

Community Services Division Tribal Relations

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

Economic Services Administration · Community Services Division

Program Description

The Department of Social and Health Services supports government-to-government relationships with Washington tribes. The Community Services Division focuses on recognizing tribal sovereignty in developing and delivering programs and services consistent with the Centennial Accord and DSHS Administrative Policy 7.01, American Indian Policy.

CSD shares information and collaborates with tribes and Urban Indian Organizations at the Indian Policy Advisory Committee, the Economic Services Administration IPAC subcommittee, DSHS Administrative Policy 7.01 meetings, biannual TANF directors' meetings and other settings. Additionally, CSD partners with all federally recognized tribes and UIOs in Washington state to share information, discuss and resolve issues, provide training and coordinate services. CSD also provides on-site and virtual outreach services to tribal communities in partnership with local tribes and UIOs. Services include answering program questions, determining eligibility for DSHS programs and EBT issuance at some locations.

CSD has oversight and program-development responsibilities for the state's TANF program and other public assistance and related employment and training programs. As such, CSD works government-to-government with 11 Tribal TANF programs involving 16 federally recognized tribes, which provide direct oversight for their Tribal TANF programs. Tribal TANF programs are designed to address the specific, unique needs of American Indian and Alaskan Native families within their service areas. Washington provides a fair and equitable share of state maintenance of effort funds to Tribal TANF programs per RCW 74.08A.040, and CSD negotiates intergovernmental TANF agreements, operating agreements and data-sharing agreements with Tribal TANF programs to do this effectively. The CSD tribal relations program administrator serves as the lead resource regarding Tribal TANF programs and provides technical assistance and guidance to state and tribal leadership and staff.

CSD also provides oversight of the SNAP Tribal Eligibility Determination Demonstration Project with the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe. This project has been ongoing since 2009 and has been approved to expand to additional tribes. Please see the SNAP Tribal Eligibility Determination Project one-pager for additional details.

Highlights

- Following the June 2023 approval from USDA's Food and Nutrition Service to expand the Tribal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Eligibility Determination Demonstration Project to five additional tribal nations, CSD has been working with the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, Lummi Nation, Quinault Indian Nation, Quileute Tribe and Spokane Tribe of Indians on implementing the project to meet the needs for each tribal community.
- In January 2024, CSD began negotiations with the Suquamish Tribe to provide MOE funds to support their Tribal TANF Program. In addition, CSD is anticipating negotiation with two tribal nations that have formally expressed interest in operating Tribal TANF programs.

Tribal TANF Programs

- Colville Confederated Tribes (2001)
- Quinault Indian Nation (2001)
- Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe (1998)
- Lummi Nation (2007)
- Nooksack Indian Tribe (2005)
- Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe (1998)
- Spokane Tribe of Indians (2003)
- South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency: Nisqually, Squaxin Island, Skokomish (2004), Shoalwater Bay (2019) and tribal members on the Puyallup Reservation
- Quileute Nation (2001)
- Tulalip Tribes (2005)
- Upper Skagit Indian Tribe (2007)

More information:

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