Governance Readiness Assessment

Introduction

Governance provides the framework and structure within which organizations operate. It guides decisions, communications, and operational oversight. It is important that strong governance processes are in place and that the right people are members of governing bodies/Tribal Councils in order to obtain successful organizational outcomes.

Committed governing bodies and Tribal Councils must understand and faithfully implement their roles as leaders and fiduciary agents. Their guidance helps to ensure Head Start and Early Head Start programs are successful in delivering high-quality, consistent services to pregnant women, young children, and their families. To ensure success, Congress charges governing bodies/Tribal Councils of organizations that operate Head Start and Early Head Start programs to:

- Include members with particular expertise
- Exercise specific oversight and leadership functions
- Create a governance system that includes an active role for the Policy Council, whose membership includes parents of enrolled children and community representatives

This Governance Readiness Assessment will help governing bodies/Tribal Councils and leaders assess their capacity to effectively oversee and monitor a Head Start or Early Head Start program. It will also assist in the development of a Governance Readiness Plan. This tool identifies the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) and Head Start Act requirements related to governance practices. It also outlines governing body/Tribal Council practices that are particularly relevant to the leadership and oversight of a Head Start or Early Head Start program.

The Governance Readiness Assessment includes three sections:

Section 1: Compliance Checklist

Use the checklist to assess whether your program is in compliance with the HSPPS related to governance. Although it is not specific enough to be the only resource you use to fully evaluate compliance, it will help you identify areas of program governance you wish to strengthen. Please see the Governance, Leadership, and Oversight Capacity Screener for more detailed reference to legislative and regulatory requirements.

Section 2: Indicators Assessment

Review recognized best practices for organizational governance. Governing body and Tribal Council members can use the worksheet provided to assess their governance practices. While some of the details in the indicators are not governance requirements referenced in the HSPPS, Head Start and Early Head Start grantees will benefit from

considering these indicators. They will help governing boards demonstrate an ability to oversee grantees' operations.

Section 3: Governance Readiness Plan

Explore forms that can be used to summarize your findings and document a plan that can be implemented to strengthen governance practices within your program. Completing your Governance Readiness Plan is the first step toward strengthening your organization's governing body or Tribal Council. It is equally important to regularly monitor progress in implementing your plan.

There are several ways the Governance Readiness Assessment can be used within programs. The governing body/Tribal Council chairperson and executive director may want to work in partnership to lead this process. They can:

- Include the Governance Readiness Assessment as an action item on an upcoming meeting agenda, reserving adequate time for a full group discussion
- Share the tool with individual governing body/Tribal Council members, requesting that they consider their responses to each of the indicators in preparation for the next meeting.

Governing bodies and Tribal Councils overseeing large organizations may choose to assign the responsibility for completing the tool to a committee that can report its findings and recommendations back to the entire group.

Some governing body/Tribal Council members may seek additional information about governance practices as they complete their assessment and develop the Governance Readiness Plan. Below is a list of selected websites that contain a variety of nonprofit governance resources:

Resource	Description
Blue Avocado	Provides practical information and insights that are easy to implement and can improve your effectiveness and that of your organization. It is the online magazine of the Nonprofits Insurance Alliance.
Board Source	Offers fundamental assessment-based support to nonprofit boards and executives. It provides a wide range of tools, seminars, best practice resources, and guidance to strengthen board performance.
GrantSpace	Provides easy-to-use self-service tools. Its "Tools" section includes resources on bylaws and additional materials for nonprofit governance. GrantSpace is a service of Foundation Center.

Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC)	The official website of the Office of Head Start (OHS). It provides resources and information about Head Start and Early Head Start programs, including governance practices and regulations.
National Council of Nonprofits	Produces and curates tools, resources, and samples for nonprofits.
The Bridgespan Group	A consulting firm that provides strategy consulting and leadership development. They post many articles and resources on their site related to leadership and governance. Review materials under "Insights" to get started.

Additional important resources include your regional program specialist and the OHS Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Network.

Section 1: Compliance Checklist

Both the Head Start Act and the HSPPS set forth governance requirements with which every Head Start and Early Head Start grantee must comply. Reference the Head Start Program Governance Reference Book for a complete listing of these requirements.

The Compliance Checklist may be used to assess your program's level of compliance with the governance requirements found in the Head Start Act and the HSPPS.

To complete the Compliance Checklist:

1. Review each requirement summary statement. Links to the original language in the Head Start Act and the HSPPS are included.

2. Assess whether you believe your program to be in compliance with the standard and place a checkmark in the appropriate column. You may add notes indicating why you selected your response or questions that require follow-up.

3. Use the completed checklist as a basis for discussion by the full governing board. A summary of the assessment responses can be listed on the summary page of the Governance Readiness Plan (pg. 21).

4. All requirements identified as not being met should be included in your program's Governance Readiness Plan: Action Steps for Areas of Compliance (pg. 22).

A. Overall Structure

45 CFR §1301.1 45 CFR §1301.3(a) A governing body/Tribal Council, a Policy Council (at agency level), a Policy Committee (at delegate level), and a parent committee have been established and maintained: • The governing body/Tribal Council is responsible for the legal and fiscal administration and oversight of the Head Start and Early Head Start programs • The Policy Council/Policy Committee is responsible for the direction of the Head Start and Early Head Start programs	⭕ Yes ⭕ No ⭕ Don't Know Notes:
45 CFR §1301.5 The agency provides T/TA and orientation to the governing body/Tribal Council, any advisory committee members, and members of the Policy Council or Policy Committee, including training on HSPPS and on program eligibility.	⭕ Yes ⭕ No ⭕ Don't Know Notes:

B. Governing Body/Tribal Council

45 CFR §1301.2(a) Sec. 642(c)(1)(B)(i–vi) The governing body/Tribal Council includes: • At least one person with a background and expertise in fiscal management or accounting • At least one person with a background and expertise in early childhood education and development • At least one person who is a licensed attorney familiar with issues that come before the governing body/Tribal Council • Members who reflect the community to be served—including parents of children who are currently or were formerly enrolled in Head Start—and who have expertise in education, business administration, or community affairs	⭕ Yes ⭕ No ⭕ Don't Know Notes:

45 CFR §1301.2(a) Sec. 642(c)(1)(C)(i-iv) and (D)(i-ii) Members of the governing body/Tribal Council: • Have no financial conflict of interest with the grantee or delegate • Do not receive compensation for serving on the governing body/Tribal Council or providing services to the grantee • Are not employed by the grantee or delegate • Operate as an entity, independent of staff employed by the grantee	⭕ Yes ⭕ No ⭕ Don't Know Notes:
45 CFR §1301.2(b)(1) Sec. 642(c)(1)(E)(i-iii) 45 CFR §1301.6 The governing body/Tribal Council: • Meets legal and financial responsibilities for overseeing programs and safeguarding federal funds • Has practices to assure active, independent, and informed governance, including impasse policies • Fully participates in the development, planning, and evaluation of the programs • Ensures compliance with federal, state, tribal, and local laws and regulations	⭕ Yes ⭕ No ⭕ Don't Know Notes:
45 CFR §1301.2(b)(1) and (c)(1–2) Sec. 642(c)(1)(E)(iv)(I–III), (VI), and (XI–X) The governing body/Tribal Council is responsible for: • Establishing procedures and criteria for recruitment, selection, and enrollment of children • Reviewing applications and amendments for funding • Developing procedures regarding Policy Council member selection • Establishing advisory committees, as practicable and appropriate • Selecting delegate agencies and their service areas, if appropriate • Establishing, adopting, and periodically updating written standards of conduct that establish criteria and formal procedures for disclosing, addressing, and resolving:	⭕ Yes ⭕ No ⭕ Don't Know Notes:

o Any conflict of interest—or any appearance of a conflict of interest—by members of the governing body/Tribal Council, officers and employees of the Head Start agency, and consultants and agents who provide services or furnish goods to the Head Start agency o Complaints, including investigations, when appropriate	
45 CFR §1301.2(b)(1) Sec. 642(c)(1)(E)(iv)(VII) The governing body/Tribal Council approves financial management, accounting, and reporting policies and monitors compliance and corrective actions, including those related to major financial expenditures, annual approval of the operating budget, and selection of independent auditor (unless one is assigned by law).	○ Yes　　○ No　　○ Don't Know Notes:
45 CFR §1301.2(b)(2) 45 CFR §1302.102(c)(2) To conduct its responsibilities, the governing body/Tribal Council uses: • Ongoing monitoring results • Data on school readiness goals • Strategic long-term goals • Goals for the provision of educational, health, nutritional, and family and community engagement services • Program data on teaching practice, staffing and professional development, child-level assessments, family needs assessments, and comprehensive services	○ Yes　　○ No　　○ Don't Know Notes:
C. Policy Council (Agency level) and Policy Committee (Delegate level)	
45 CFR §1301.3(a–b) Sec. 642(c)(2)(B–C) The Policy Council or Policy Committee: • Is established as early in the program year as possible • Includes persons elected by parents of currently enrolled children • Includes parents of currently enrolled children as the majority of members, and they proportionately represent each program option	○ Yes　　○ No　　○ Don't Know Notes:

• Ensures members do not have a conflict of interest, are not program staff (except for those who occasionally substitute as staff), and do not receive compensation for serving on the Policy Council or Policy Committee	
45 CFR §1301.3(C)(1) Sec. 642(c)(2)(D) The Policy Council or Policy Committee approves and submits to the governing body/Tribal Council decisions about: • Activities to support parent engagement in program operations • Program recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities • Applications and amendments for funding • Budget planning for program expenditures, including policies for reimbursement and participation in Policy Council activities • Bylaws for the operation of the Policy Council • Program personnel policies, decisions regarding program staff employment and dismissal, and standards of conduct for program staff, contractors, and volunteers • Procedures for electing Policy Council and Policy Committee members • Recommendations on the selection of delegate agencies and their service areas	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Don't Know Notes:
45 CFR §1301.3(d)(1–4) The Policy Council and Policy Committee have identified that: • Terms are for one year • Re-elections must take place if a member intends to serve for another year • The number of one-year terms allowed are included in bylaws • In no case may a person serve for more than five terms • A successor Policy Council (at agency level) or Policy Committee (at delegate level) must be seated before the Policy Council or Policy Committee can be dissolved	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Don't Know Notes:

D. Governing Body/Tribal Council and the Policy Council			
45 CFR §1301.2 (b)(1) 45 CFR §1301.3(c)(2) Sec. 642(c)(1)(E)(iv)(IV and VIII) and (d)(2) The governing body/Tribal Council and the Policy Council or Policy Committee have each established procedures and guidelines for accessing and collecting information from: • Monthly financial statements, including credit card statements • Monthly program information summaries • Program enrollment reports, including attendance reports • Monthly meal and snack reports • Financial audit • Annual self-assessment and findings • Community and needs assessments • Communication and guidance from U.S. Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services • Program information reports • Monitoring results and appropriate follow-up activities • Ongoing monitoring results • Data on school readiness goals	○ Yes ○ No ○ Don't Know Notes:		
45 CFR §1301.2(b)(1) 45 CFR §1301.3(c)(2) Sec. 642(c)(1)(E)(iv)(V and IX) and (d)(2) The governing body/Tribal Council and the Policy Council or Policy Committee each review and approve all major policies, including: • Annual self-assessment • Annual financial audit • Program progress carrying out programmatic and fiscal provisions in the grant application • Implementation of corrective actions • Personnel policies regarding hiring, evaluation, termination, and compensation of employees, including the executive director, Head Start director, director of human resources, and chief fiscal officer	○ Yes ○ No ○ Don't Know Notes:		

45 CFR §1301.6	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Don't Know
Together, the governing body/Tribal Council and the Policy Council have established written procedures for resolving internal disputes between the groups, which include impasse procedures.	Notes:

E. Parent Committee

45 CFR §1301.4	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Don't Know
As early in the year as possible, a parent committee comprised exclusively of parents of currently enrolled children has been established at the center level for center-based programs and at the local level for other program options. It: • Advises staff about local program policies, activities, and services • Communicates with the Policy Council or Policy Committee • Participates in the recruitment and screening of employees per guidelines established by the governing body/Tribal Council, Policy Council and Policy Committee	Notes:

Section 2: Indicators Worksheet

It is critical to determine if your program is in compliance with the requirements of the Head Start Act and HSPPS. However, it is also important to review whether you have systems and practices in place that will position your program's governing body/Tribal Council to provide the legal, programmatic, and fiscal oversight required. Understanding how to best provide oversight to an organization can be a complex task, especially for those who have not been involved in program governance previously. In this section, 15 indicators of high-functioning governing bodies/Tribal Councils have been identified. These will help as you assess your program's level of readiness and inclusion of best practices related to program governance. The indicators are divided into six categories:

Structural

Head Start and Early Head Start programs must ensure the structural components of their governing body/Tribal Council meet regulations and support best practices.

Fiduciary

Head Start and Early Head Start programs must ensure strong systems are in place for exercising their fiduciary responsibilities.

Strategic Direction

Governing bodies/Tribal Councils must provide strategic direction to Head Start and Early Head Start programs, including successfully engaging the management team and Policy Council in a strategic planning process.

Leadership

In accepting funding for Head Start and Early Head Start programs, governing bodies/Tribal Councils agree to provide leadership to the program as a whole, as well as to Head Start staff and parent leaders. Governing bodies/Tribal Councils also recognize the important relationship between themselves and the Policy Council and their shared leadership responsibilities.

Community Relations

In accepting funding for Head Start and Early Head Start programs, governing bodies/Tribal Councils agree to work with program leaders to develop links with the community that the program serves.

Decision-making

Head Start and Early Head Start programs must establish a Policy Council (at agency level) or Policy Committee (at delegate level) whose members include parents of children currently enrolled in the program and community representatives. The governing body/Tribal Council must actively engage this group in program decision-making.

Complete the Indicators Worksheet.

1. Ask governing body/Tribal Council members and organizational leaders to take stock of each indicator by reviewing the questions that characterize effective governance practices, and considering other related issues. Personal experiences as well as knowledge of written documents should be considered.

2. Arrange time for governing body/Tribal Council members and organizational leaders to come together and share their thoughts to determine which stage of development best describes their progress in each area. A summary of the assessment responses can be listed on the summary page of the Governance Readiness Plan (pg. 21).

3. Review all requirements identified as "needs improvement" or "in process." These should be considered for inclusion in your program's Governance Readiness Plan Action Steps (pg. 22).

STRUCTURAL
Review five indicators programs should consider when assessing the structural strengths of their governance readiness: (S1) Bylaws, (S2) Major policies, (S3) Measuring governing body/Tribal Council performance, (S4) Membership, and (S5) Orientation and training.

Indicator S1: Bylaws	Select one of the following stages of development for this indicator.
Bylaws can be helpful to any organization. They are written rules that govern the operation and management of the organization.	⭘ Needs Improvement
Take Stock	⭘ In Process
• Does the governing body/Tribal Council adhere to a set of bylaws that members regularly review and update?	⭘ Strong
• Do all governing body/Tribal Council members have a copy of the current bylaws?	Provide comments explaining what led to your conclusion.
• Do the bylaws:	
o Indicate when they were last updated	
o Outline the qualifications of members	
o Clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of members	
o Establish a functional committee structure	
o Include policies that define expectations for attendance and membership on committees	
o Include an annual calendar of activity?	

• Do governing body/Tribal Council members regularly reference the bylaws during meetings to clarify how the governing body/Tribal Council is expected to function? • Does the governing body/Tribal Council have a system for regularly reviewing and updating the bylaws?	
Indicator S2: Major Policies All organizations need some standard policies in order to guide decisions and actions. Among those that Head Start and Early Head Start grantees will want to consider are a conflict of interest policy, personnel policies, and having a formal process for employees and consumers to report complaints without retaliation. The HSPPS references conflict of interest in 45 CFR §1301.2 and 45 CFR §1301.3, and personnel policies in 45 CFR §1302.90. **Take Stock** • Are there policies related to conflict of interest? • Are personnel policies in place? • Is there a formal process for employees and consumers to report complaints without retaliation? • Are each of the policies identified above current and easy to locate? • Are these and other policies referenced during meetings to provide guidance to the organization and governing body/Tribal Council during their decision-making processes?	Select one of the following stages of development for this indicator. ○ Needs Improvement ○ In Process ○ Strong Provide comments explaining what led to your conclusion.
Indicator S3: Measuring Governing Body/Tribal Council Performance It is important that the governing body/Tribal Council take time to objectively look at its own effectiveness. The governing body/Tribal Council will need systems for measuring its own performance, evaluating the engagement of individual members, and using the results to strengthen the governance system. **Take Stock** • Are the governing body/Tribal Council chair, other members, and the organization's director committed to continually improving the governance system?	Select one of the following stages of development for this indicator. ○ Needs Improvement ○ In Process ○ Strong Provide comments explaining what led to your conclusion.

- Has the governing body/Tribal Council measured its own performance, documented the results, and used the results to make improvements?

- Are governing body/Tribal Council members able to recall their individual evaluations; do some members report they have increased their level of engagement as a result?

- Are governing body/Tribal Council members aware of tipoffs that indicate the need for evaluating governance policies and practices, such as:
  - Spotty attendance or lack of quorum
  - Late arrivals and early departures at meetings
  - Lack of preparation for meetings
  - Meetings that reflect micromanagement rather than strategic focus?

Indicator S4: Membership

A highly effective governing body/Tribal Council recruits diverse and qualified members whose experience and expertise align with its responsibilities and ensure the community served is adequately represented. The Head Start Act and HSPPS identify required membership on the governing body/Tribal Council, Policy Council (at agency level) and Policy Committee (at grantee level), and the parent committee: Sec. 642(c)(1)(B) and (c)(2)(B–C), 45 CFR §1301.2(a), 45 CFR §1301.3 (a–b), and 45 CFR §1301.4

Take Stock

- Do the bylaws describe specific qualifications that are sought when recruiting governing body/Tribal Council members to fill vacancies?

- Does the governing body/Tribal Council have a nominating committee that has been successful in recruiting qualified members?

- Does the governing body/Tribal Council include members with different areas of expertise that align with key governing body responsibilities as well as members who represent the community served?

- Is the governing body/Tribal Council prepared to change its membership in accordance with the Head Start Act?

Select one of the following stages of development for this indicator.

○ Needs Improvement

○ In Process

○ Strong

Provide comments explaining what led to your conclusion.

Indicator S5: Orientation and Training

The governing body/Tribal Council provides orientation to all new members, and ongoing training as needed, so members fully understand their responsibilities and are knowledgeable about the organization's systems, services, and financial health. The HSPPS require agencies to provide T/TA and orientation to the governing body/Tribal Council, any advisory committee members, and members of the Policy Council or Policy Committee, including training on HSPPS and on program eligibility: 45 CFR §1301.5

Take Stock

- Is a comprehensive governing body/Tribal Council orientation held annually for all new members?

- Does a current governing body/Tribal Council handbook exist? Is it distributed to all new members? Is it used to guide members in embracing their new roles?

- Is the executive director responsive to the ongoing needs of members by providing yearly training activities that support their continuous growth and development?

- Does the executive director utilize internal and external resources to ensure all training content is current and the professional development strategies are appropriate to the audience?

- Can governing body/Tribal Council members describe the orientation and ongoing training they received and how it helped prepare them for their role?

Select one of the following stages of development for this indicator.

○ Needs Improvement

○ In Process

○ Strong

Provide comments explaining what led to your conclusion.

FIDUCIARY
Review three indicators programs should consider when assessing the fiduciary strengths of their governance readiness: (F1) Fiscal oversight, (F2) External audit, and (F3) Managing federal funds.

Indicator F1: Fiscal Oversight

The governing body/Tribal Council has responsibility for developing and formally adopting policies that establish control procedures and other requirements for financial operations in order to assess the fiscal health of the organization. The Head Start Act and HSPPS state that governing bodies/Tribal Councils have legal and fiscal responsibilities, and that at least one member have fiscal management expertise:
Sec. 642(c)(1)(A) and (B)(i),
45 CFR §1301.1, and 45 CFR §1301.2(a)

Take Stock

- Does one or more governing body/Tribal Council members have fiscal expertise?

- Is financial management included in the governing body/Tribal Council orientation and training process so all members have the skills to review and assess budget reports?

- Do minutes from either full governing body/Tribal Council meetings or finance committee meetings clearly document the budget review and approval process?

- Can governing body/Tribal Council members recall times when budget reports have revealed potential fiscal issues and members have worked with management to take corrective action?

- Do governing body/Tribal Council members regularly review their fiscal policies and develop new, more efficient procedures as necessary?

- Does the governing body/Tribal Council:
  - Approve the organization's annual Head Start budget and other major program budgets
  - Establish and adhere to procedures and guidelines for accessing, reviewing, and approving regular budget reports

Select one of the following stages of development for this indicator.

○ Needs Improvement

○ In Process

○ Strong

Provide comments explaining what led to your conclusion.

- o Implement a system of checks and balances to ensure proper internal controls are in place for expenditures - o Regularly analyze budget reports to monitor the organization's financial health, compare actual fiscal performance against the budget, ensure appropriate financial controls are in place, and initiate corrective action when indicated?	
Indicator F2: External Audit The governing body/Tribal Council has responsibility for developing and formally adopting policies that establish control procedures and other requirements for financial operations in order to assess the fiscal health of the organization. Federal audit requirements for organizations receiving Head Start and Early Head Start funding can be found in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards at 45 CFR §75. **Take Stock** - Are governing body/Tribal Council members involved in the selection of a qualified and independent auditor? - Have governing body/Tribal Council members thoroughly reviewed the most recent audit report and are all members familiar with the results? - Can governing body/Tribal Council members recall times when they have worked with the chief financial officer (CFO) and executive director during the audit resolution process to ensure compliance and avoid a repeat finding? - Does the governing body/Tribal Council work with the executive director to take corrective actions, as warranted, to strengthen the organization's financial management operations? - Have governing body/Tribal Council members evaluated the relevance of audit findings and changed audit firms over time to ensure audits are independent, objective, and useful to the organization?	Select one of the following stages of development for this indicator. ⭕ Needs Improvement ⭕ In Process ⭕ Strong Provide comments explaining what led to your conclusion.

Indicator F3: Managing Federal Funds

There are many rules, regulations, and guidance that an organization must incorporate into their fiscal management practices when they receive federal funds.

Take Stock

- Does the organization have a track record of successfully managing programs supported by federal funds?

- Is the governing body/Tribal Council confident that the organization has a highly qualified CFO and fiscal management staff who can manage federal funds based on their prior experience?

- Has the governing body/Tribal Council supported organizational staff in developing their professional skills and expertise related to managing federal funds?

- Do the CFO and fiscal management staff have the ability to address compliance issues, especially as they relate to financial reporting requirements?

Select one of the following stages of development for this indicator.

◯ Needs Improvement

◯ In Process

◯ Strong

Provide comments explaining what led to your conclusion.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Review one indicator programs should consider when assessing the strategic strengths of their governance readiness: (SD1) Strategic planning.

Indicator SD1: Strategic Planning

Governing bodies/Tribal Councils must participate in strategic planning in order to examine internal and community data and analyze trends. The HSPPS require grantees to undertake community-wide strategic planning, which is considered an integral part of program planning and service system design for Head Start: 45 CFR §1302.11

Take Stock

- Is the strategic plan a key reference point during the governing body/Tribal Council's orientation and ongoing training?

- Can governing body/Tribal Council members describe how they have worked with senior program managers on the development of a strategic plan?

- Can governing body/Tribal Council members share examples of how they have used data to make decisions regarding the goals and objectives to be included in the strategic plan?

Select one of the following stages of development for this indicator.

⭘ Needs Improvement

⭘ In Process

⭘ Strong

Provide comments explaining what led to your conclusion.

LEADERSHIP

Review two indicators programs will want to consider when assessing the leadership strengths of their governance readiness: (L1) Oversight of organizational performance and (L2) Relationship with executive director.

Indicator L1: Oversee Organizational Performance

The governing body/Tribal Council oversees organizational performance by monitoring and evaluating metrics of major programs, services, and initiatives. The Head Start Act and HSPPS require governing bodies/Tribal Councils and Policy Councils or Policy Committees use monitoring results and data on school readiness goals: Sec. 642(d)(2), 45 CFR §1301.2(b)(2), and 45 CFR §1301.3(c)(2)

Take Stock

- Is the strategic plan a key reference point during the governing body/Tribal Council's orientation and ongoing training?

- Do organizational staff regularly share required reports with the governing body/Tribal Council?

- Do reports contain information regarding core services and are they tied to monitoring results and data on school readiness?

- Do meeting minutes confirm the governing body/Tribal Council regularly reviews reports that provide information on the status of program services?

- Do governing body/Tribal Council members utilize reports to determine the progress the organization is making in meeting organizational and strategic program-specific goals and measurable objectives?

- Can governing body/Tribal Council members recall instances when they have used progress reports to identify trends and emerging issues with organizational performance and have worked with the executive director to address these issues and support the organization in meeting objectives?

- Do governing body/Tribal Council members spend time observing program services in action in order to obtain their own perspective on program operations?

Select one of the following stages of development for this indicator.

◯ Needs Improvement

◯ In Process

◯ Strong

Provide comments explaining what led to your conclusion.

Indicator L2: Relationship with Executive Director

The relationship between the governing body/Tribal Council and the executive director is an important aspect of program governance. The roles and responsibilities of each must be understood, and work should be done in a collaborative manner.

Take Stock

- Are governing body/Tribal Council members involved in the process of hiring the executive director?

- Do governing body/Tribal Council members annually evaluate the performance of the executive director?

- Do governing body/Tribal Council members have a system to include the opinions of parents, staff, and community members in the hiring and evaluation of the executive director?

- Does the executive director provide the governing body/Tribal Council with regular, objective information about the organization's operations?

- Can governing body/Tribal Council members provide examples of ways they have worked with the executive director to provide leadership to the organization?

Select one of the following stages of development for this indicator.

○ Needs Improvement

○ In Process

○ Strong

Provide comments explaining what led to your conclusion.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Review two indicators programs should consider when assessing the community relations strengths of their governance readiness: (CR1) Community partners and stakeholders and (CR2) Communication strategies.

Indicator CR1: Community Partners and Stakeholders

Developing strong community relationships is a foundational aspect for every Head Start and Early Head Start program, and the governing body/Tribal Council can play a role in establishing and monitoring these. The HSPPS require programs establish ongoing collaborative relationships and partnerships with community organizations: 45 CFR §1302.53

Take Stock

- Are governing body/Tribal Council members able to speak on behalf of the organization with community partners and stakeholders and create connections with resource providers who can benefit the organization and its programs?

- Can governing body/Tribal Council members provide examples of ways they have enhanced community partnerships on behalf of the organization?

- Are governing body/Tribal Council members actively involved with community organizations that will serve as effective partners and provide resources for the Head Start or Early Head Start program?

Select one of the following stages of development for this indicator.

◯ Needs Improvement

◯ In Process

◯ Strong

Provide comments explaining what led to your conclusion.

Indicator CR2: Communication Strategies

Well-crafted internal and external communications strategies connect the program with staff, parents, community partners, key stakeholders, and the general public.

Take Stock

- Does the organization produce an annual report?
- Is the governing body/Tribal Council aware of the contents of the annual report and can it provide examples of how this information is shared with the broader community?
- Does the organization regularly communicate its accomplishments, both internally and externally, through:
  - Newsletters
  - Website content
  - Media outreach
  - Other communication channels?
- Are strategies in place for the governing body/Tribal Council to receive feedback and input from constituents?

Select one of the following stages of development for this indicator.

○ Needs Improvement

○ In Process

○ Strong

Provide comments explaining what led to your conclusion.

DECISION-MAKING

Review two indicators programs should consider when assessing the inclusivity of their governance readiness: (D1) Constituent voice and (D2) Informed and inclusive process.

Indicator D1: Constituent Voice

Informed decision-making requires that a constituent voice is presented and responded to on an ongoing basis. The Head Start Act and HSPPS require that both the governing body/Tribal Council and Policy Council or Policy Committee include parents and community members: Sec. 642(c)(1)(B)(iv)(I) and (c)(2)(B)(ii), 45 CFR §1301.2(a), and 45 CFR §1301.3(b)

Take Stock

- Does the organization produce an annual report?

- Does the governing body/Tribal Council include parents and community members?

- Does the governing body/Tribal Council include representation reflective of the variety of constituents served?

- Does the governing body/Tribal Council carefully consider the opinions and recommendations of the Policy Council or Policy Committee when making decisions?

- Do governing body/Tribal Council members recognize that the opinions and ideas of those being served should be used to shape the organization and its service delivery systems?

- Are governing body/Tribal Council members able to share examples of how they have utilized feedback from constituents in their decision-making?

- Does the governing body/Tribal Council, when making decisions, have mechanisms in place for obtaining and considering the viewpoints of those being served?

- Are Policy Council or Policy Committee and governing body/Tribal Council meetings designed and scheduled to support a coordinated flow of information between the two groups that results in sound and inclusive decision-making?

Select one of the following stages of development for this indicator.

○ Needs Improvement

○ In Process

○ Strong

Provide comments explaining what led to your conclusion.

Indicator D2: Informed and Inclusive Process

For governance to be most successful, members of the governing body/Tribal Council must fully and meaningfully participate in the process, and a variety of perspectives should be welcomed.

Take Stock

- Are governing body/Tribal Council meetings well attended?

- Does the process allow for the sharing of diverse expertise and perspectives?

- Do governing body/Tribal Council members report that their views and the views of others are respected and considered during meeting discussions?

- Do governing body/Tribal Council members receive a packet of materials prior to meetings so they can review the information and prepare for discussions?

Select one of the following stages of development for this indicator.

○ Needs Improvement

○ In Process

○ Strong

Provide comments explaining what led to your conclusion.

Section 3: Governance Readiness Plan

Part 1: You have taken a comprehensive look at the governance requirements in the Head Start Act and HSPPS, as well as policies and practices of high-functioning governing bodies/Tribal Councils as they relate to your own system of governance. Now, review your Governance Compliance Checklist and Indicators Worksheet and summarize your responses in the table below. This will provide you with the foundation for creating your Governance Readiness Plan Action Steps and can serve as a one-page summary of your governance assessment that can be shared with others.

SUMMARY

	Responses from Compliance Checklist	Responses from Indicators Worksheet
Strong		
In Process		
Needs Improvement		

Governance Readiness Plan: Action Steps for Areas of Compliance

Part 2: Using the form below, identify each area of compliance that has not been fully met. Describe the steps you will take to meet the HSPPS in these areas. If needed, be sure to identify and include where you will seek Head Start T/TA support. If there are more than three areas that you are in the process of strengthening, make additional copies of this template as needed.

Area of Compliance:		
Next Steps	**Persons Responsible**	**Time Frame**

Area of Compliance:		
Next Steps	**Persons Responsible**	**Time Frame**

Area of Compliance:		
Next Steps	**Persons Responsible**	**Time Frame**

Governance Readiness Plan: Action Steps for Indicators

Part 3: Using the form below, identify each indicator that needs improvement or is in process. Describe the next steps you will take to advance your governing body/Tribal Council's practices in these areas. If needed, identify and include where you will seek Head Start T/TA support. If there are more than three indicators that you are in the process of strengthening, make additional copies of this template as needed.

Indicator:		
Next Steps	**Persons Responsible**	**Time Frame**

Indicator:		
Next Steps	**Persons Responsible**	**Time Frame**