

# EVALUATION OF THE ACL TITLE VI PROGRAMS – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## BACKGROUND

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) supports home and community-based services for older American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian (AI/AN, NH) populations through funding from Title VI of the Older Americans Act.

In 2016, ACL contracted ICF, a public health consulting firm, to conduct the Evaluation of ACL's AI/AN/NH Title VI grant program. This document presents a summary of the evaluation process, findings, and recommendations. For a more detailed report, please see [The Evaluation of the ACL Title VI Programs – Final Report](#).

## THE EVALUATION

From 2016-2021, this first ever evaluation of the Title VI program collected and analyzed data on the program delivery and impact. The evaluation used a mixed methods, participatory action research design. Twelve Title VI grantees representing four Title VI regions and six states participated in the evaluation.

### Culturally Responsive

The evaluation used a participatory action research design centered on empowerment and community engagement. Title VI program staff and other stakeholders were active participants throughout, providing insight and recommendations on culturally based mechanisms of development and dissemination. This helped to ensure a culturally responsive and grounded evaluation.

### Methods

The Evaluation of the ACL Title VI Programs included both the implementation study and the outcomes study, to assess the impact of the Title VI programs. The evaluation used both primary and secondary data collection.

- ▶ **Primary data** included interviews and focus groups with program staff, elders, and caregivers.
- ▶ **Secondary data** included the National Resource Center on Native American Aging (NRCNAA) Elder Needs Assessment, n4a Title VI Program Survey, Program Performance Reports, and Title VI applications.

## FINDINGS

- ▶ Title VI Evaluation grantees were similar to other Title VI grantees in important ways, including characteristics of the elders served and the number of elders participating in nutrition programs. Because of this, the evaluation grantees may be considered representative of all Title VI grantees.
- ▶ Most evaluation grantees (86%) rely on additional funding streams to support services and staffing for their Title VI programs.
- ▶ Meal programs are the focal point around which all other elder services are provided.
- ▶ Evaluation grantees reported significant confusion regarding what qualifies as a Title VI service.
- ▶ The range of Part C, Caregiver Support Services, provided varied considerably across the evaluation grantees. The most frequently provided service was information and assistance. None of the evaluation grantees were providing all of the required Part C services.
- ▶ Elders participating in Title VI services are older, have lower income, and are more likely to have difficulty with activities of daily living and instrumental activities of daily living than elders not using Title VI services.
- ▶ Elders using Title VI services reported an average of 36% fewer hospital visits (for all causes) and 10% fewer falls per person per year than elders not using Title VI services. This suggests that Title VI programs may be reducing healthcare costs.
- ▶ Elders participating in Title VI services are almost 20% more likely to engage in cultural practices on a monthly basis compared to elders who do not participate in Title VI services.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Elders participating in Title VI services reported 35% more social activities per month than non-Title VI elders.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Receiving nutrition services is a positive predictor of elders' mental well-being. Elders from grantees with overall high service provision for congregate and home-delivered meals report feeling happier compared to elders from lower service provision grantees.

<sup>1</sup>The difference is even greater for elders from programs that provide a higher number of services compared to programs that provide fewer services.

### IMPACT OF TITLE VI

#### **Title VI programs are serving elders most in need.**

*Title VI elders are older, have lower income, are more likely to have difficulties with ADLs and IADLs.*

#### **Title VI programs provide opportunities for improved health.**

*Title VI elders experience fewer hospitalizations and falls.*

#### **Title VI programs promote social and cultural connectedness.**

*Title VI elders participate in more cultural practices and social activities.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the evaluation findings, ACL should consider the following recommendations:

- ▶ To reduce confusion among grantees and increase the likelihood of grantees providing the full range of Title VI services, provide enhanced guidance and training and technical assistance for Title VI grantees, including: (1) developing plain language definitions and guidance for Title VI services and grant requirements, (2) promoting skill building by offering trainings for staff in various program roles (e.g., program director, finance, director, cook), (3) improving access to user friendly resources, and (4) creating opportunities for grantees to share and learn from one another.
- ▶ To facilitate collaboration and leveraging of limited resources, use the findings from the evaluation to build awareness in the field of the importance of Title VI and build/strengthen partnerships across programs with similar goals and outcomes.
- ▶ To better support the unique needs of caregivers, including grandparents raising grandchildren, implement a cross-site representative survey of caregivers to understand caregiver needs at the national level and how they vary by caregiver role.
- ▶ To better understand the return on investment that Title VI provides, conduct a cost-benefit study identifying and monetizing all relevant program costs and benefits.
- ▶ To better understand the health outcomes impact on a broader scale, utilize the full disaggregated National Resource Center on Native American Aging elder needs assessment data to assess whether and how social and cultural participation relate to the experience of falls and hospitalizations among elders participating in Title VI, as well as whether these findings are consistent when all Title VI grantees are included.
- ▶ To better understand impact of Title VI on caregiver well-being and quality of life, conduct a caregiver study assessing the indicators of caregiver well-being and how those translates to better outcomes for elders.