

2010 Hualapai Tribe Regional Partnership Council Needs & Assets Assessment ~ Summary of Identified Needs

Community Challenges and Areas for Improvement

Despite the concerted efforts of community organizations, tribal departments, and individuals, there are areas affecting the health and well-being of Hualapai children that need additional improvement.

- High levels of poverty and unemployment

Poverty is a serious problem on the Hualapai Reservation. Over one-third of children under age six were living below the Federal Poverty Level in 2000, and nearly one-quarter of community members were unemployed in 2009. While the Food Assistance and Nutrition Strategy and WIC Program will help reservation members receive food and nutritional education, families would likely benefit from additional assistance. Support for household costs aside from food could be beneficial, access to quality child care so parents can work, and additional job training programs.

- Lack of school readiness and educational attainment

Many children on the Hualapai Reservation are entering kindergarten unprepared. Only 6% of 3rd grade students met the Arizona reading standards in 2008, and only slightly more than one-quarter of the Hualapai population had more than a high school diploma. Currently, there is no high school closer than 40 miles away. The high school drop-out rate is a big concern in the Hualapai community, as high school diplomas are required for work on the reservation. Considering the importance of early education on future academic success and attainment, the Reach Out and Read program and the increase in quality child care are positive steps, but more is necessary to ensure that Hualapai children are prepared to enter kindergarten and that they have strong educational opportunities. Additional early childhood education programs, as well as an increased emphasis on reading and math skills could help improve student success in school.

- Low rates of breastfeeding

Very few women enrolled in the Hualapai WIC program exclusively breastfeed their children. The “Preventing Obesity in Children: Breastfeeding = Best-feeding!” public awareness campaign is a good first step toward addressing this issue. However, in order to have a more targeted approach, another step could be to conduct interviews or focus groups with women involved with WIC, or ask more in-depth questions in the WIC client survey to better understand why they are not breastfeeding, and from that information, develop a more specific strategy for increasing breastfeeding. Additional data on rates of breastfeeding among all mothers in the community, not exclusively WIC clients, would also help to fully understand and address the lack of breastfeeding on the reservation.

- More children on the Hualapai Reservation are suffering from child abuse

Substantiated cases of child abuse on the reservation increased between 2007 and 2010 for all age groups of children. Due to the correlation of increased child abuse cases with increased

financial stress and poverty, one area to target would be the availability of additional financial support to parents. One method would be to provide more affordable child care options, simultaneously combating the Hualapai Tribe's need for birth through five child care and the expense of child care. Additionally, offering a positive-parenting program and/or classes for parents that provided child care during class would encourage attendance and help parents develop alternative ways of interacting with their children.

- Increasing juvenile arrest rates

From 2007 to 2009, the number of juveniles arrested increased from 12 to 60. The majority of arrests were related to liquor law violations, disorderly conduct, and driving under the influence. In addition to the continuation of the Multi-Systemic Therapy program, programs to help combat underage drinking and increased extracurricular educational opportunities could benefit the youth of the Hualapai Tribe.

- Many parents are not accessing available parenting and child development resources

There are many resources for parents available in the community. The Maternal and Child Health Program offers childbirth classes, classes for new moms and parents of toddlers, home visitations to parents, and many other trainings and support programs. The First Things First Hualapai Regional Partnership Council also provides resources for parents of children ages birth through five on the Hualapai Reservation. Yet, despite these opportunities, very few parents access the programs available. Most of the classes have very low attendance, and some events have no attendees. Additionally, while multiple developmental screenings are held during the year, very few parents bring their children to be evaluated, leaving the actual number of young children with disabilities unknown. Conducting surveys or focus groups with parents on the reservation would help to identify the barriers preventing families from accessing the services.

- Many children at risk for overweight and obesity in adulthood

Among people living on the Hualapai Reservation in 2010, the incidence of overweight and obesity exponentially increased with age: 5% of children ages birth through five were overweight or obese, increasing to approximately 15% of children ages 6 through 17, to then 90% of adults overweight or obese. As more parents become obese within the community, it increases their children's risk of becoming obese as well, but the large percent increase in this health problem suggests that there are other risk factors involved that the community could target. Surveyed WIC recipients illustrated that potential trainings on how to plan healthier meals with WIC approved foods, weight control, and increasing physical activity were amongst the top four topics people wanted to learn more about. Providing educational opportunities on these subjects could greatly benefit the Hualapai tribe in efforts to reduce obesity rates and prevent the adverse health outcomes associated with obesity (e.g., cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer).