division (ASD)



PSA(S)	TITLE VI GRANTEE	AAA/SERVICE PROVIDER	SUA
Multiple	Nooksack Indian Tribe	Northwest Regional Council (NWRC)	Washington Aging & Long-Term Support Administration (AL TSA)

OVERALL FINDINGS

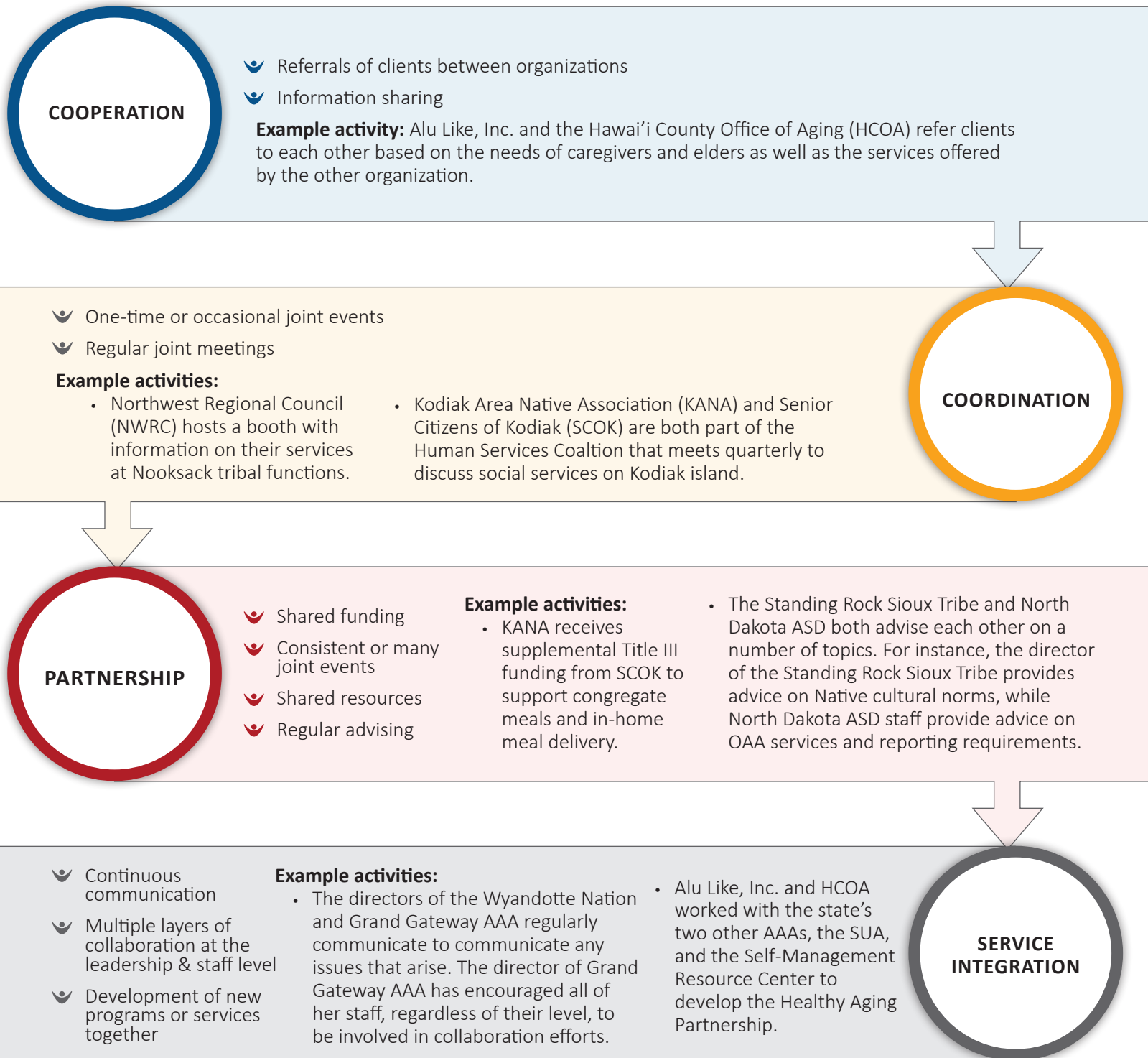
Most findings in this summary report are from the virtual site visits, which covered topics such as: background information, including organizational challenges and opportunities for growth; different types of collaboration activities; cultural competency and tribal sovereignty; facilitators and barriers to collaboration; and recommendations for collaboration. This summary also includes one-page summaries for each of the five case studies. Please see the webpage with the full report for more details.

TYPES OF COLLABORATION ACTIVITIES

Exhibit 3 summarizes the various types of collaboration activities that the evaluation team learned about during virtual site visits.

Exhibit 3. STUDY COLLABORATION FRAMEWORK

The evaluation team adapted Kagan’s (1991)⁷ collaboration framework to guide analysis and reporting of results. In general, the four levels build on each other from cooperation to service integration (from least complex and involved to most complex and involved); however, organizations may engage in activities in any order.



⁷ Kagan, S. L. (1991). United We Stand: Collaboration for Child Care and Early Education Services. Teachers College Press.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY AND TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY

A key issue for collaboration among Title VI grantees, AAAs/service providers, and SUAs is trust. Interviewees shared the following recommendations for acknowledging, integrating, and respecting Native values and practices in collaborative relationships:

- ✎ Having an equal approach to collaboration;
- ✎ Using tribal liaisons;
- ✎ Incorporating cultural competency into organizations including practices such as holding regular staff trainings on cultural competency, hiring Native employees, or making an effort to learn about Native values, practices, and histories;
- ✎ Accepting feedback from the Title VI grantees and acknowledging their contributions; and,
- ✎ Visiting the Title VI grantee in person.

- Cultural competency refers to a set of practices that acknowledge and meet individuals' cultural, social, and linguistic needs.⁸
- Tribal sovereignty is the inherent right of American Indians and Alaska Natives to self-govern. Many, but not all, Title VI grantees are federally recognized sovereign nations. In this study, three out of five of the Title VI grantees interviewed represented federally recognized tribal nations.⁹

Exhibit 4. FACILITATORS & BARRIERS TO COLLABORATION

FACILITATORS

- ⊕ Consistent and open communication
- ⊕ Shared vision and aligned goals
- ⊕ A “champion” or liaison as a consistent point-of-contact
- ⊕ Cultural respect and awareness
- ⊕ Title VI grantees on advisory boards
- ⊕ SUA support
- ⊕ Previous good relationships

BARRIERS

- ⊖ Staff turnover and limited staffing
- ⊖ Misaligned visions
- ⊖ Different reporting requirements
- ⊖ Miscommunication or lack of communication
- ⊖ Lack of information
- ⊖ Rural geography
- ⊖ Previous poor relationships

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

Interviewees offered the following recommendations for Title VI, AAAs/service providers, and SUAs, to create and maintain successful collaborations (**Exhibit 5**).

⁸ National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development. (n.d.). NCCC: Curricula Enhancement Module Series. Retrieved August 11, 2020, from: <https://nccc.georgetown.edu/curricula/culturalcompetence.html>

⁹ The Wyandotte Nation, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and Nooksack Tribe are the three Title VI grantees in this study that are sovereign, federally recognized tribal nations. There are no federally recognized tribal nations in Hawai'i; as a result, Alu Like, Inc. does not represent a sovereign nation. KANA serves Alaska Native beneficiaries and represents federally recognized tribes, but the organization itself is not a sovereign nation.

Exhibit 5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

FIND LOCAL GRANTEES FOR COLLABORATION

- See the Older Indians website for a list of Title VI Directors or the Aging, Independence, and Disability (AGID) map for information on grantee organizations.
- State Units on Aging (SUAs) can consider distributing lists of grantees.
- Introduce yourself and get to know the grantees.



UNDERSTAND THE POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS AROUND COLLABORATION

- Check out the Older Americans Act or state-specific information.



INCORPORATE CULTURAL COMPETENCY PRACTICES INTO ORGANIZATIONS

- Practice cultural competency.
- Recognize tribal sovereignty.
- Practice diverse hiring.



HAVE A CONSISTENT POINT OF CONTACT TO STREAMLINE COMMUNICATION



HAVE STANDING CHECK-IN MEETINGS

- Meetings can be helpful to brainstorm solutions or work on events together.



INCLUDE TITLE VI GRANTEE STAFF REPRESENTATIVES AND/OR TITLE VI SERVICE RECIPIENTS ON POLICY AND ADVISORY BOARDS



REGULARLY SHARE ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS AND PLANS WITH EACH OTHER



REACH OUT FOR HELP

- SUAs, Regional Administrators, and grantees can all support collaboration.



DON'T GIVE UP!

- Remember that collaboration can take time.



CASE STUDY: Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) and Senior Citizens of Kodiak, Inc. (SCOK)

BACKGROUND OF COLLABORATION

KANA and SCOK first established a formal contract in 2003. Before the contract started, SCOK collaborated with KANA through providing referrals and ensuring services for Native elders when they were in the city of Kodiak, Alaska.

The Older Americans Act (OAA) provides funding provisions for state support of aging adults, and requires collaboration between Title VI and Title III grantees. This ACL study aims to summarize best practices among five case studies.

FUNDING



One of the primary ways that KANA collaborates with SCOK is through a formal contract for supplemental meal funding. SCOK provides Title III funding for KANA's congregate and home-delivered meal services to outlying villages year round.

MEETINGS



KANA and SCOK participate in quarterly Human Services Coalition meetings, which have been very meaningful and helpful in sharing information and updates, brainstorming solutions, and reducing service duplication. KANA started coordinating quarterly Human Services Coalition meetings over 10 years ago due to a grant. The organizations primarily communicate through the coalition meetings, but there are ad hoc communications on grant writing, contract renewal, referrals, and questions.

EVENTS



KANA and SCOK invite each other to attend health fairs and trainings that they host.

SUCCESSSES, CHALLENGES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✔ KANA faces a number of challenges related to the supplemental meal funding collaboration because of reporting differences for Title VI and Title III funding. This results in additional administrative responsibilities for KANA in distributing annual applications to elders, sending reminders for application completion, identifying Title VI and Title III eligibility, and tracking meals based on elder funding eligibility.
- ✔ Staff turnover and miscommunication can be obstacles to relationship building.
- ✔ For successful collaboration, the Title VI, AAA/service provider, and State Unit on Aging (SUA) administrators need to be on the same page with their objectives, outcomes, and strategies. Consistent and open communication is also very important.

“I would advise [to AAAs, service providers, and SUAs] that it is more of a two-way street and [the organizations] own the collaboration and communication of services equally.”

Title VI Grantee: KANA
Contact: Greg Zadina, Director
of Community Services
greg.zadina@kodiakhealthcare.org
907-486-9820

Service Provider: SCOK
Contact: Pat Branson, Executive Director
scokinc@ak.net
907-486-6181

SUA:
AK Senior and Disability Services (SDS)

CASE STUDY: Alu Like, Inc. and the Hawai'i County Office of Aging (HCOA)

BACKGROUND OF COLLABORATION

Alu Like, Inc. is a non-profit social service agency that focuses on enhancing the lives of Native Hawaiians. Alu Like, Inc. and HCOA have had a longstanding and successful relationship for over 10 years. A centerpiece of their collaborative efforts is the Healthy Aging Partnership, which is a series of evidence-based disease prevention programs for elders in Hawai'i.

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MEETINGS



Alu Like, Inc. and HCOA have meetings over the phone every two to four weeks to discuss updates, short- and long-term plans, and organizational visions. Additionally, despite being on different islands, they try to meet in person at least once annually.

EVENTS AND SERVICE DELIVERY



The two organizations routinely attend each other's events and host workshops on various topics together, such as health promotion. For the Healthy Aging Partnership, Alu Like, Inc. provides the trainers and curriculum, and HCOA provides the training materials and meeting space as well as occasionally covers travel for Alu Like, Inc. trainers.

REFERRALS



Alu Like, Inc. and HCOA regularly refer elders to each other and work together to ensure that elders receive the services needed.

SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✔ Representatives from both organizations reported that their collaborative relationship comes naturally and is built on a history of trust. Mutual respect helps the organizations solve problems together.
- ✔ The Aging Program planner for HCOA recommended being open and willing to share knowledge, and providing everyone a fair platform to express their needs in order to have a successful and collaborative relationship.

“The collaboration is something I believe in so much that I’m willing to go above and beyond to ensure collaboration continues even if funding is limited. I will do the extra work to keep the flame burning and providing services to people who so desperately need it.”

Title VI Grantee:
Alu Like, Inc.
Contact: Leslie Tanoue, Title VI Director
letanoue@alulike.org
808-535-6725

Area Agency on Aging (AAA):
Hawai'i County Office of Aging
Contact: Keola Kenoi-Okajima,
Aging Program Planner
mary.hcoa@hawaiiantel.net | 808-961-8340

State Unit on Aging (SUA):
HI Executive Office on Aging (EOA)

CASE STUDY: Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and North Dakota Aging Services Division (ASD)

BACKGROUND OF COLLABORATION

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe spans both North Dakota and South Dakota. North Dakota does not have any Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). The North Dakota ASD is the designated State Unit on Aging (SUA). Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the North Dakota ASD have a formal contract and routinely share data and information regarding information, trainings, and lists of elders and caregivers who receive Title III services. The two organizations have been working together for over 20 years.

The Older Americans Act (OAA) provides funding provisions for state support of aging adults, and requires collaboration between Title VI and Title III grantees. This ACL study aims to summarize best practices among five case studies.

ADVISING AND SUPPORTING



Through North Dakota ASD's assessment related to Title III funding, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe learned that they faced challenges in keeping delivered foods in the temperature "safe zones" due to limited delivery staff and a large delivery area. The North Dakota ASD purchased temperature-controlled delivery containers and sent them directly to the tribe to help them meet this need.

FUNDING



Standing Rock Sioux Tribe receives Title III funding from the North Dakota ASD and from the South Dakota SUA.

MEETINGS



Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and North Dakota ASD have standing weekly virtual check-in meetings to discuss areas that are going well and areas where they could use support. Additionally, North Dakota ASD is willing to travel to the reservation for meetings with Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

SUCCESSSES, CHALLENGES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Standing Rock Sioux Tribe successfully uses collaboration with the North Dakota ASD as an opportunity to build in quality assurance and quality improvement. Through their collaboration, the organizations identify new needs. For Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, working with the Title III program provides added accountability.
- ✓ North Dakota ASD has been receptive to prioritizing and learning about the cultural norms of Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, which improves their cultural competency and allows their collaboration to be more successful. An elder from Standing Rock Sioux Tribes sits on North Dakota ASD's Committee on Aging. This inclusion also helps ensure tribal needs are addressed at the state level.

"The Title VI and Title III [AAA/service provider/SUA] administrators need to be on the same page with their objectives, outcomes, and strategies. Consistent and open communication is also very important."

Title VI Grantee: Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
Contact: Petra Harmon One Hawk,
Title VI Director
pharmononehawk@standingrock.org
701-854-3846

SUA: ND ASD
Contact: Nancy Nikolas-Maier,
Aging Services Director
nmaier@nd.gov
701-328-4607

Administration for Community Living (ACL) Title VI and Title III Grantee Collaboration Study

CASE STUDY: Wyandotte Nation and Grand Gateway Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

BACKGROUND OF COLLABORATION

The Wyandotte Nation and Grand Gateway AAA have collaborated for over 30 years. The collaboration started before either of the current directors were in their roles. Currently, the two organizations do not have a formal contract.

The Older Americans Act (OAA) provides funding provisions for state support of aging adults, and requires collaboration between Title VI and Title III grantees. This ACL study aims to summarize best practices among five case studies.



MEETINGS

Both organizations are members of the Caregiver Coalition that formed in 2000. Other members include additional tribes in the Northeast Oklahoma region and various area social service agencies. Through the Caregiver Coalition, the two organizations plan two annual health fairs and a picnic where elders, caregivers, and community members can socialize and learn about available services.



TRANSIT SERVICES

Since 2011, Wyandotte Nation, Grand Gateway AAA, and other tribes have coordinated tribal transit through the Pelivan, which is a local bus service that provides free transit to all tribal citizens with a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood.



REGULAR COMMUNICATION

The director and staff of the two organizations communicate regularly through e-mail, coalition meetings (previously in-person and now over Zoom), phone calls, text messages, and Facebook.



REFERRALS

The Wyandotte Nation and Grand Gateway AAA regularly refer clients to each other.



ADVISORY COUNCIL PARTICIPATION

The current Title VI Director has been a member of the Grand Gateway AAA Advisory Council on Aging since 1992.

SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✔ It was noted that Grand Gateway AAA has a strong understanding of tribal sovereignty through their consistent acknowledgment and consideration of the tribes while making decisions.
- ✔ The long-standing and supportive relationships between the two directors and the organizations contributes to a high level of trust underpinning collaboration activities. For example, all Grand Gateway AAA staff members are encouraged to be active in collaboration efforts with Title VI grantees, regardless of their staff level.



“When I’m doing a PowerPoint at the national level, such as the National Title VI training, I tell them ‘Don’t wait for the AAA to call you. You call them! They can help you and you can help them. It works great.’ They don’t know what they’re missing if they’re not coordinating with their local AAA.”

Title VI Grantee:
Wyandotte Nation
Contact: Brenda House, Title VI Director
bhhouse@wyandotte-nation.org
918-678-6327

Area Agency on Aging (AAA):
Grand Gateway AAA
Contact: Staci Pierce, AAA Director
spierce@grandgateway.org
800-482-4594

State Unit on Aging (SUA):
OK Aging Services Division (ASD)

Administration for Community Living (ACL) Title VI and Title III Grantee Collaboration Study

CASE STUDY: Nooksack Tribe and Northwest Regional Council (NWRC)

BACKGROUND OF COLLABORATION

Since 1994, Nooksack Tribe has been one of six tribes that partner with NWRC's Tribal Outreach & Assistance Program. Currently, the two organizations do not have a formal contract. In the state of Washington, the 1989 Centennial Accord requires all state programs develop a government-to-government relationship with tribes. This includes the 7.01 Policy and Plan that requires each AAA to develop and collaborate on an annual plan with individual tribes.

The Older Americans Act (OAA) provides funding provisions for state support of aging adults, and requires collaboration between Title VI and Title III grantees. This ACL study aims to summarize best practices among five case studies.

MEETINGS



The Nooksack Tribe and NWRC participate in monthly Task Force meetings to discuss approaches to supporting elders outside of medical services. Participants include Nooksack Tribe social services staff (which encompasses Title VI services), NWRC, health professionals, and other area social service agencies. In addition to the monthly Task Force meetings, NWRC recently invited the Title VI Director to a meeting with other tribal leaders and the local hospital to discuss tribal norms in medical settings.



EVENTS

Prior to COVID-19, NWRC hosted booths at Nooksack functions, such as health and housing fairs.

REGULAR COMMUNICATION



The Title VI Director and NWRC staff communicate regularly when questions or issues arise. The Title VI Director noted that NWRC staff were very helpful in supporting her transition into the director role.



REFERRALS

The Nooksack Tribe and NWRC refer elders and caregivers to each other if their organization is not able to meet that individual's needs.

SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ The two organizations have built trust together as a result of monthly Task Force meeting discussions of sensitive and pressing issues. For example, during one of the Task Force meetings, the group discussed a Nooksack elder who was reluctant to pay for services provided by NWRC. The Title VI director noticed his unfamiliarity with NWRC and recommended that a Nooksack tribal staff member explain the process to him. The elder trusted this individual and eventually understood the need and expense for services. This anecdote highlighted the importance of cultural competency through openness and receptiveness from non-Native staff and organizations towards issues that concern Native service recipients. "It's important to let us lead sometimes and then they follow. As long as we can open the door, the tribal member is more willing to let someone in," stated the Title VI director.

"It's good for programs to reach out to each other. Find out what is successful at other programs. From my experience, programs are always willing to share what they're doing, what's working, and what's not working. This has been helpful for not only Title VI, but also my other programs."

Title VI Grantee:
Nooksack Tribe
Contact: Heidi Davis, Title VI Director
hdavis@nooksack-nsn.gov
360-592-5176 ext. 3423

Area Agency on Aging (AAA):
Northwest Regional Council (NWRC)

State Unit on Aging (SUA):
WA Aging and Long-Term Support
Administration (AL TSA)

