

TRIBAL HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

CONTACT

Michael Meit, MA, MPH

Co-Director, Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis
Program Area Director
Public Health

(301) 634-9324
meit-michael@norc.org

Alana Knudson, PhD

Co-Director, Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis
Principal Research Scientist
Public Health

(301) 634-9326
knudson-alana@norc.org

Carol Hafford, PhD

Principal Research Scientist
Economics, Justice, and Society

(301) 634-9491
hafford-carol@norc.org

NORC

at the UNIVERSITY of CHICAGO

NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. NORC research addresses a broad range of topics including but not limited to human development, economics, public health systems and services, health disparities, housing, rural health, and tribal health and human services. An overarching theme that connects many of these important research topics is social inequities that lead to disparities in health outcomes—NORC has a deep interest in researching these issues and helping to identify solutions. NORC has worked closely with tribal partner organizations and directly with many tribal nations while undertaking a diverse set of survey and evaluation research projects.

NORC consistently uses the latest, empirically proven data collection methodologies, technologies, and strategies to collect needed information while maximizing quality and efficiency and minimizing time, cost, and respondent burden. Our experience working with tribal communities provides us with a deep understanding of the issues and challenges facing tribal communities, as well as the many assets and opportunities that can be leveraged to create positive change. Through our experience, we understand the critical importance of building positive relationships and working collaboratively with tribal nations and tribal members when conducting research and evaluation activities, and ensuring that research benefits tribal communities.

Sample Projects

Assessment of American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Housing Needs. Working in partnership with the Urban Institute, Econometrica, and Support Services International, NORC at the University of Chicago conducted a congressionally-mandated assessment that produced national estimates of housing needs in tribal areas in the United States for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Office of Policy Development and Research. The largest study of American Indian and Alaska Native housing conditions ever undertaken in Indian Country, the study identified the determinants of housing needs, emphasizing trends in demographic, social, and economic conditions; housing conditions and needs; and housing policies and programs, focusing on the role of Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) of 1996. NORC conducted the nationally-representative household survey of 1,340 native families across 38 tribes, a survey of 110 tribally designated housing entities, and interviews with local leaders in site visits to sampled areas.

Evaluation of Tribal Health Professions Opportunity Grants (HPOG) Program. For the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), in partnership with Abt Associates, NORC is leading a second round of evaluation of the design, implementation and outcomes of the five Tribal Health Profession Opportunity Grants that provide training in health professions to tribal members that meet low income requirements. Activities include reviewing documents and curricula, conducting site visits and interviews with grantee administrative staff and partners, interviewing local employers, conducting student focus groups, and analyzing program operations data. As part of this study NORC produces practice briefs and other products that help grantees promote their programs in order to help achieve sustainability.



National Profile of Tribal Health Departments. With funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and in partnership with the National Indian Health Board (NIHB), NORC refined analyses used to develop the national profile of tribal public health agencies. The profile is designed to be consistent with profiles conducted by the National Association of County and City Health Officials and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, and includes information regarding budgets, staffing, leadership, program areas, and priorities. Enhanced understanding of tribal agencies will stimulate performance improvement activities, identify capacity needs, and assist in targeting of resources.

The Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) contracted with the Urban Institute and its partners—NORC at the University of Chicago and Support Services International—to conduct a study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) and its participants. The study provides an update on participant characteristics and program operations that is based on a nationally representative sample of participants served by 23 Indian Tribal Organizations (ITO). NORC conducted a case record review of 1,053 program participants and in-person and telephone surveys with 849 households. Findings indicate that FDPIR serves people of all ages, including very young children, school-age children, young and older adults, and elders from age 60 to beyond 75. The monthly income of FDPIR households is very low and many households live below the poverty line. Although FDPIR is intended to be a supplemental food package program, survey responses indicate that it was the sole or primary source of food for 38 percent of households. Overall, program participants were satisfied with the products in the food packages. Almost 90 percent of survey respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the variety of food, the freshness, the quality, the nutritional value, and the taste and visual appeal. The program continues to evolve at both the Federal and local levels, and ITOs work continuously to improve their local programs.

Descriptive Study of the Coordination of Tribal TANF and Child Welfare Services.

In 2011, the Office of Family Assistance (OFA), Administration for Children and Families (ACF) awarded grants to 14 tribes and tribal organizations to coordinate tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and child welfare services to address family risk factors for child abuse and neglect. The study was completed in 2016 and describes 14 tribes and tribal organizations' implementation of service coordination efforts across Tribal TANF and child welfare services. The tribes and tribal organizations effectively coordinated culturally-relevant services across programs. They pooled scarce human and material resources, shared expertise, reduced duplication, expanded services, and attended to the economic needs and well-being of families. The final report describes the tribes and tribal organizations, explores their journeys to strengthen tribal families, identifies project facilitators and challenges, and shares lessons learned.

Other Projects

OMH Performance Improvement Management System (PIMS)

Multisite Evaluation of Project LAUNCH: Promoting Wellness in Early Childhood

Evaluation of the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) Beta Test

CMS OMH Planning, Designing, Implementing and Evaluating Programs: Reducing Health Disparities through Quality Improvement

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