



Title VI and Title III Grantee Collaboration Study Final Report

*Prepared for: Administration for Community Living
Office for Performance and Evaluation*

*Submitted by: New Editions
The Lewin Group*

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Executive Summary

BACKGROUND AND STUDY OVERVIEW

The Older Americans Act (OAA) provides funding for state aging programs in 56 states and territories, as well as more than 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 grantees 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), State Units on Aging (SUAs), and service providers, 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 ES-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 and Area Agency on Aging (AAA)/service provider organizations and SUAs; and analyzing and summarizing common themes. A timeline of study activities is shown in Exhibit ES-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 ES-2 below. Additional information on the study methodology can be found in [Appendix A: Methodology](#).

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 ES-2.

VIRTUAL SITE VISIT SAMPLE



PSA(S)

Single

TITLE VI GRANTEE

Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA)

AAA/SERVICE PROVIDER

Senior Citizens of Kodiak, Inc. (SCOK)

SUA

Alaska Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS)



PSA(S)

Multiple

TITLE VI GRANTEE

Alu Like, Inc.

AAA/SERVICE PROVIDER

Hawai'i County Office of Aging (HCOA)

SUA

Hawai'i Executive Office on Aging (EOA)



PSA(S)

Single

TITLE VI GRANTEE

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

AAA/SERVICE PROVIDER

N/A

SUA

North Dakota Aging Services Division (ASD)



PSA(S)

Multiple

TITLE VI GRANTEE

Wyandotte Nation

AAA/SERVICE PROVIDER

Grand Gateway Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

SUA

Oklahoma Aging Services Division (ASD)



PSA(S)

Multiple

TITLE VI GRANTEE

Nooksack Indian Tribe

AAA/SERVICE PROVIDER

Northwest Regional Council (NWRC)

SUA

Washington Aging & Long-Term Support Administration (ALTSA)

FINDINGS

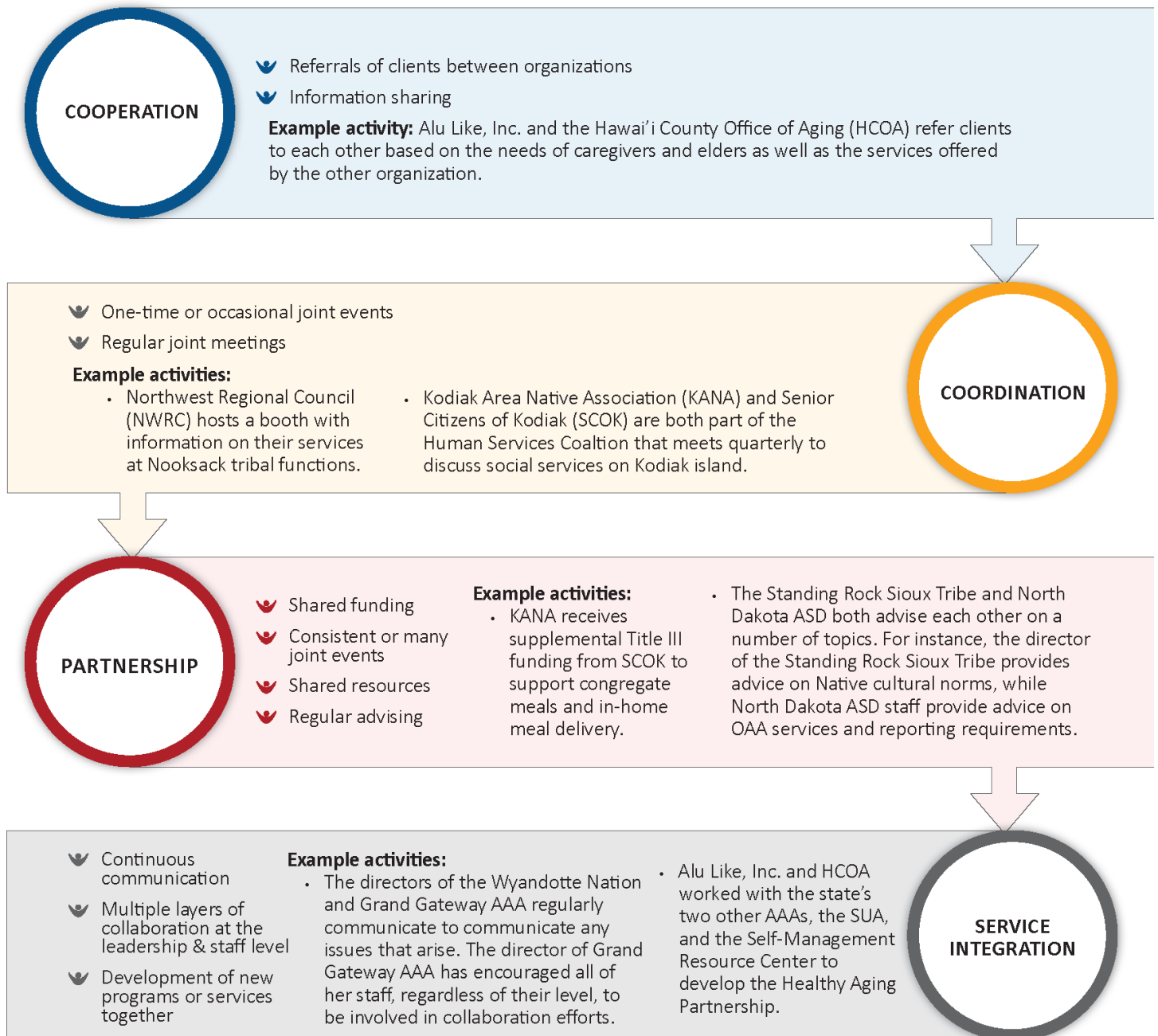
The evaluation team identified common themes across case studies and drew the majority of information from virtual site visits. This executive summary provides a high-level overview of the study findings. For more details on the overall findings, please go to [Chapter I: Overall Findings](#) of the full report.

TYPES OF COLLABORATION ACTIVITIES

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. This framework, along with examples of collaboration activities from site visit interviews is shown in Exhibit ES-3. An expanded version of the collaboration framework with examples of activities is found in the [Types of Collaboration Activities](#) section.

Exhibit ES-3.

SUMMARY OF COLLABORATION ACTIVITIES



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 cornerstone issue for collaboration among Title VI grantees, AAAs/service providers, and SUAs is the presence of trust. Due to historical and current strains on relationships among Native groups and federal or state governments, the evaluation team found it important to explore trust within the context of cultural competency and tribal sovereignty during the initial SME interviews and subsequent conversations with case study organizations. 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 Interviewees shared the following recommendations for acknowledging, integrating, and respecting Native values and practices in collaborative relationships:

- Having an equitable approach to collaboration;
- Utilizing 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.

Additional details can be found in the [Cultural Competency and Tribal Sovereignty](#) section.

FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS TO COLLABORATION

Interviewees mentioned the following themes related to facilitators (i.e., activities that made collaboration easier) and barriers to collaboration shown in Exhibit ES-4.

Exhibit ES-4.

FACILITATORS AND 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

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.

Additional information can be found in the [Facilitators of Collaboration](#) and [Barriers to Collaboration](#) sections.

SNAPSHOT OF COVID-19 IMPACT

Interviewees noted a number of challenges in response to the pandemic, such as shortages of food and necessary supplies, relationship building over virtual platforms, cancelation of events, lack of social opportunities for elders served, and adaptations to service delivery due to safety protocols. All interviewees mentioned service changes in response to COVID-19, such as regular in-person meetings shifting to virtual settings and the temporary closure of congregate services. Other changes included more frequent meetings between organizations, implementation of drive-through meals, increased home-delivered meals, and provision of supplies outside of meals (e.g., shelf-stable food, hygiene items, and other supplies) to reduce out-of-home shopping trips.

Organizations reported using innovative strategies to support service recipients, especially with regards to social isolation. For example, the Wyandotte Nation held a series of drive-through Car Bingo events in a local parking lot. Seniors were encouraged to “dress up their cars” as part of a contest, and the Bingo game was held over a megaphone.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was small in scale and provided initial insights into collaboration between Title VI and Title III grantees. Overall, the key takeaways of the study included the importance of trust in fostering relationships, and vice versa; the absence of trust serving as a barrier to relationships; recognition of tribal sovereignty (if applicable to the Title VI grantee) and Native cultures; and consideration of time needed to build lasting and collaborative relationships.

Future studies on Title VI and Title III grantee collaboration could include an expanded sample of grantees and use in-person site visits for greater rapport and opportunities for observation of grantee collaboration. Lewin anticipates that future case study research with larger samples of grantees across and within multiple states as well as in-person data collection approaches may build upon the findings of this study.

Introduction

Originally passed in 1965, the Older Americans Act (OAA) creates funding provisions for state support of aging adults through health promotion activities, senior centers, legal assistance, caregiver support, transportation, and other programs. Since 1965, Congress has passed multiple amendments and reauthorizations, many of which outline assurances for state agencies to support older adults with the greatest economic and social needs. The OAA provides funding for state aging programs in 56 states and territories, as well as more than 400 tribes represented by 281 tribal organizations and one Native Hawaiian organization.¹⁰

The original OAA language established Title III grants for state and community programs on aging, such as area agencies on aging (AAAs), State Units on Aging (SUAs), and service providers, that provide home- and community-based services such as nutrition, supportive, and caregiver 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.¹¹ In 1978, the OAA was amended to include Title VI grants for organizations that represent federally recognized Native American tribes, Alaska Villages, or Native Hawaiian Organizations. Title VI grantees provide similar nutrition, supportive, and caregiver services to eligible Native elders.

Funding allocations for both the Title VI and Title III grants are based upon the population aged 60 and older in their respective service areas; in the case of Title VI grants, this only includes American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian populations.^{12,13} While funding allocations are based on the population aged 60 or older, Title VI grantees determine their program's age of service eligibility and may establish age requirements below 60 years of age.¹⁴ Conversely, AAAs/service providers receiving Title III grants are restricted to an age requirement of 60 years and older.¹⁵

Within the OAA, there is language that requires coordination between Title VI and AAA/service providers with support from SUAs.^{16,17} In 2018, the 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.¹⁸ 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:

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¹⁰ Older Americans Act. (2020, July 21). Retrieved August 13, 2020, from: <https://acl.gov/about-acl/authorizing-statutes/older-americans-act>

¹¹ 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>

¹² 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>

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

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ 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>

¹⁶ 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>






¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ As referenced in a letter sent by Lance Robertson on March 30, 2018 to the directors of SUAs.

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 the common themes. 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 (e.g., Pacific Northwest, Midwest, and non-U.S.-mainland). The virtual site visit sample is outlined in Exhibit 1 below.

Exhibit 1.

VIRTUAL SITE VISIT SAMPLE

	PSA(S) Single	TITLE VI GRANTEE Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA)	AAA/SERVICE PROVIDER Senior Citizens of Kodiak, Inc. (SCOK)	SUA Alaska Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS)
	PSA(S) Multiple	TITLE VI GRANTEE Alu Like, Inc.	AAA/SERVICE PROVIDER Hawai'i County Office of Aging (HCOA)	SUA Hawai'i Executive Office on Aging (EOA)
	PSA(S) Single	TITLE VI GRANTEE Standing Rock Sioux Tribe	AAA/SERVICE PROVIDER N/A	SUA North Dakota Aging Services Division (ASD)
	PSA(S) Multiple	TITLE VI GRANTEE Wyandotte Nation	AAA/SERVICE PROVIDER Grand Gateway Area Agency on Aging (AAA)	SUA Oklahoma Aging Services Division (ASD)
	PSA(S) Multiple	TITLE VI GRANTEE Nooksack Indian Tribe	AAA/SERVICE PROVIDER Northwest Regional Council (NWRC)	SUA Washington Aging & Long-Term Support Administration (ALTSA)

Please see [Chapter I](#) for a summary of themes, the collaboration framework, and recommendations for successful collaboration. Summaries of the virtual site visits can be found in [Chapter II](#). The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are discussed in [Chapter III](#). The study methodology, the protocols, interview lists, and the text of the RA survey can be found in the Appendices.

Chapter I: Overall Findings

This chapter summarizes the overall findings of the study. Most results are derived from the virtual site visits, which covered topics such as: background information, including organizational challenges and opportunities for growth; different types of collaboration activities; facilitators and barriers to collaboration; cultural competency and tribal sovereignty; and recommendations for collaboration. Additionally, this section includes results from the RA survey on the nature of Title VI and Title III grantee collaboration in their regions, how they support collaboration, and their perceptions and tips related to successful collaboration. The evaluation team systematically reviewed notes from interviews and survey responses to determine major themes for discussion in this report.

TYPES OF COLLABORATION ACTIVITIES

The evaluation team adapted a collaboration framework established by Kagan (1991)¹⁹ with four levels:

- **COOPERATION:** Personal, informal relationships among organization staff members
- **COORDINATION:** Joint coordination of services, such as one-time programming
- **PARTNERSHIP:**²⁰ Formalization of organizational relationships through sharing of resources
- **SERVICE INTEGRATION:** Creation of new shared services using resources from multiple organizations

At the beginning of the evaluation, Lewin identified examples for each category drawn from peer-reviewed and gray literature on organizational collaboration. Lewin reflected on the framework when developing the virtual site visit interview protocols. During data analysis, Lewin adapted the framework to reflect activities discussed during interviews. The revised framework is shown in Exhibit 2. 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.

¹⁹ Kagan, S. L. (1991). *United We Stand: Collaboration for Child Care and Early Education Services*. Teachers College Press.

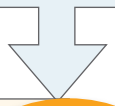
²⁰ Kagan calls this level “collaboration,” but for the purposes of this study, we will call this level “partnership.”

Exhibit 2. STUDY COLLABORATION FRAMEWORK



- ☺ Referrals of clients between organizations
- ☺ Information sharing

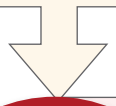
Example activity: Alu Like, Inc. and the Hawai'i County Office of Aging (HCOA) refer clients to each other based on the needs of caregivers and elders as well as the services offered by the other organization.



- ☺ One-time or occasional joint events
- ☺ Regular joint meetings

Example activities:

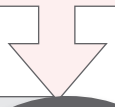
- Northwest Regional Council (NWRC) hosts a booth with information on their services at Nooksack tribal functions.
- Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) and Senior Citizens of Kodiak (SCOK) are both part of the Human Services Coalition that meets quarterly to discuss social services on Kodiak island.



- ☺ Shared funding
- ☺ Consistent or many joint events
- ☺ Shared resources
- ☺ Regular advising

Example activities:

- KANA receives supplemental Title III funding from SCOK to support congregate meals and in-home meal delivery.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and North Dakota ASD both advise each other on a number of topics. For instance, the director of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe provides advice on Native cultural norms, while North Dakota ASD staff provide advice on OAA services and reporting requirements.



- ☺ Continuous communication
- ☺ Multiple layers of collaboration at the leadership & staff level
- ☺ Development of new programs or services together

Example activities:

- The directors of the Wyandotte Nation and Grand Gateway AAA regularly communicate to communicate any issues that arise. The director of Grand Gateway AAA has encouraged all of her staff, regardless of their level, to be involved in collaboration efforts.
- Alu Like, Inc. and HCOA worked with the state's two other AAAs, the SUA, and the Self-Management Resource Center to develop the Healthy Aging Partnership.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY AND TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY

A cornerstone issue for collaboration among Title VI grantees, AAAs/service providers, and SUAs is the presence of trust. Due to historical and current strains on relationships among Native groups and federal or state governments, the evaluation team found it important to explore trust within the context of cultural competency and tribal sovereignty during the initial SME interviews and subsequent conversations with case study organizations.

Cultural competency refers to a set of practices that acknowledge and meet the cultural, social, and linguistic needs of service recipients.²¹ Tribal sovereignty is the inherent right of American Indians and Alaska Natives to self-govern. Sovereign nations exercise this right by developing their own forms of government, determining citizenship, establishing civil and criminal laws,²² taxing, licensing, and regulating, among other governing activities.²³ 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.

In the context of Title VI and Title III grantee collaboration, it is imperative that relationships between Title VI grantees and state institutions, such as SUAs, reflect government-to-government relationships, when applicable, and consider the needs and experiences of Native elders and caregivers.

Interviewees said that they valued culturally competent practices and found it important to recognize tribal sovereignty (when applicable) in planning and service delivery. Interviewees shared the following recommendations for acknowledging, integrating, and respecting Native values and practices in collaborative relationships:

- **Having an equitable approach to collaboration** leads to genuine partnership and support of elders and tribal communities. A Title VI grantee shared that their relationship with their state previously felt like “oversight of the tribe.” The Title VI grantee addressed this issue by reiterating that the contract between their organizations states that the two organizations should work in collaboration, and that the relationship has since been successful.
- **Utilizing tribal liaisons** to connect Title VI grantees with AAAs/service providers and SUAs can be beneficial to begin collaborations with a foundation of trust.
- **Incorporating cultural competency practices into organizations**, such as holding regular staff trainings on cultural competency, hiring Native employees, or making an effort to learn about Native values, practices, and histories. Title VI grantees shared that the responsibility to educate on cultural norms and practices is often placed on their organizations.
- **Accepting feedback from the Title VI grantees and acknowledging their contributions** are important. For example, the SUA of a single-PSA state made it a practice to ask Title VI grantees what they needed, rather than providing them designated funds without first understanding their needs. Additionally, a Title VI grantee shared that they are consistently acknowledged by their AAA partner because the organization repeatedly uses language stating, “The AAA and the tribe...”
- **Visiting the Title VI grantee in person** to form face-to-face relationships is beneficial. One Title VI grantee shared an experience of being required to travel hours away on short notice to attend a meeting at the request of a state agency. The interviewee said that, per their tribal practices, the party making the request should be the one responsible for traveling.

“We continue building trust by being there for each other, continuing with the same idea [referring to shared events], listening to each other, and knowing that not one person has the only right answer.”

²¹ 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>

²² The extent of this varies by area due to state and federal legislation that may restrict criminal jurisdiction over non-Native individuals.

²³ National Congress of American Indians. (2020). Tribal Nations and the United States: An Introduction. Retrieved August 1, 2020 from: http://www.ncai.org/tribalnations/introduction/Indian_Country_101_Updated_February_2019.pdf

FACILITATORS OF COLLABORATION

Interviewees mentioned the following themes related to facilitators of collaboration (i.e., activities that made collaboration easier).

- **Consistent and open communication** was a recurring theme and regular practice of grantees that collaborated successfully together. Many grantees have regular weekly, biweekly, or monthly standing meetings. Some grantees with long-standing relationships described continuous, open communication. Meetings between grantees occur over the phone and in person, and grantees indicated the importance of having face-to-face discussions at least annually. Meetings serve as an opportunity to discuss updates and successes, as well as brainstorm solutions for current challenges.
- **Shared visions, aligned goals, and flexibility** were reported as important by grantees.
- A **“champion” or liaison** that serves a consistent point of contact creates deeper trust and streamlines the process of answering questions.
- **Cultural respect and awareness** was important to all grantees. Beneficial practices included: providing cultural competency trainings to employees, asking for feedback from the Title VI grantee related to cultural competency, taking time to listen to different perspectives and needs, having tribal liaison positions through the AAA, service provider, and/or SUA, and including language about tribal sovereignty in state and organizational policies.
- **Inclusion of a representative from the Title VI grantee organization on governing or advisory boards** of the AAA/provider agency and/or SUA was reported as being particularly important. Not only was this described as providing an opportunity for Native concerns to be heard, but it also aids trust building and allows for more frequent communication.
- **Support from the SUA** is integral to Title VI grantee and AAA/provider agency collaboration success. This support can look different from state to state. Generally speaking, grantees reported that SUAs share lists of grantees, make introductions, host regular meetings, and help resolve conflicts among grantees.
- **Pre-existing relationships** can contribute to successful, long-term collaborations. Many interviewees noted that collaboration existed before they started their positions. In these cases, collaboration tend to occur naturally and without intentional effort due to routine communication practices and a strong foundation of trust between organizations.

“Everyone wants the same thing; [elders] living well and independently in their communities as long as possible.”

BARRIERS TO COLLABORATION

- **Staff turnover and limited staffing** was cited as a barrier to collaboration. Staff turnover exacerbates obstacles in relationship building. With new staff, roles and processes must be re-explained and changing relationship dynamics can hinder successful collaboration. Additionally, grantees noted that staff are often very busy and organizations may not have a designated employee who focuses on collaboration and communication efforts.
- **Misaligned visions** contributed to collaboration struggles. Grantees stressed the importance of Title VI grantees, AAAs/service providers, and SUAs having similar visions and adequate transparency when communicating and planning.

- **Varying reporting requirements across Title VI and Title III programs** posed challenges for grantees. One Title VI grantee shared that reporting differences for supplemental meal funding (e.g., more frequent required reporting) requires substantial additional administrative responsibilities with inadequate funding and staff support. An additional reporting difference mentioned was age discrepancies for service eligibility between Title VI and Title III programs.²⁴ Lastly, a Title VI grantee shared an experience of being required to report certain data to their Title III organization, but only one staff member having access to the database, making the process tedious and challenging.
- **Miscommunication or lack of communication** can be detrimental to collaboration efforts. Grantees said that consistent and clear communication is integral to success.
- **Lack of information** increased challenges to successful collaboration. One Title VI grantee shared an experience of being newer in their role and not knowing the local AAA/service provider, the services and activities available, or policies related to Title III funding. Another grantee shared an experience of onboarding to their position but not receiving invites to meetings between organizations, which accidentally prevented collaboration from occurring.
- **Rural geography** contributes to increased challenges for some grantees. In rural locations, grantees reported that services are not as readily available, there are unique challenges specific to that location, and in-person meetings may not be accessible. A grantee shared that there may not be as much contact with or knowledge of formal services in rural areas.
- **Pre-existing relationships** that were not successful can become a hindrance to current and future relationships of grantees. Previous negative interactions can slow down the process of rebuilding relationships.

The evaluation team asked RAs about barriers to collaboration faced by Title VI and Title III grantees. Their responses were in alignment with the barriers reported from the interviews with Title VI grantees, AAAs/provider agencies, and SUAs. In summary, barriers reported including the following:

- **Lack of understanding** of the OAA collaboration requirement and activities that may encompass collaboration;
- **Resource limitations**, such as insufficient time for staff to devote to collaboration efforts and limited funding; and
- **Lack of trust and cultural competency.**

“It’s takes time and showing up and continued efforts. If something isn’t successful, don’t give up and say it didn’t work.”

²⁴ While the age requirement for Title III services is set at 60, Title VI grantees can set the age of service eligibility. Many grantees have established age requirements to be between 50 and 60 years of age.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

To better understand the context of interviewee organizations, the evaluation team also asked questions related to perceived organizational challenges and opportunities for growth. Common organizational challenges mirrored the perceived challenges to collaboration with other grantees and included:

- **Funding shortages** that hinder meeting the full needs of all elders and caregivers;
- **Rural landscape** of grantees' service area associated with challenges in transportation, access to essential items, lack of broadband access, and high costs of living;
- **OAA grant reporting requirements and administrative burden**, particularly with requirements associated with the Title III program;
- **Turnover** leading to a lack of service continuity; and
- **The necessity for cultural sensitivity** to meet the diverse needs and backgrounds of elders and an understanding that elders may not have experience with or trust of governmental services.

In response to opportunities for growth, many interviewees discussed ways to better support their service clients. Examples included expansion of phone or virtual platforms to administer activities,²⁵ increased tribal housing and long-term care supports, and increased socialization opportunities.

ROLE OF ACL'S REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS IN FACILITATING COLLABORATION

All of the RAs reported directly supporting grantee collaboration in their region, but only five of the seven RAs reported knowing of successful Title VI and Title III collaboration occurring in their region. The following were the most common ways RAs reported facilitating collaboration for grantees in their region:

- **Providing technical assistance (TA)** and supporting development of state plans on aging, area plans, and Title VI grant applications;
- **Supporting new Title VI grantee, AAA/service provider, and SUA staff**, such as introducing new staff members and offering personalized orientation sessions to incoming directors to thoroughly explain the relationships and expectations of the role;
- **Promoting state and tribal initiatives** to inform grantees about services and events; and
- **Supporting SUA staff** in awareness of collaboration requirements and of concerns and needs of Title VI grantees.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

Interviewees offered the following recommendations for Title VI grantees, AAAs/service providers, and SUAs, to create and maintain successful collaborations (Exhibit 3).

²⁵ This is related to, but not exclusive to, programming changes as a result of COVID-19.

Exhibit 3.

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.



Chapter II: Case Studies

This chapter summarizes each of the five case studies and includes background and contact information, collaboration details, successes, challenges, and recommendations.

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.

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



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.

SUCCESSES, 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)

Chapter III: Impact of COVID-19

Both older adults and individuals of Native heritage are high-risk groups for COVID-19, based on preliminary studies.^{26,27} Particularly for the latter group, increased risk of COVID-19 is associated with underlying disparities in health, social, and economic factors. This may be exacerbated by a lack of access to health insurance, medical care, and broadband internet for those living in tribal areas. Due to interest at ACL, the evaluation team asked additional questions during interviews about organizational responses to COVID-19 and potential impact on Title VI and Title III grantee collaboration. This chapter describes themes identified.

CHALLENGES

Interviewees noted challenges in responding to COVID-19, including but not limited to:

- **Supply line shortages for food and necessary supplies** were obstacles particularly at the onset of COVID-19. For example, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe described challenges in local supply chains, payment policies, and tribal purchase approval that hindered the Title VI program's access to food for meals as well as personal protective equipment for employees.
- **Relationship building on virtual platforms** presented challenges when relationships had been historically in-person. For example, North Dakota ASD reported difficulties in supporting local service providers, as relationships have been very dependent on in-person interactions.
- **Event cancelation** occurred to meet social distancing requirements and maintain safety. The Wyandotte Nation and Grand Gateway AAA cancelled annual informational and social events for elders and caregivers. Alu Like, Inc. cancelled their Healthy Aging T-trainer series (T-trainers are certified trainers of trainers) where they had anticipated sharing skills with the state's four AAAs, SUA, and other social services leaders around the state.
- **A lack of social opportunities for elders** has led to social isolation. Multiple interviewees noted that many elders are facing social isolation due to public health guidelines.
- **Service delivery adaptations to ensure safety and compliance with public health guidance** results, at times, in challenges. For example, interviewees reported being short-staffed due to employees being from high-risk groups. Additionally, due to safety guidance, grantees had to shut down congregate service settings.

²⁶ Older Adults and COVID-19. (2020, July 30). Retrieved August 13, 2020, from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html>

²⁷ Artiga, S., & Orgera, K. (2020, May 14). COVID-19 Presents Significant Risks for American Indian and Alaska Native People. Retrieved August 13, 2020, from: <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/covid-19-presents-significant-risks-for-american-indian-and-alaska-native-people/>

RESPONSES TO COVID-19

All interviewees mentioned service changes in response to COVID-19, such as:

- **Increased frequency of meetings to discuss program needs**, such as weekly meetings between the North Dakota ASD and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, weekly meetings between the Hawai'i EOA and state AAAs, and weekly or biweekly meetings between Oklahoma ASD and state AAAs.
- **Changes to meal provision** through the use of home delivery or drive-through meals.
- **Streamlined service provision** including shelf-stable food, hygiene items, and other supplies so that elders did not have to leave their homes.
- **Increased demand for services**, such as in the case of the Wyandotte Nation that noticed an uptick in demand for meals from about 120 meals distributed per day prior to COVID-19 to about 200 meals, or in the case of Alu Like Inc., where they are now serving and engaging with additional younger elders who previously did not believe they needed services.
- **Innovative strategies** in addressing social isolation, such as:
 - The Wyandotte Nation held a series of drive-through Car Bingo events in a local parking lot. Seniors were encouraged to “dress up their cars” as part of a contest, and the Bingo game was held over a megaphone.
 - Grand Gateway AAA provides a weekly newsletter to seniors as they picked up their meals that summarized the latest social updates and news from the community.
 - ALTSA reported that many tribes are supporting grandparents who are primary caretakers of their grandchildren and responsible for assisting with distance learning.
 - Oklahoma ASD shared that they are hosting remote caregiver support groups, which have attracted additional participants compared to past in-person meetings.
- **Increased Title VI grantee and AAA/service provider collaboration**, such as in the case of Nooksack Tribe Title VI staff relaying messages related to the clinic or medication refills between NWRC and elders during daily meal drop offs, and in the case of HCOA offering ready-to-eat meals to Alu Like, Inc.'s elders.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was small in scale and provided initial insights into collaboration practices, facilitators and barriers to collaboration, cultural competency and tribal sovereignty, and recommendations for collaboration. Interviews with Title VI grantees, AAAs/service providers, and SUAs across the five case studies provided context into the landscape of Aging Network Services and the nature of Title VI and Title III grantee collaboration. The research questions and a summary of the main findings are included below.

HOW DO TITLE VI AND TITLE III GRANTEE COLLABORATE?

Lewin found that Title VI grantees, AAAs/service providers, and SUAs collaborated in a variety of ways across the five case studies (Exhibit 4). All grantees described participating in less complex and involved “cooperation” or “coordination” activities, such as providing referrals, sharing information or data, and participating in occasional joint events or regular meetings together. A couple of grantees noted deeper “partnership” activities, such as sharing Title III grant funds or resources, advising, and hosting recurring events. Additionally, a couple of the grantees described activities that could be described as “service integration.” These grantees described being in continuous communication with each other, involving staff at all levels in collaborative efforts, and partnering on delivering services together. Each case study reflected different collaboration activities based on the needs of elders and caregivers, historical relationships, and other local factors. This reinforces the contextual nature of collaboration. Additionally, grantees wishing to start or renew a collaborative relationship may want to begin with simply reaching out, as all of the case study relationships were built on a foundation of open communication and connection.

Exhibit 4.

SUMMARY OF COLLABORATION ACTIVITIES

COLLABORATION LEVEL	EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES
COOPERATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Referrals of clients between organizations▪ Information sharing
COORDINATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ One-time or occasional joint events▪ Regular joint meetings
PARTNERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Shared funding▪ Shared resources▪ Regular advising▪ Consistent or many joint events
SERVICE INTEGRATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Continuous communication▪ Multiple layers of collaboration at the leadership and staff level▪ Development of new programs or services together

WHAT ARE BEST PRACTICES RELATED TO TITLE VI AND TITLE III GRANTEE COLLABORATION?

Throughout the study, interviewees reflected on practical steps that grantees could take to create and maintain successful collaborations. Major recommendations included:

- Understanding relevant policies and requirements and knowing potential grantees in the area with which to collaborate.
- Incorporating cultural competency practices into organizations and including Title VI representatives on policy and advisory boards of AAAs/service providers and SUAs.
- Establishing standing check-in meetings and having one person serve as a consistent point of contact.
- Regularly sharing organizational goals and plans with each other.
- Reaching out for help and acknowledging that collaboration can take time.

WHAT ARE FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS RELATED TO TITLE VI AND TITLE III GRANTEE COLLABORATION?

Interviewees also shared what they perceived as key factors that made collaboration easier or more difficult. Some factors are within grantees' control, such as open communication or a shared vision or goals. Other factors are contextual or beyond the immediate control of grantees, such as previous relationships, geography, or differing reporting requirements. Findings are summarized in Exhibit 5.

Exhibit 5.

FACILITATORS AND 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

The COVID-19 pandemic was described as both a barrier and a facilitator to collaboration. The public health emergency is forcing grantees to change the way that they connect with each other by shifting from in-person to only virtual meetings. Additionally, some planned joint events were cancelled during this time. However, the crisis also has strengthened collaborations by requiring grantees to communicate more often and, at times, it led to innovative solutions and new ways to partner.

Overall, the key takeaways of the study included the importance of trust in fostering relationships, and vice versa; the absence of trust serving as a barrier to relationships; recognition of tribal sovereignty (if applicable to the Title VI grantee) and Native cultures; and consideration of time needed to build lasting and collaborative relationships.

In addition to this full report, the evaluation team developed an abbreviated report and other materials to support Title VI grantees, AAAs/service providers, SUAs, and other stakeholders in fostering Title VI and Title III grantee collaboration. Please see [this webpage](#) for more details. Lewin recommends that ACL consider additional dissemination strategies, such as webinars or training sessions that incorporate these materials. After the release of the reports, recommendations, and collaboration framework, ACL can also consider conducting outreach to grantees to identify questions and recommendations.

There were some limitations to this study. Firstly, the COVID-19 pandemic altered the study design. The evaluation team originally planned for in-person, half-day visits with longer interviews and the potential for attending collaborative events or meetings. Due to the pandemic, Lewin shifted to a virtual site visit design with phone interviews. Conducting only virtual site visits may have limited the richness of data obtained. Additionally, despite using multiple sources of data, the team experienced some difficulty in selecting an appropriate sample of case studies. Lewin found that the usefulness and accuracy of written materials such as state plans or Title VI grantee applications varied. At times, the written descriptions of collaboration practices were outdated.

Future studies with the goal to identify best practices could implement additional sampling strategies, such as an open solicitation for grantees that feel like they have strong collaboration, or further investigation into the full list of grantees recommended in RA survey responses. In particular, dual Title VI/AAA grantees and Title VI grantees with consortia structure present an additional area of research, as they were not represented in this study's sample. Additionally, the evaluation team recommends in-person approaches to data collection, if feasible, to build rapport and observe collaboration meetings or events. Lewin anticipates that future case study research with larger samples of grantees across and within multiple states as well as in-person data collection approaches may build upon the findings of this study.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the evaluation team's evaluation activities between January 2020 to September 2020 as indicated in Exhibit A-1. The exhibit divides activities into three overarching sections: evaluation design, data tool development and data collection, and data analysis and reporting. The timeline of project activities included:

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

EVALUATION DESIGN

During the evaluation design phase of the study, the evaluation team identified existing research on general organizational collaboration, background information about Title VI grantees, AAAs, service providers, and SUAs, and resources on grantee collaboration. The evaluation design included the following components:

- **An environmental scan on organizational collaboration** identified best practices of collaboration among organizations, as well as tools for measuring collaboration. This environmental scan informed the creation of a collaboration framework detailed in [Chapter I: Overall Findings](#).
- **A materials review** that included the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging's (n4a) biannual Title VI and Title III survey reports^{28,29} and survey instrument, as well as publicly available online materials on collaboration, provided background information. Examples include presentations on Title VI and Title III grantee collaboration in from Shelly Zylstra³⁰ and Leonard Geshick.³¹
- **Phone interviews with SMEs** informed the evaluation strategy. The evaluation team conducted ten telephone interviews with SMEs, such as ACL RAs, directors of Title VI grantees (who were also members of n4a Title VI advisory board), and SUA staff. The evaluation team used snowball sampling to identify additional SMEs to interview. Interviewees discussed recommendations for case study sites, their past experience working with Title VI and Title III grantees, and their current involvement in Title VI and Title III grantee collaboration. The interview protocol is located in [Appendix B](#) and interviewee lists are located in [Appendix C](#).
- **A review of select Title VI grantee applications** provided additional context to Title VI and Title III grantee collaboration. To narrow down the proposed grantees, the evaluation team reviewed and coded select Title VI 2020-2023 grant applications by type of collaboration. Lewin focused on case study sites with strong descriptions of collaboration.

After these activities, the evaluation team identified five primary case studies for further data collection. Due to difficulties contacting the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe/Minnesota Indian AAA (MCT/MIAAA), Lewin and ACL replaced the case study with Alu Like, Inc. and HCOA. The final list is as follows:

- KANA and SCOK
- Alu Like, Inc. and HCOA
- Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and North Dakota ASD
- Wyandotte Nation and Grand Gateway AAA
- Nooksack Indian Tribe and NWRC

DATA TOOL DEVELOPMENT AND DATA COLLECTION

The evaluation team used two main forms of data collection: virtual site visits and a survey administered to RAs.

²⁸ National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) & Scripps Gerontology Center at Miami University. (2017). National Title VI Program Survey: Serving Tribal Elders Across the United States. Retrieved August 13, 2020, from: https://www.n4a.org/Files/Title%20VI%20Survey/Title%20VI%20Program%20Survey_508.pdf

²⁹ National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) & Scripps Gerontology Center at Miami University. (2017). National Survey of Area Agencies on Aging 2017 Report: Serving America's Older Adults. Retrieved August 13, 2020, from: https://www.n4a.org/Files/2017%20AAA%20Survey%20Report/AAANationalSurvey_web.pdf

³⁰ Zylstra, S. (2017). Working with Tribal Communities: Title III and Title VI Coordination. Retrieved August 13, 2020, from: <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/SENIORS-DISABILITIES/SUA/AAABusinessTraining/Title-III-Title-VI-Coordination.pdf>

³¹ Geshick, L., & Hammer, S. (2019). OAA Services in Indian Country. Retrieved August 13, 2020, from: <https://bit.ly/2PIDKuG>

VIRTUAL SITE VISITS

The evaluation team originally planned to conduct in-person site visits to five case study sites. However, due to COVID-19, the evaluation team shifted to virtual site visits. Each case study site visit consisted of interviews with the Title VI grantee, AAA/service provider, and SUA (if not the main Title III collaborating organization). If possible, the evaluation team requested to observe any planned collaboration meetings.³²

To prepare for these interviews, Lewin collected relevant information about each case study from the respective state plan(s) on aging, Title VI 2020-2023 grant application, and online public information. Additionally, Lewin sent a survey in advance ([Appendix D](#)) to identify ongoing types of collaboration to ask about during the interview. Background information and survey responses supported the evaluation team in adapting protocol questions and tailoring each interview to the respondent, allowing for compliance with Paperwork Reduction Act regulations. Interview protocols are located in [Appendices E](#) (Title VI grantee), [F](#) (AAA/service provider), and [G](#) (SUA). Within two weeks of conducting each interview, Lewin developed a one- to two-page summary document to send to the interviewee for suggestions and confirmation.

RA SURVEY

Lewin developed a 13-question survey to better understand the role of RAs in supporting Title VI grantees and facilitating collaboration with Title III grantees. This survey contained a mixture of open- and close-ended questions, such as yes/no, matrix, short answer, and long answer questions. Topics included types of collaboration present in the RA's region, their thoughts on facilitators and barriers to collaboration, and areas for better support. ACL assisted with survey dissemination to the seven out of nine RAs who are directly involved with Title VI grantees in their region. All seven RAs provided feedback. The full RA survey text is located in [Appendix H](#).

DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

The evaluation team used a number of techniques to analyze data collected from the virtual site visits and RA survey.

DATA COLLECTION TOOL	ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE
VIRTUAL SITE VISITS	The evaluation team used an “informal thematic analysis” technique to analyze site visit findings, which included iterative review of interview notes, development of interview summaries, and discussions of themes across interviews and summaries.
RA SURVEY	The evaluation team used descriptive quantitative analysis of close-ended survey questions and informal thematic analysis of open-ended survey questions.

The evaluation team used themes identified across data collection tools to inform the writing of the final reports and other project deliverables (e.g., checklist of recommendations for Title VI and Title III grantee collaboration, collaboration framework, and slide deck).

³² Due to the timing of the interview request and COVID-19, all interviewees reported that they did not have a virtual collaboration meeting within the window of June to July.

Exhibit B-1.

OUTREACH TEXT

SUBJ: Subject Matter Expertise Requested Re: ACL Project

Dear [SME name],

We are from The Lewin Group, and are currently working with ACL on a project related to areas of collaboration between Title III and Title VI grantees. As part of our study, we are conducting several interviews with ACL regional administrators and members of the n4a Title VI board. Members of ACL (Cynthia LaCounte, Krissy Hudgins, and Leslie Green) identified you as an expert who could provide valuable information on this topic.

If you are available and interested, we would like to schedule a 30-minute call to explain more about the project and learn from your experience. Below are some time blocks (Central Time) when we are available—could you send back a few preferred and alternate times?

- Thursday, February 27: 8am – 10am, 12pm – 1pm (CT)
- Monday, March 2: 8am – 12pm, 12:30pm – 4pm (CT)
- Wednesday, March 4: 12pm – 4pm (CT)
- Thursday, March 5: 11am – 1pm (CT)

Please reach out to sarah.bergman@lewin.com and rebecca.chang@lewin.com with any questions and thank you in advance for your time!

Best,
Sarah Bergman and Rebecca Chang

INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Bolded questions within the interview guide indicate high-priority questions. Other questions should be asked if appropriate and if time allows.

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PRIVACY

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has contracted the Lewin Group to conduct a study on Title III and Title VI grantee collaboration. Within the Older Americans Act (OAA), there is language that requires this collaboration: specifically, each Title VI funding application should contain examples of service coordination with Title III grantees³³ of the same geographical area, and each State Unit on Aging (SUA) should include program coordination with Title VI grantees in their state plan.

However, there are no specific guidelines on collaboration within the OAA, and ACL is interested in exploring best practices among Title III and Title VI grantees.

³³ Within the protocols, Lewin used the general term “Title III grantees” to refer to AAAs/service providers.

As part of our study to better understand these collaboration areas, we are conducting several interviews with subject matter experts to inform the study's design and sample of grantees. You were identified as an expert who could provide valuable information on this topic.

This interview will take about 30 minutes. Thank you in advance for taking the time to speak with us. Your participation is voluntary and you do not have to answer any questions you don't want to answer.

If it is OK with you, we are interested in recording this interview to supplement our notes. The recordings will be deleted after the notes are finalized.

[If yes: Hit record and proceed]

[If no: That is fine; we can proceed without recording.]

INTRODUCTION

1. What is your role at your organization?
2. Can you tell us a bit about your experience working with Title III and Title VI grantees?
3. What are some common challenges or opportunities for Title III and Title VI grantees? If they have different challenges, please describe.

COLLABORATION

1. In which ways have you seen Title III and Title VI grantees collaborate?
 - a. If not brought up by interviewee, probe using examples such as working together on one-time or occasional events, Title VI programs receiving Title III funding, or developing new programs or services together.
2. What does successful collaboration among Title III and Title VI grantees look like?
3. What are some facilitators of collaboration (or factors that lead to collaboration) among Title III and Title VI grantees?
4. What are some barriers to collaboration among Title III and Title VI grantees?
5. We are going to be conducting a limited number of site visits to Title III and Title VI grantee organizations that are successfully collaborating. Which organizations would you suggest for us to visit? Why would you choose these grantees?
6. When the study is done, we hope to share a document with best practices. What do you think would be the best format for stakeholders?
 - a. If not brought up by interviewee, probe on infographic or visuals, short report, example case studies, or checklist.

CLOSING

1. [If seeking additional SMEs to interview]: Do you have any recommendations for other individuals with knowledge on Title III and Title VI grantee collaboration who we should consider contacting?
2. Is there anything else about this topic that you would like to share?

Thank you so much for your time today! We appreciate being able to learn from your expertise. If you think of anything else that you wish you had brought up during our conversation, please feel free to e-mail or call us.

APPENDIX C: DATA COLLECTION INTERVIEWEE LISTS

Exhibit C-1.

SME INTERVIEWEE LIST

NAME	ROLE
Amy Wiatr-Rodriguez	ACL Regional Administrator (Region V)
Brenda House	Title VI Director of Wyandotte Nation and member of n4a Title VI Board
Glen (Manny) Carlo	Title VI Director, Denakkanaaga, Inc. and member of n4a Title VI Board
Lacey Boven	ACL Regional Administrator (Region VII)
Laurai Atcitty	AAA Director of Inter-Tribal Council of AZ
Leonard Geshick	Indian Elders Coordinator, Minnesota Board on Aging
Percy DeVine	ACL Regional Administrator (Region VIII, IX)
Rhonda Weaver	Title VI & Caregiver Director of Quapaw Nation Elders Center and member of n4a Title VI Board
Shelly Zylstra	ACL Regional Administrator (Region X)
Wendell Holt	Aging & Disability Program Lead of Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council

Exhibit C-2.

VIRTUAL SITE VISIT INTERVIEWEE LIST

STATE	ORGANIZATION NAME	ORGANIZATION TYPE	INTERVIEWEE(S)
Alaska	Senior Citizens of Kodiak, Inc. (SCOK)	AAA/Service Provider	Patricia (Pat) Branson
	Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA)	Title VI	Greg Zadina
	Alaska Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS)	SUA	Lisa Morley
Hawai'i	Hawai'i County Office of Aging (HCOA)	AAA/Service Provider	Keola Kenoi-Okajima
	Alu Like, Inc.	Title VI	Leslie Tanoue
	Hawai'i Executive Office on Aging (EOA)	SUA	Caroline Cadirao
North Dakota	North Dakota Aging Services Division (ASD)	SUA	Petra Harmon One Hawk
	Standing Rock Sioux Tribe	Title VI	Nancy Maier
Oklahoma	Grand Gateway Area Agency on Aging (AAA)	AAA/Service Provider	Staci Pierce, Mary Satterwhite
	Wyandotte Nation	Title VI	Brenda House
	Oklahoma Aging Services Division Aging Services Division (ASD)	SUA	Rebecca Snellen
Washington	Nooksack Tribe	Title VI	Heidi Davis
	Washington Aging and Long-Term Support Administration (AL TSA)	SUA	Marietta Bobba, Rosemary Biggins, Ann Dahl

Exhibit C-3.

RA SURVEY RECIPIENTS

NAME	REGION
Jennifer Throwe	Region I
Rhonda Schwartz	Region III
Amy Wiatr-Rodriguez	Region V
Derek Lee	Region VI
Lacey Boven	Region VII
Percy Devine	Regions VIII & IX
Shelly Zylstra	Region X

APPENDIX D: PRE-VIRTUAL SITE VISIT SURVEY

The following questions were sent to Title VI and Title III grantees before virtual site visit interviews, to guide interview questions.

- Over the course of your collaboration with the [other grantee organization name], which of the following activities have your organizations done in the past or do currently with each other? (Marked by X's in the table columns)

COLLABORATION ACTIVITY	YES	NO
Communicate regularly (e.g., e-mail, phone, in-person interactions)		
Attend meetings together		
Serve as members on your advisory boards		
Share data or reports (e.g., related to elders, caregivers, or community members)		
Have a liaison or "champion" working on collaboration		
Provide and/or attend trainings		
Provide advice		
Host events together		
Support programs or services		
Develop new programs or services together		
Receive funding and/or provide funding to each other		
Refer elders or caregivers to each other		

- Are there any ways you collaborate with the other organization that were not included in the earlier question?
- Which form(s) of collaboration are most valuable for your organization?
- Does your organization collaborate with other [Title VI or Title III] grantees? If so, please list the names of the organizations.
- Do you have any additional comments or questions to add?

APPENDIX E: TITLE VI GRANTEE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PRIVACY

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has contracted the Lewin Group to conduct a study on Title III and Title VI grantee collaboration. Within the Older Americans Act (OAA), there is language that requires this collaboration: specifically, each Title VI funding application should contain examples of service coordination with Title III grantees of the same geographical area, and each State Unit on Aging (SUA) should include program coordination with Title VI grantees in their state plan.

However, there are no specific guidelines on collaboration within the OAA, and ACL is interested in exploring best practices among Title III and Title VI grantees. The results and best practices will be publically shared when the study is completed. We will also write a one to two-page summary of today's interview and you will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the summary.

To better understand these collaboration areas, we selected five case studies of collaboration and are conducting several [virtual] site visits. [Include information on how this specific case study was chosen, if relevant and necessary]

This interview will take about an hour and a half. Thank you in advance for taking the time to speak with us. Your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to answer any questions you don't want to answer.

If it is OK with you, we are interested in recording this interview to supplement our notes. The recordings will be deleted after the notes are finalized.

[If yes: Hit record and proceed]

[If no: That is fine; we can proceed without recording.]

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

We want to start first with learning about your organization and the services that you provide.

1. Please describe your organization and your role.
2. Please describe the community that your organization serves (e.g., geographic, historical, demographic context).
3. What about your organization makes you most proud?
 - a. Probe:³⁴ Some examples include community members served, notable programs or services, and relationships created.
4. What are a few of the biggest opportunities for growth for your organization?
5. What are a few of the biggest challenges for your organization?
 - a. Probe: How does this compare to challenges faced by Title VI grantees in other areas?
6. Which other organizations do you most frequently collaborate with (e.g., Tribal organizations/governmental bodies, other Title VI grantees, SUA, Title III grantees, nursing homes, Indian Health Services)?

³⁴ Lewin included various probes throughout the interview guide to ensure that specific details are answered. It is likely that the interviewee will answer some or all of the probes, but in the event that they do not, the interviewers will follow up.

SECTION II: Collaboration Types

Now we want to spend some time learning about your relationship with [Title III organization name].

1. Why did your organization start collaborating with [Title III organization name]? What key events led to collaboration?
2. How formal is your relationship with [Title III organization name]? Do you have a Memorandum of Understanding, a different written agreement, or a verbal agreement?
3. When did you start working together? Do you recall or know who reached out to whom?
4. Has the relationship changed over time? If yes, how so?
 - a. Probe: Have both organizations been flexible and adaptive to change?

If the grantee has filled out the questionnaire beforehand, Lewin will focus the conversation on those collaboration types, but still reserve time to confirm that the other collaboration types are not practiced and/or understand why they are not practiced.

- If questionnaire was answered: We'll now ask a series of questions about how you collaborate with [Title III organization name] based on the answers you provided on the questionnaire.
- If questionnaire was not answered: We'll now ask a series of questions about how you collaborate with [Title III organization name]. We are interested in different kinds of collaboration, such as communication, data and reporting, meetings, staffing, trainings, events, funding, and service development.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

1. Do you share any information with [Title III organization name]?
 - a. What kinds of information do you share with [Title III organization name]?
2. How do you share information with [Title III organization name]?
 - a. Probes:
 - i. Is information shared through emails, listservs/newsletters, phone calls, face-to-face, or multiple ways?
 - ii. How often do you share information with [Title III organization name]? Would you say it is continuous communication, weekly, monthly, or less frequent?
3. What do you think about [Title III organization name]'s communication style? How well does it align with your organization's communication style?

DATA AND REPORTING

1. What data or reports do you share with [Title III organization name] (e.g., data on number of community members served)?
2. Is [Title III organization name] tracking some of the same metrics that your organization tracks? If yes, which metrics are similar?
3. Have either of your organizations worked together on needs assessments or area plans before?

REFERRALS/CONNECTING ELDERLY TO SERVICES

1. Do you refer elders to each other? If yes, please describe.
2. Does [Title III organization name] provide services to the elders in your community? If yes, which services?

MEETINGS

1. Do you attend meetings together? If yes, what are your meetings like?

- a. Probes:
 - i. Who holds the meetings?
 - ii. How often do you meet?
 - iii. How do you meet (e.g., face-to-face, over the phone)?
 - iv. Where do you meet?
 - v. Who attends your meetings? What roles do they have (e.g., social services, health care providers)?
2. Do you serve on any of [Title III organization name]’s advisory councils or boards? Are they on your advisory councils or boards?

STAFFING

1. At what levels of the organization does collaboration occur? Does it include staff and members of leadership?
2. Is there a person who serves as a liaison or as a “champion” from each organization? Does this person or others work for both organizations?
3. What is the level of engagement of collaborators? What are the responsibilities of each organization?
4. Are any [Title III organization name] staff of Native American heritage? Do any [Title III organization name] staff have extensive experience working with tribal communities? How does this impact your collaboration?

TRAININGS

1. Do you provide training/education to [Title III organization name]? Do they provide training to your organization?
 - a. Probes:
 - i. How often?
 - ii. What are the topics of these trainings?
 - iii. How were the topics determined and who chose the topics?

ADVISING

1. Do you advise the other organization?
 - a. [If yes] On which topics do you provide support (e.g., policies, grant writing, assessment, service delivery)?
 - b. [If no] On which topics does [Title III organization name] need support?
2. Does the other organization advise you?
 - a. [If yes] On which topics do they provide support?
 - b. [If no] On which topics would your organization need support?

EVENTS

1. Do you ever host events with [Title III organization name]? If yes, please describe.
 - a. Probe: How often does this happen?

DEVELOPING PROGRAMS OR SERVICES TOGETHER

1. Have you worked with [Title III organization name] to develop any new programs or services together? If yes, please describe.
 - a. Probes: Why was the program or service created? Who does the program or service serve? What responsibilities does each grantee have?

2. Do you or [Title III organization name] use any Native-specific or adapted models or programs? If yes, please describe.

FUNDING

1. Do you receive any funding from [Title III organization name]? If yes, please describe.
2. Have you ever collaborated with [Title III organization name] on grants? If yes, please describe.
3. [If not currently a Title III grantee]: Have you ever considered applying to be a Title III grantee? Why or what not?
[If currently a Title III grantee]: Why was the decision was made to become a Title III grantee? How does your organization use Title III funds? Are they used in a different way than Title VI funds? What are the challenges and advantages to being a Title III grantee?

SECTION III: CULTURAL COMPETENCY, SOVEREIGNTY, AND TRUST

Thank you for explaining the specific forms of collaboration between your organization and [Title III organization name]. Now we would like to ask some questions about the overall collaboration. First, we want to learn more about the role that cultural competency, sovereignty, and trust play in your relationship.

1. How do your organization and [Title III organization name] build trust with each other?
2. How are your organizational goals and vision aligned with [Title III organization name]'s goals and vision? How are they different?
3. Does [Title III organization name] understand and work with the cultural needs of the elders you serve?
 - a. [If yes]: How do they demonstrate their understanding?
 - b. [If no]: What could they do to strengthen and demonstrate their understanding?
4. [If a sovereign nation]: Do you feel like [Title III organization name] does a good job of recognizing tribal sovereignty?
 - a. [If yes]: How do they demonstrate their recognition?
 - b. [If no]: What could they do to demonstrate their recognition?
5. Some states have statutes related to tribal sovereignty and practices for collaborating with tribes. We've heard that these laws may help facilitate or shape collaboration. Do you know of any laws in your state that may impact your collaboration with other organizations?
6. An important concern we have heard from many Native groups is a lack of trust due to historical and current relationships among Native tribes, federal, and state governments. How does [Title III organization name] take this into account while collaborating with your organization?

SECTION IV: OVERALL THOUGHTS ON COLLABORATION

Now we would like to ask some questions about collaboration more broadly.

1. How has your collaboration with [Title III organization name] been successful?
2. What factors made collaboration easier with [Title III organization name] (e.g., sufficient resources or capacity, mutual trust, clearly defined partnership roles, shared goals, or champions)?
3. Do you have any recommendations for other Title VI and Title III grantees on how they can make and keep collaborative relationships?
4. What are the challenges related to your collaboration with [Title III organization name], if any?
5. Do you think any factors made it more difficult to collaborate with [Title III organization name]?
6. Is there anything you wish was different about your collaboration with [Title III organization] (e.g., more, less, or different communication, support, trainings, meetings, or programs)?

7. [If answered yes to the survey question, “Does your organization collaborate with other Title III grantees”]: How do you collaborate with [other Title III grantee organization name]? How is your collaboration with [other Title III grantee organization name] different to that with [Title III grantee organization name] (e.g., is one more prominent, or do you collaborate with both in complimentary ways)?

In response to COVID-19, organizations supporting aging individuals and their caregivers have had to make changes related to their operations and strategy.

1. How has your organization been responding to COVID-19?
2. Have you met with or discussed needs related to COVID-19 with [Title III organization]?
[If yes] How has collaboration with [Title III organization] supported your organization’s response?

SECTION V: ROLE OF THE STATE UNIT ON AGING (IF APPLICABLE)

Interviewers will skip this section for case studies where the SUA serves as the main Title III collaborator of focus for the study, since similar questions will be covered in Section II: Collaboration Types section.

1. Do you communicate or work with staff from [SUA name]?
2. Are there staff members at [SUA] who liaison with Native/tribal organizations?
 - a. [If yes] How does this support your Title VI work?
3. Was your organization involved with creating your state plan? Was anyone from [SUA name] involved in helping you assess the needs of your elders for the Title VI grant?
4. Does [SUA name] support your collaboration with [Title III organization] or other organizations in any way? If yes, please explain.

SECTION VI: CLOSING

1. When we finish this study, we hope to share a document with best practices. What do you think would be the best format for you and other stakeholders (e.g., infographic or visuals, short report, example case studies, or checklist)?
2. If we share a description of your collaboration, would you be willing to have you or your organization’s contact information listed on the best practices document?
3. Is there anything else about this topic that you would like to share?

Thank you so much for your time today! We appreciate being able to learn from your expertise. If you think of anything else that you wish you had brought up during our conversation, please feel free to e-mail or call us. In the next couple of weeks, we will send you a one to two-page summary of today’s interview and you will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the summary.

APPENDIX F: AAA/SERVICE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PRIVACY

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has contracted the Lewin Group to conduct a study on Title III and Title VI grantee collaboration. Within the Older Americans Act (OAA), there is language that requires this collaboration: specifically, each Title VI funding application should contain examples of service coordination with Title III grantees of the same geographical area, and each State Unit on Aging (SUA) should include program coordination with Title VI grantees in their state plan.

However, there are no specific guidelines on collaboration within the OAA, and ACL is interested in exploring best practices among Title III and Title VI grantees. The results and best practices will be publically shared when the study is completed. We will also write a one to two-page summary of today's interview and you will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the summary.

To better understand these collaboration areas, we selected five case studies of collaboration and are conducting several [virtual] site visits. [Include information on how this specific case study was chosen, if relevant and necessary]

This interview will take about an hour and a half. Thank you in advance for taking the time to speak with us. Your participation is voluntary and you do not have to answer any questions you don't want to answer.

If it is OK with you, we are interested in recording this interview to supplement our notes. The recordings will be deleted after the notes are finalized.

[If yes: Hit record and proceed]

[If no: That is fine; we can proceed without recording.]

SECTION I: Introduction

We want to start first with learning about your organization and the services that you provide.

1. Please describe your organization and your role.
2. Please describe the community that your organization serves (e.g., geographic, historical, demographic context).
3. What about your organization makes you most proud?
 - a. Probe: Some examples include community members served, notable programs or services, and relationships created.
4. What are a few of the biggest opportunities for growth for your organization?
5. What are a few of the biggest challenges for your organization?
 - a. Probe: How does this compare to challenges faced by Title III grantees in other areas?
6. Which other organizations do you most frequently collaborate with (e.g., health care providers, other Title III grantees, SUA, Title VI grantees, nursing homes)?

SECTION II: COLLABORATION TYPES

Now we want to spend some time learning about your relationship with [Title VI organization name].

1. Why did your organization start collaborating with [Title VI organization name]? What key events led to collaboration?
2. How formal is your relationship with [Title VI organization name]? Do you have a Memorandum of Understanding, a different written agreement, or a verbal agreement?

3. When did you start working together? Do you recall or know who reached out to whom?
4. Has the relationship changed over time? If yes, how so?
 - a. Probe: Have both organizations been flexible and adaptive to change?

If the grantee has filled out the questionnaire beforehand, Lewin will focus the conversation on those collaboration types, but still reserve time to confirm that the other collaboration types are not practiced and/or understand why they are not practiced.

- If questionnaire was answered: We'll now ask a series of questions about how you collaborate with [Title VI organization name] based on the answers you provided on the questionnaire.
- If questionnaire was not answered: We'll now ask a series of questions about how you collaborate with [Title VI organization name]. We are interested in different kinds of collaboration, such as communication, data and reporting, meetings, staffing, trainings, events, funding, and service development.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

1. Do you share any information with [Title VI organization name]?
 - a. What kinds of information do you share with [Title VI organization name]?
2. How do you share information with [Title VI organization name]?
 - a. Probes:
 - i. Is information shared through emails, listservs/newsletters, phone calls, face-to-face, or multiple ways?
 - ii. How often do you share information with [Title VI organization name]? Would you say it is continuous communication, weekly, monthly, or less frequent?
3. What do you think about [Title VI organization name]'s communication style? How well does it align with your organization's communication style?

DATA AND REPORTING

1. What data or reports do you share with [Title VI organization name] (e.g., data on number of community members served)?
2. Is [Title VI organization name] tracking some of the same metrics that your organization tracks? If yes, which metrics are similar?
3. Have either of your organizations worked together on needs assessments or area plans before? Do you consult with tribes or elders when developing or updating your area plan?

REFERRALS/CONNECTING ELDERS TO SERVICES

1. Do you refer elders to each other? If yes, please describe.

MEETINGS

1. Do you attend meetings together? If yes, what are your meetings like?
 - a. Probes:
 - i. Who holds the meetings?
 - ii. How often do you meet?
 - iii. How do you meet (e.g., face-to-face, over the phone)?
 - iv. Where do you meet?
 - v. Who attends your meetings? What roles do they have (e.g., social services, health care providers)?

2. Do you serve on any of [Title VI organization name]’s advisory councils or boards? Are they on your advisory councils or boards?

STAFFING

1. At what levels of the organization does collaboration occur? Does it include staff and members of leadership?
2. Is there a person who serves as a liaison or as a “champion” from each organization? Does this person or others work for both organizations?
3. What is the level of engagement of collaborators? What are the responsibilities of each organization?
4. Are any of your organization staff of Native American heritage? Do any staff have extensive experience working with tribal communities? How does this impact your collaboration?

TRAININGS

1. Do you provide training/education to [Title VI organization name]? Do they provide training to your organization?
 - a. Probes:
 - i. How often?
 - ii. What are the topics of these trainings?
 - iii. How were the topics determined and who chose the topics?

ADVISING

1. Do you advise the other organization?
 - a. [If yes] On which topics do you provide support (e.g., policies, grant writing, assessment, service delivery)?
 - b. [If no] On which topics does [Title VI organization name] need support?
2. Does the other organization advise you?
 - a. [If yes] On which topics do they provide support?
 - b. [If no] On which topics would your organization need support?

EVENTS

1. Do you ever host events with [Title VI organization name]? If yes, please describe.
 - a. Probe: How often does this happen?

DEVELOPING PROGRAMS OR SERVICES TOGETHER

1. Have you worked with [Title VI organization name] to develop any new programs or services together? If yes, please describe.
 - a. Probes: Why was the program or service created? Who does the program or service serve? What responsibilities does each grantee have?
2. Do you or [Title VI organization name] use any Native-specific or adapted models or programs? If yes, please describe.
 - a. [If yes] How were these models or programs developed? How does [model or program] ensure that services are culturally congruent?

FUNDING

1. Do you provide any funding for [Title VI organization name]? If yes, please describe.

- a. Probes: How is the funding calculated? If there are more than one Title VI organizations in your area, how is it determined which receive funding?
2. Have you ever collaborated with [Title VI organization name] on grants? If yes, please describe.

SECTION III: CULTURAL COMPETENCY, SOVEREIGNTY, AND TRUST

Thank you for explaining the specific forms of collaboration between your organization and [Title III organization name]. Now we would like to ask some questions about the overall collaboration. First, we want to learn more about the role that cultural competency, sovereignty, and trust play in your relationship.

1. How do your organization and [Title VI organization name] build trust with each other?
2. How are your organizational goals and vision aligned with [Title VI organization name]'s goals and vision? How are they different?
3. How do you understand and work with the cultural needs of Native elders?
 - a. Probe: What, if anything, could your organization do better to strengthen and demonstrate understanding of cultural needs?
4. [If Title VI grantee is a sovereign nation] How does your organization acknowledge, recognize, and work with tribal sovereignty in collaboration with [Title VI organization name]?
5. Some states have statutes related to tribal sovereignty and practices for collaborating with tribes. We've heard that these laws may help facilitate or shape collaboration. Do you know of any laws in your state that may impact your collaboration with other organizations?
6. An important concern that we have heard from some Native groups is a lack of trust due to historical and current relationships among Native tribes, federal, and state governments. How does your organization take this into account while collaborating with [Title VI organization name]?

SECTION IV: OVERALL THOUGHTS ON COLLABORATION

Now we would like to ask some questions about collaboration more broadly.

1. How has your collaboration with [Title VI organization name] been successful?
2. What factors made collaboration easier with [Title VI organization name] (e.g., sufficient resources or capacity, mutual trust, clearly defined partnership roles, shared goals, or champions)?
3. Do you have any recommendations for other Title III and Title VI grantees on how they can make and keep collaborative relationships?
4. What are the challenges related to your collaboration with [Title VI organization name], if any?
5. Do you think any factors made it more difficult to collaborate with [Title VI organization name]?
6. Is there anything you wish was different about your collaboration with [Title VI organization] (e.g., more, less, or different communication, support, trainings, meetings, or programs)?
7. [If answered yes to the survey question, "Does your organization collaborate with other Title VI grantees"]: How do you collaborate with [other Title VI grantee organization name]? How is your collaboration with [other Title VI grantee organization name] different to that with [Title VI grantee organization name] (e.g., is one more prominent, or do you collaborate with both in complimentary ways)?

In response to COVID-19, organizations supporting aging individuals and their caregivers have had to make changes related to their operations and strategy.

1. How has your organization been responding to COVID-19?
2. Have you met with or discussed needs related to COVID-19 with [Title VI organization]?

- a. [If yes] How has collaboration with [Title VI organization] supported your organization's response to meet the needs of Native elders?
- b. [If no] Are there reasons why you have not met to discuss COVID-19? How could collaboration around COVID-19 response assist your organization's response to meet the needs of Native elders?

SECTION V: ROLE OF THE STATE UNIT ON AGING (IF APPLICABLE)

Interviewers will skip this section for case studies where the SUA serves as the main Title III collaborator of focus for the study, since similar questions will be covered in Section II: Collaboration Types section.

1. Do you communicate or work with staff from [SUA name]?
2. Are there staff members at [SUA] who specialize providing support for Title III/Title VI collaboration?
 - a. [If yes] How does this support your collaboration work?
3. Was your organization involved with creating your state plan? Was anyone from [SUA name] involved in helping you assess the needs of your elders for the Title III grant?
4. Does [SUA name] support your collaboration with [Title VI organization] or other organizations in any way? If yes, please explain.

SECTION VI: CLOSING

1. When we finish this study, we hope to share a document with best practices. What do you think would be the best format for you and other stakeholders (e.g., infographic or visuals, short report, example case studies, or checklist)?
2. If we share a description of your collaboration, would you be willing to have you or your organization's contact information listed on the best practices document?
3. Is there anything else about this topic that you would like to share?

Thank you so much for your time today! We appreciate being able to learn from your expertise. If you think of anything else that you wish you had brought up during our conversation, please feel free to e-mail or call us. In the next couple of weeks, we will send you a one to two-page summary of today's interview and you will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the summary.

APPENDIX G: SUA INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PRIVACY

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has contracted the Lewin Group to conduct a study on Title III and Title VI grantee collaboration. Within the Older Americans Act (OAA), there is language that requires this collaboration: specifically, each Title VI funding application should contain examples of service coordination with Title III grantees of the same geographical area, and each State Unit on Aging (SUA) should include program coordination with Title VI grantees in their state plan.

However, there are no specific guidelines on collaboration within the OAA, and ACL is interested in exploring best practices among Title III and Title VI grantees. The results and best practices will be publically shared when the study is completed. We will also write a one to two-page summary of today's interview and you will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the summary.

To better understand these collaboration areas, we selected five case studies of collaboration and are conducting several [virtual] site visits. [Include information on how this specific case study was chosen, if relevant and necessary.]

This interview will take less than an hour. Thank you in advance for taking the time to speak with us. Your participation is voluntary and you do not have to answer any questions you don't want to answer.

If it is OK with you, we are interested in recording this interview to supplement our notes. The recordings will be deleted after the notes are finalized.

[If yes: Hit record and proceed]

[If no: That is fine; we can proceed without recording.]

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION TO INTERVIEWEE AND SUA

First we want to learn about [SUA name] and your role more generally.

1. Could you introduce us to your organization, [SUA name]?
2. Within [SUA], what is your role and what responsibilities does it entail?
3. We know that one of the overarching responsibilities of SUAs is to write and administer the state plans on aging.
 - a. How does [SUA name] account for tribal needs in the state plan? Do you consult with tribes or elders when developing or updating the state plan?
 - b. How do tribal needs factor into funding applications and allocations (such as in the event of Title III grantees sharing funding with Title VI grantees)?
 - c. How do you learn of new collaboration initiatives that are included in the state plan?

SECTION II: SUA OUTREACH TO TITLE III GRANTEEES

Thank you for the broad overview of [SUA name]. Now we're interested in delving into a few specific topics, such as support and outreach to grantees. We'll start first with Title III grantees.

1. How does [SUA] conduct outreach and support Title III grantees (e.g., regular communication, regular meetings, technical assistance)?
2. What common challenges or opportunities for growth do you hear most from Title III grantees?

SECTION III: SUA OUTREACH TO TITLE VI GRANTEEES

Now we'll ask some questions about SUA outreach to Title VI grantees in your state.

1. How does [SUA] conduct outreach to Title VI grantees (e.g., regular communication, regular meetings, technical assistance)?
2. Does [SUA] have a tribal liaison or office?
 - a. [If yes] When and why was it created? What specific duties fall under this role or office?
 - b. [If no] Is there interest in creating a liaison position or office? What barriers are there to creating the position or program?
3. Does [SUA] have an advisory board that includes Native and/or Title VI leaders?
 - a. [If yes] What issues are discussed during advisory boards? What issues are brought up or commented on by Native or Title VI leaders during advisory board meetings?
 - b. [If no] Is there interest in [creating the advisory board or inviting leaders to the advisory board]? What barriers are there?
4. Some states have statutes related to tribal sovereignty and practices for collaborating with tribes. We've heard that these laws may help facilitate or shape collaboration. Do you know of any laws in [state name] that may impact collaboration? Are there any policies that may impact collaboration? Please describe.
5. [Only ask questions not covered in background research] Do you provide any Title III funding for Title VI organizations? If yes, please describe.
 - a. Probes: How is the funding calculated? If not all Title VI organizations receive funding, how is it determined which receive funding?
6. What common challenges or opportunities for growth do you hear most from Title VI grantees?

SECTION IV: Collaboration Among Title III/Title VI State Grantees

We'd like to focus on your understanding of collaboration among Title III and Title VI grantees in the state, and the role your SUA may play in fostering this collaboration.

1. For this study, we are focusing on [case study sites] in [state]. What is your understanding of collaboration between [grantees]?
2. What support does [SUA name] provide to encourage or support collaboration among grantees?
 - a. Probe: For instance, does the [SUA] provide opportunities to Title III and Title VI grantees to meet each other or trainings related to collaboration?
3. What does successful collaboration among Title III and Title VI grantees look like?
4. What are some facilitators of collaboration (or factors that lead to collaboration) among Title III and Title VI grantees?
5. What are some barriers to collaboration among Title III and Title VI grantees?
6. What opportunities do non-Native SUA and Title III staff have for cultural competency training to better understand the context and needs of Native populations in [state]?
 - a. [If yes] Could you provide more details about these opportunities and trainings? How have they led to increased understanding in non-Native staff?
 - b. [If no] Is there interest in training opportunities? What barriers are there to establishing them?
7. An important concern we have heard from some Native groups is a lack of trust due to historical and current relationships among Native tribes, federal, and state governments. How does [SUA] take this into account while facilitating collaboration among Title III and Title VI organizations?

In response to COVID-19, organizations supporting aging individuals and their caregivers have had to make changes related to their operations and strategy.

1. How has your organization been responding to COVID-19?

2. Have you met with or discussed needs related to COVID-19 with Title III or Title VI grantees?
3. How do you think COVID-19 has impacted collaboration among Title III and Title VI grantees?

CLOSING

1. To wrap up, we're interested in shifting our focus from collaboration specifically with Title VI grantees to the larger Native population in [state name]. In many states, not all registered tribes are Title VI grantees, and there may also be Native individuals living away from their reservation, such as in urban areas. How do Title III programs in [state name] work to ensure the needs of elders in all tribal entities and urban Native populations are met?
2. When we finish this study, we hope to share a document with best practices. What do you think would be the best format for you and other stakeholders? (e.g., infographic or visuals, short report, example case studies, or checklist)
3. Is there anything else about this topic that you would like to share?

Thank you so much for your time today! We appreciate being able to learn from your expertise. If you think of anything else that you wish you had brought up during our conversation, please feel free to e-mail or call us. In the next couple of weeks, we will send you a one to two-page summary of today's interview and you will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the summary.

APPENDIX H: REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY TEXT

1. Name:
2. Are you aware of Title III and Title VI grantees in your region collaborating together on the following activities?

ACTIVITY	YES	NO
Attending meetings together		
Serving as members on each other's advisory boards		
Sharing data or reports (e.g., related to elders, caregivers, community members)		
Having a liaison or "champion" working on collaboration		
Providing and/or attending trainings		
Providing advice		
Hosting events together		
Supporting programs or services		
Developing new programs or services together		
Providing funding to each other		
Referring elders or caregivers to each other		

3. Do you have any comments related to Title III and Title VI grantee collaboration activities in your region that you would like to share?

4. Are you directly engaged in supporting Title III and Title VI grantee collaboration in your position (e.g., communicating the requirements to collaborate, connecting grantees, sharing best practices)?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe how you support Title III and Title VI grantee collaboration.

5. What could central office do to make it easier for you to support Title III and Title VI grantee collaboration?

6. What does successful collaboration among Title III and Title VI grantees look like?

7. Do you know of any successful Title III/Title VI grantee collaborations in your region?

Yes

No

If yes, please list the names of some of the Title III/Title VI grantees that are successfully collaborating and a brief description of how they are collaborating.

8. Do you have any recommendations for Title III and Title VI grantees on how they can make and keep collaborative relationships?

9. What are some facilitators or factors that lead to collaboration among Title III and Title VI grantees?

10. What are some barriers to collaboration among Title III and Title VI grantees?

11. Do you have any collaboration tools or presentations that you would be willing to share? If yes, Lewin staff will reach out to you via email.

Yes

No

12. How do you think COVID-19 has impacted collaboration among Title III and Title VI grantees?

13. Do you have any other information or questions that you would like to discuss further via email or phone call? If yes, Lewin staff will reach out to you via email.

Yes

No