



Office of Urban Indian Health Programs Work Plan Quarterly Report and Launch Plan Update – Sept. 30, 2023

The Indian Health Service's mission is *"to raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level."*

Background

On June 5, 2023, the Indian Health Service (IHS) sent a [letter](#) to Urban Indian Organization (UIO) Leaders and Tribal Leaders announcing the publication of the [2023-2027 Office of Urban Indian Health Programs \(OUIHP\) Strategic Plan](#). In August 2023, the IHS developed the OUIHP Work Plan outlining the strategic activities identified in the 2023 calendar year to address Urban Indian health priorities.

Status

Communications about the 2023 OUIHP Work Plan will include progress, barriers encountered, resources needed, next steps, specific timelines, and accomplishments. The OUIHP tracks progress for each activity and looks for sustained progress over time. Results of the work are made public for our partners and stakeholders' awareness. The OUIHP will provide regular updates on the progress of the [Work Plan](#) through a quarterly OUIHP Work Plan Report with a focus on increased and effective communication with UIO partners while implementing sustainable actions.

OUIHP Accomplishments

Pillar One – Provide effective timely and transparent communication.

- Featured 74 UIO highlights in the IHS Week-In-Review from June through September 2023 {Goal 1/Objective 1}
- Held a hybrid meeting with IHS Area Urban Coordinators in Sacramento, California, to address the implementation of the Urban Confer Policy, OUIHP Strategic Plan, contracts and grants, annual on-site reviews, data and reporting, accreditation, and other topics. The AUCs also visited the [Sacramento Native American Health Center](#) and [Sacred Oaks Healing Center](#). {Goal 2/Objective 1}
- Published the 2023-2027 OUIHP Strategic Plan on June 5, 2023, and the 2023 Work Plan on Sept. 20, 2023, with input from UIO Leaders and Tribal Leaders, UIO stakeholders, and IHS Leadership. Conducted two orientation trainings for IHS staff (September 19, 2023) and UIOs (Aug. 29, 2023). {Goal 2/Objective 1}
- Launched a new [OUIHP Strategic Plan webpage](#) featuring an orientation on the Strategic Plan and Work Plan. {Goal 2/Objective 1}
- Collaborated with the Department of Veterans Affairs to launch a new interagency map application, [Find Health Care & Resources for Native Veterans](#), on June 15, 2023, to increase health care, community-based resources, and other essential services for American Indian and Alaska Native veterans. The interactive map application integrates location-based data from 41 UIOs with 82 locations and 1,500 VA health care facilities. The application creates an immersive one-stop platform for Native veterans to search and explore health care and other supportive services by clicking on the map to gain additional details and driving directions within specified areas of interest. {Goal 2/Objective 1}



OUIHP Accomplishments (cont.)

Pillar One – Provide effective timely and transparent communication (cont.).

- On March 24, 2023, the IHS sent a [letter](#) to UIO Leaders announcing the Agency completed revisions to the IHS [Urban Confer Policy](#) as a result of UIO recommendations. Launched a new [Urban Confer Policy webpage](#) featuring an “Overview of Updated Policy on Conferring with UIOs”. Conducted two orientation trainings in August 2023 for IHS staff and UIOs. {Goal 3/Objective 1}

Pillar Two – Improve OUIHP operations oversight and management.

- Finalized the [4-in-1 Grant Program Comprehensive Report](#) and posted on the IHS OUIHP [4-in-1 Grant Program](#) webpage. Provided updates to UIOs on the 4-in-1 grant communications, report deadlines, and technical assistance available. In Fiscal Year 2023, increased the number of grantees from 32 to 34 and increased funding by \$2 million. {Goal 3/Objective 1}
- Provided accreditation and accreditation readiness consultation services to 20 out of 41 UIOs to create quality improvement capability at all levels of the organization and support UIOs in providing high quality and accessible care. A total of \$115,900 was expended. {Goal 4/Objective 1}

Pillar Three – Leverage partnerships to expand Urban Indian Organization resources.

- Collaborated with the Veterans Health Administration to ensure UIOs are included in the work related to the [VHA-IHS Memorandum of Understanding](#), such as [conferring on the VHA-IHS MOU Operational Plan](#); the Native American Veteran PACT Act; [waiving copayments for eligible Native Veterans](#); the VA Office of Integrated Veteran Care and UIO reimbursement agreement program; identifying the Native American Development Corporation in Montana, the American Indian Health Service of Chicago in Illinois, and First Nations Community Healthsource in New Mexico as participants in the VA-UIO reimbursement program with four in the onboarding process; and involvement in the [VA Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs](#). {Goal 1/Objective 1}
- Collaborated with the [White House Council on Native American Affairs \(WHCNA\) Health Committee](#) on the Native American Veteran Homelessness Initiative, a multi-agency effort led by the WHCNA, including VA, Department of Health and Human Services, and Department of Housing and Urban Development. This initiative’s overall goal is to develop relationships between VA, IHS, UIOs, and other organizations serving Native Americans to provide education on VA and IHS resources and to encourage Native veterans to access these services. Ending veteran homelessness is a top priority of VA, IHS, and the entire [Biden administration](#). A [brochure](#) was developed to share information on VA services to help veterans who are at-risk of or experiencing homelessness, including emergency and transitional housing services, permanent housing services, case management, employment programs and more. Stand Down events have been utilized as community events to increase engagement with Native Veterans. The Initiative is leveraging long-standing community-driven Stand Down events as an access point to serve Native Veterans directly. Five sites were selected as pilot sites for this whole-of-government approach, including Albuquerque, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Seattle, and Alaska Fairbanks and Anchorage.



OUIHP Accomplishments (cont.)

Pillar Three – Leverage partnerships to expand Urban Indian Organization resources (cont.).

- Provided technical assistance to Congressional staff regarding the extension of 100 percent Federal Medical Assistance Percentage for UIOs and assignment of [United States Public Health Service Commissioned Officers to UIOs](#), which is included in the FY 2024 Congressional Justification (CJ – 285). {Goal 1/Objective 2}
- Met bi-weekly with the [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Division of Tribal Affairs](#) on IHS, Tribal, and UIOs' priorities, such as activities and regulations related to AI/AN health, policy analysis, technical assistance, and guidance on national and local levels. {Goal 1/Objective 2}
- In FY 2023, transferred \$200,000 in [Urban Emergency Funds](#) to the Billings Area IHS to support one UIO that experienced an emergency issue. {Goal 1/Objective 5}

Pillar Four – Improve data quality.

- Sponsored \$81,000 in travel costs for 46 staff from UIOs to attend the annual [2023 IHS Partnership Conference](#) held in Atlanta, GA. Over 1,000 IHS, Tribal, and UIO staff attended to receive updates, guidance, and best practices on business office topics and special sessions focused on Urban and Tribal programs. Two UIO speakers presented during the urban sessions. {Goal 2/Objective 1}
- Collaborated with the IHS National Patient Information Reporting System to facilitate a two-part UIO-specific training session on [data submissions and reporting criteria to the National Data Warehouse \(NDW\)](#). Resources are available on the OUIHP webpage under National Data Reporting, including NDW FAQs, [Uniform Data System Reports](#), and [Budget Formulation Data Flow](#) pictogram. Completed 2021 Uniform Data System and Budget Formulation Reports. {Goal 3/Objective 1}
- Developed public resource pages on the new [OUIHP webpage](#), including the [Federal Tort Claims Act](#) (\$32,754.89 was paid in FY 2023 to the IHS Office of Quality for FTCA support) resources. Resources include recorded training and supporting documents. {Goal 3/Objective 2}

Pillar Five: Expand UIO Infrastructure and capacity.

- OUIHP is in the process of completing an Infrastructure Study Report to Congress in partnership with 40 of the 41 UIOs. The report noted that there is \$1.37 billion future facility needs through 2032 for the majority of the 40 existing UIOs and provided estimates of the operational resources needed to serve the future Urban Indian population. {Goal 1/Objective 1}