

# A Legacy of Partnership

## Overview

FHI 360's National Institute for Work and Learning (NIWL) partners with federal, state, local, and Tribal governments, community-based organizations, education and workforce agencies and community members to design, implement and evaluate social programs. Along the way, we and our partners learn alongside one another to develop our collective capacities to advance equity, health and well-being through data-driven, locally led solutions — so that humanity thrives.

**Organizational Development** In 50 years of providing comprehensive technical assistance (TA) to community-based organizations, we have learned that sustained success requires strong support structures. We intentionally partner with organizations who are embedded in, knowledgeable of, and committed to their communities. Then we work together to bolster their capacities to assess and respond to community needs, manage complex projects, raise funds, and plan strategically for the futures of their organization and community. Meanwhile, we apply lessons learned from community partners to enhance our own capacity to support locally driven priorities.



*In Dermott, AR and elsewhere, NIWL supports community partners to dream big. Image: Jessica Scranton/FHI 360*

**Data Literacy** We tailor how we communicate results so that partners can readily understand and act on salient findings. We believe it is crucial to produce compelling visuals that bring data to life. Our data collection and reporting techniques are designed to build comfort and capacity with data among our clients and partners, so that the results of our partnership are always more than a report. Clients and partners emerge with the ability to align metrics to objectives, collect and manage meaningful data, and use data to drive decision-making about program improvements.

**Locally Led Solutions** NIWL's approach to solving complex challenges taps the expertise of those who know best: individuals and organizations who understand the needs and opportunities of their communities based on lived experience. We recognize that work and learning institutions, and the intermediaries who support them, operate within entrenched power structures that have often failed to respond to the needs of historically underserved communities. In response, we strive to elevate community voices. We share power to work with and for community members in true collaboration.

## Strengthening

### North Dakota's Regional Education Associations

From 2012 to 2018, FHI 360 partnered with North Dakota's Regional Education Associations (REAs)—which train educators across the state—in *Succeed 2020*, a Hess Corporation-funded, \$25 million effort to support successful transitions from school to college and careers for all North Dakota students. FHI 360's TA encompassed subject-matter expertise on college and career readiness and, equally important, organizational development for REAs. REAs engaged in strategic planning, revenue forecasting, grant writing, formalizing policies, and a series of *Data 101* trainings to improve data literacy. Over the six years of *Succeed 2020*, and in the years since, REAs have honed their individual and collective capacities to: deliver statewide evidence-based teacher professional development; give voice to educators' and students' needs in state-level policy conversations through their collective entity, NDREA; and even sustain their own existence in the face of state funding cuts. More than 10 years into our lasting partnerships with North Dakota REAs, FHI 360 has been asked by and now serves as external evaluator on education, workforce development, and justice services grant programs operated by the Central Regional Education Association.

*"[FHI 360] has continued to be a helpful resource, who does not wait for me to reach out but rather get in touch with me to ensure that [I have] any support I need... [They have] been a marvelous addition to my team." REA Director*

About FHI 360: FHI 360 is a global organization that mobilizes research, resources and relationships so people everywhere have access to the opportunities they need to lead full and healthy lives. With collaborations in over 60 countries, we work directly with local leaders to advance social and economic equity, improve health and well-being, respond to humanitarian crises and strengthen community resilience. We share data-driven insights and scalable tools that expand access and equity so communities can effectively address complex challenges, respond to shocks and achieve thriving futures.

WASHINGTON DC OFFICE  
2101 L St. NW Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20037 USA  
T 1.202.884.8000  
F 1.202.884.8400

## CONTACT

For more information, please contact or visit:

Lisa Johnson  
Director  
[ljohnson@fhi360.org](mailto:ljohnson@fhi360.org)  
[NIWL Resource HUB](#)  
[NIWL X \(Twitter\)](#)  
[NIWL LinkedIn](#)

## Setting a Course

### for Cherokee Nation's Language Department

Since 2019, FHI 360 has partnered with Cherokee Nation's Language Department to secure and evaluate a series of federal grants that support language revitalization in Cherokee communities. The Language Department weaves together grants and programs to enact a cohesive vision for language revitalization and economic development, applying FHI 360's evaluation results to make strategic decisions.

*"Sharing best practices, developing a community of practitioners and overall, being able to network with other providers from around the country, has been made possible by our collaboration with FHI 360." Phoenix Staff*

## Sharing Power

### with Phoenix Youth and Family Services

Since 2018, FHI 360 has partnered with Southeast Arkansas's Phoenix Youth and Family Services to operate Department of Labor-funded efforts to support young people reentering their communities after involvement with the justice system. Across two multi-year grants, FHI 360 has offered TA on engaging employers, financial management, and fundraising. Then, in 2022, a welcome role reversal that exemplifies NIWL's commitment to locally led solutions: NIWL staff supported grant writing for Phoenix Youth and Family Services who then engaged FHI 360 as a subcontractor in their Urban Institute-funded *Catalyst* grant program to develop their data dashboard and management capacity and system.