Discussion Guide for Inter-Agency Partnership for WIC Director and High-Risk Counselor

Purpose: The purpose of this document is to guide Agency stakeholders through a structured process of exploring, planning, and potentially implementing a partnership arrangement for sharing the roles of a Regional WIC Director and WIC High-Risk Counselor.

1) Understanding Current Needs:
   a) Discuss the current full-time equivalent (FTE) positions for roles such as the Director, High-Risk counselor, educators), and any other relevant positions at each Agency.
   b) Identify any specific challenges or gaps in staffing for these roles.
   c) Explore how each agency prioritizes the staff roles within the WIC program, considering any additional duties/roles outside of the WIC program.

2) Partnership Objectives:
   a) Share the primary objectives or goals for considering a partnership.
   b) Discuss each Agency's vision for how the partnership for Director and/or High-Risk Counselor roles would work between the two Agencies.
   c) Define the outcomes each Agency hopes to achieve through this partnership.
   d) Define how the partnership would help each Agency meet COWIC Service Standards requirements.

3) Staffing Flexibility:
   a) Assess the flexibility of both Agencies in terms of sharing staffing resources. For example, if an Agency has WIC staff person time not fully utilized, could that person help in the other Agency if needed?
   b) Discuss any considerations or limitations regarding staffing flexibility.
   c) Determine the involvement of the WIC Director in the hiring process for any new WIC staff. Ideally, the WIC Director would be part of this process.

4) Role Definitions:
   a) Review and refine the description of the responsibilities of the WIC Director and High-Risk Counselor as outlined in the COWIC Local Staffing Policy.
   b) Identify any specific tasks or duties that are non-negotiable for each role.

5) Communication and Collaboration:
   a) Brainstorm strategies to ensure effective collaboration between staff members and leadership in both agencies.
   b) Outline the appointment of key leaders responsible for communication and collaboration in each agency. For example, Agency A designates a staff leadership staffer as a "point person" for the Agency B WIC Director to communicate with on a regular and consistent basis.
   c) Discuss the frequency of meetings or check-ins between leadership in both agencies to discuss the partnership.

6) Performance Evaluation and Feedback:
    a) Determine how performance evaluation will be managed for shared staff members.
    b) Agree on the involvement of the WIC Director in conducting observations, completing record reviews of shared staff, and completing an annual summary of Program duty performance.
    c) Establish steps for correcting performance issues, including documentation, coaching, development of an improvement plan, regular monitoring and feedback, escalation if necessary, and follow-up.

7) Evaluation
    a) Define metrics or indicators to measure the success of the partnership.
    b) Discuss the process for collecting and addressing feedback to improve the partnership over time.

8) Legal and Administrative Considerations:
    a) Review any legal or regulatory requirements that need to be addressed for a partnership.
    b) Determine the administrative processes required to support the partnership.
    c) Address how liability will be handled in the event of disputes or issues arising.

9) Duration Review
    a) Discuss the proposed duration of the partnership agreement.
    b) Agree on the frequency of evaluations to determine the efficacy of the partnership.
    c) Explore opportunities to extend or modify the partnership based on outcomes and feedback.

10) Agency Agreements
    a) Confirm support from leadership and/or policymakers for the partnership.
    b) Outline the specific documented agreements that need to be finalized (e.g.,Memoranda of Understanding, Letters of Agreement, Intergovernmental Agreements).
    c) Identify any additional agency stakeholders who need to be consulted or to grant approval for the partnership to proceed.

Discussions should clarify objectives, identify needs and resources, ensure alignment, address practical considerations, promote collaboration, define terms and duration, and guide decision-making by providing a comprehensive overview of key considerations and questions regarding the potential partnership.