



STATE OF WASHINGTON

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

ECONOMIC SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

### DSHS ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY 7.01

JULY 1, 2025 TO JUNE 30, 2026 - PLAN & PROGRESS REPORT

## ECONOMIC SERVICES ADMINISTRATION HEADQUARTERS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Here is our DSHS mission, vision and values: **Mission**-We partner with people to access support, care, and resources. **Vision**-People find human services to shape their own lives. **Values**: Welcome all with access and inclusion; Serve with respect and dignity; Collaborate with community; Improve services continually; and Communicate with clarity and choices. At DSHS, our [House of Health and Human Services](#) priorities are the driving force behind [our agency's Strategic Plan goals](#). One of the keys to DSHS achieving our goals are the strong working relationships and partnerships that we have with Indian Nations and Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs).

Individual 7.01 plans and this ESA Headquarters Executive Summary highlight some of the great work of ESA and tribal partners. Our 2025-2026 7.01 Plans will be available here: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/division-child-support/washington-state-tribal-policy>.

We have also linked our 2024 ESA Briefing Book (<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/manuals/briefing-book>), which is an excellent reference guide to our programs, client demographics, caseloads and expenditures, for State Fiscal Year 2024 (July 2023 – June 2024).

### A. Office of the Assistant Secretary (OAS)

The OAS Statewide Tribal Relations Administrator (STRA) coordinates state/tribal activities to ensure timely, consistent, and respectful interactions between ESA and tribal partners, in order to improve services for the individuals and families we mutually serve. The OAS STRA works with executive leadership, DCS and CSD headquarters tribal program leads, ESA regional and field office staff, and the Office of Indian Policy (OIP) to strengthen our government-to-government relationships with tribes and assist with state/tribal communications, coordination, partnerships and intergovernmental agreements.

The OAS STRA provides structural and organizational assistance in leading ESA's state/tribal efforts and in managing an ESA Tribal Relations SharePoint site for OAS, CSD, and DCS Headquarters to better store, organize, and track state/tribal work, meetings, communications, and negotiations.

To further improve ESA communications, coordination, and negotiations with Tribal TANF programs, the OAS STRA leads and facilitates (as needed) a Tribal TANF Workgroup of subject matter experts from OAS, Budget, Fiscal, Accounting and Internal Control, CSD Tribal, CSD Communications and Community Relations, and the DSHS Office of Indian Policy. The OAS STRA also helps track state/tribal actions and correspondence.

The OAS STRA is ESA's lead contact with OIP, co-chair and facilitator of the quarterly Indian Policy Advisory Committee (IPAC) ESA Subcommittee meeting, and ESA's lead for the Governor and Tribal Leaders Social Services Council (GTLSSC), IPAC, and the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA).

In an effort to increase ESA staff awareness and knowledge of tribal sovereignty and state/tribal relations and partnerships, OAS STRA manages the ESA Tribal SharePoint page for all staff that includes links to tribal relations staff, useful websites, key policies, state/tribal intergovernmental agreements, articles and other resources. OAS STRA continues to oversee tribal-related ESA News articles and provide, schedule and advertise ongoing staff and management training regarding state/tribal relations, tribal sovereignty, tribal culture and government-to-government principles and partnerships. The OAS STRA provides tribal training at the ESA Leadership Academy, and is available (with the CSD HQ Tribal Relations Program Administrator) to provide tribal training at CSD Regional and Call Center Skill Builder's Classes and at CSD Regional Expanded Leadership Teams meetings (*as requested*).

ESA values National Native American Heritage Month (NNAHM) activities, events, training and presentations to help raise cultural awareness and cultural competency of all DSHS staff. DCS, CSD and OAS HQ tribal liaisons kick-off each November by writing a NNAHM News article for staff, that is packed with useful information and resources. Since 2020, ESA began having "DSHS Tribal Talks," providing numerous virtual tribal trainings in the DSHS Learning Center, featuring a variety of Native American presenters. These highly-regarded sessions have been very well-attended, and recorded versions for most sessions are also available to state staff. DCS, CSD and OAS have continued hosting these trainings once or twice a year as a way for all DSHS staff to increase their cultural competency. NNAHM activities also continue to take place in several ESA offices throughout the state. ESA HQ is evaluating the possibility of resuming an in-person celebration this November.

As needed, the OAS STRA works with ESA Tribal TANF Workgroup members, tribes, CSD HQ and Regional leadership and tribal liaisons, the federal Administration for Children and Families, the ESA Assistant Secretary, and OIP to facilitate the finalization of numerous State/Tribal Intergovernmental Agreements (Tribal TANF IGAs, Tribal TANF Operating Agreements, ACES/SEMS Web Data Share Agreements and CSD Tribal Outstation Agreements).

In various forums (state/tribal meetings, Director meetings, 7.01 meetings, GTLSSC, IPAC and IPAC ESA Subcommittee meetings, and others), ESA meets with tribes to learn from them, discuss ways we can strengthen state/tribal relationships and partnerships, celebrate successes, identify areas of opportunities, and discuss how we can better partner together to achieve mutual goals. ESA HQ Tribal Leads continue to track and support the goals and activities identified in ESA 7.01 Plans.

The OAS STRA works with the CSD HQ Tribal Relations Administrator and the 11 Tribal TANF Directors to plan two State/Tribal TANF Director's meetings each year. These meetings continue to be very successful, and provide a great forum to build relationships, strengthen partnerships, share information, provide updates, discuss mutual issues, seek feedback, and brainstorm solutions.

ESA works with Indian tribes to support their interest in applying for federal approval and funding to operate a TANF program. DSHS and the Suquamish Tribe began working together in 2023 and reached negotiations of their Tribal TANF Agreement in November 2024. The Suquamish Tribe is waiting for final federal approval of their Tribal Family Assistance Plan. Since 2023, the Snoqualmie Tribe and the Makah Nation have also worked with ACF seeking approval of their Letters of Intent to operate a TANF

program.

## **B. Community Services Division (CSD)**

Community Services Division services and operations are aligned with DSHS's mission to partner with people to access support, care, and resources. CSD strives to achieve ESA's goal to reduce poverty and in a way that eliminates disparities. CSD is committed to creating, maintaining, and growing relationships with tribal governments and communities and to work with Urban Indian Organizations.

Guided by DSHS American Indian Policy 7.01, CSD honors tribal sovereignty by working with tribal governments and their representatives in policy development, services, and program activities. DSHS Policy 7.01 provides the template for and guidance in documenting CSD's efforts in working government-to-government with Indian tribes and in collaborating with UIOs. The policy requires the division to provide accountability and measures of progress on its actions and to document how it works with a tribe(s) or UIO throughout the year. The 7.01 Plan and Progress Reports help identify gaps in services and opportunities for improvement and to highlight what we've achieved together over the past year.

Tribal liaisons and regional managers with the Office of Indian Policy meet with tribes and UIOs to discuss and update the 7.01 Plan and Progress Reports. These meetings provide opportunities to discuss partnerships and collaboration opportunities and to exchange ideas and assistance methods. They also enable state and tribal leadership to learn about each other's programs and services. The meetings and 7.01 Plan and Progress reports help us monitor and track joint successes of the state, tribe(s) and UIOs working together to assist tribal communities. This process supports comprehensive customer service through regular meetings with the 29 federally recognized tribes and several UIOs that provide services to American Indians and Alaskan Natives throughout the state.

CSD continues to conduct bi-annual meetings with state and Tribal TANF directors. The next meeting will be on May 29, 2025 and hosted by the Quinault Tribal TANF Program in Ocean Shores, Washington. These meetings encourage relationship-building and collaboration for innovative service delivery. They provide a great opportunity for discussing mutual issues, lessons learned and new approaches to providing services, and for providing updates on state programs and policies and how they may impact tribal families and Tribal TANF Programs.

The CSD tribal relations program administrator works in CSD's Office of Communications and Community Relations. This position was previously held by Mary Anderson for nearly five years. Mary further developed positive relations and provided consistent support to tribal partners and CSD staff at all levels regarding tribal relations matters. When Mary accepted a position with OFM as of Jan. 16, 2025, CSD was approved an exception to hire during the current hiring freeze. Following a competitive recruitment process that included participation by Rebecca Sampson Weed, Social Services Director, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, on the hiring panel, Freda Cogger was selected for this position as of April 16, 2025. Freda brings over 20 years of experience in workforce development, policy analysis, and intergovernmental collaboration, with a strong track record of working alongside tribal communities to support equitable and effective public services.

The CSD tribal relations program administrator assists CSD staff in working government-to-government with tribes and UIOs and is responsible for managing, monitoring and negotiating new Intergovernmental Agreements between the state and 11 Tribal TANF programs (involving 16 tribes in

total). Three other tribes have expressed their intention to run a Tribal TANF program. Along with these agreements, the TRPA also monitors the Data Share and Operating Agreements that provide Tribal TANF programs access to customer information in CSD's systems. These local agreements between Tribal TANF programs and regional Community Services Offices describe how they work together to provide the best services for tribal families and individuals.

The tribal relations program administrator also works directly with CSD staff, including Community Services Office administrators, regional CSD tribal liaisons, and local office tribal liaisons, to facilitate meetings and training between state and tribal partners. CSD staff provide information and training to tribal partners in DSHS programs and services, Washington Connection (including setting up Secure Access Washington or SAW accounts), Client Benefit Accounts, the Benefit Verification System and ACES Online training. By working directly with tribal partners, the administrator assists in creating and fostering relationships between tribal partners and CSD staff.

CSD continues to support collaboration efforts with tribes and UIOs. At the tribal outstations, CSD staff determine eligibility and provide numerous other services, including EBT card issuance. CSD has expanded in-person tribal outstation locations since the pandemic and continues to establish new outstations in partnership with tribes and UIOs as staffing allows. CSD also shares conferences, training, and job opportunities through regular email communications, and the Office of Indian Policy shares these opportunities with tribal partners. Per DSHS Administrative Policy 7.01, CSD continues to invite tribal partners into hiring panels to fill key CSD positions.

The tribal relations program administrator provides information at Indian Policy Advisory Committee meetings and IPAC ESA-Subcommittee meetings to inform tribes of program development and policy changes that may affect services. The administrator leads conversations and follow-up from these meetings to research and answer tribal questions and develop enhanced partnerships. The administrator also reviews proposed legislation to provide feedback on potential impacts to Tribal TANF programs.

Current and future projects for CSD tribal relations include:

- CSD Tribal Relations Workgroup: In collaboration with CSD, OAS, and OIP, CSD formed a workgroup in September 2023 to review CSD's current tribal relations work, identify opportunities to strengthen tribal relations, review best practices on a statewide level, leverage those practices statewide and define the role of CSD staff providing services at tribal outstations. This workgroup surveyed tribal partners and current and former OIP and CSD tribal outstation staff for feedback on the services offered and suggestions for opportunities and best practices. This workgroup finalized its recommendations and received approval by CSD executive leadership to implement 27 specific recommendations. A plan to fully implement all recommendations is underway and will be shared with tribal partners in the near future. One recommendation being implemented is to restart and recharter the Tribal Relations Community of Practice. Its main purposes are to transfer knowledge of tribal relations practices and through CSD member participation, strengthen the tribal relations framework to ensure our partnerships with tribes and UIOs are supported and DSHS services are accessible to tribal members.
- Tribal SNAP Eligibility Determination Demonstration Project Expansion: CSD is dedicated to collaboration and partnership efforts. In November 2020, CSD requested approval from USDA's

Food and Nutrition Services to expand the Tribal SNAP Eligibility Determination Demonstration Project to other interested tribes. CSD developed this plan with a collaborative workgroup that included the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, which has operated a Tribal SNAP Eligibility Determination Demonstration Project since 2009. In May 2022, FNS denied CSD's initial request. Upon review of the feedback provided with the denial, CSD submitted an updated, clarified request to FNS in December 2022. In June 2023, the FNS Deputy Under Secretary Stacy Dean and her staff visited the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe to celebrate the successful pilot program and to announce the approval to expand the pilot to five additional tribes: Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Lummi Nation, Quileute Tribe, Quinault Indian Nation and the Spokane Tribe of Indians. In August 2023, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation formally declined to participate.

Following approval of the Tribal SNAP Eligibility Determination Demonstration Project Expansion, CSD hired a full-time food policy administrator dedicated to the expansion project. A workgroup was formed and is working toward creating individual implementation plans and timelines for each tribe. The first step toward developing these plans was to visit each tribe in person to assess its readiness for implementation. These meetings occurred during February and March 2024. In 2025, the workgroup began creating timelines to meet each tribal community's particular needs. Two additional staff were hired, a tribal SNAP program manager and a lead worker, to support work focused on system enhancements, development of agreements and training, and EBT issuance processes. The project team continues partnering with participating tribes (Lummi Nation, Quileute Tribe, Quinault Indian Nation, Spokane Tribe of Indians) in designing the program and focusing on developing procedures for network access, updates to the [Tribal SNAP Eligibility Determination Project - Homepage](#), and finalizing Indian Nation Agreements. While new tribal service offices are on track to be added to DSHS eligibility systems by July 2025, the tribal service offices will not be operational until Indian nation agreements are executed and tribes complete basic training. The project team will update timelines with each tribe as these steps are completed. The anticipated project completion is August 2027.

### **C. Division of Child Support (DCS)**

The Division of Child Support (DCS) respects and maintains government-to-government relationships with 29 federally recognized tribes and seven urban Indian organizations (UIOs) in Washington State, and strives to develop and deliver culturally appropriate child support services. Through collaboration with the tribes and tribal organizations, DCS leadership, statewide tribal liaisons, and DCS staff, the DCS Tribal Relations Team (TRT) leads the Division's tribal relations efforts to improve the lives of American Indian and Alaska Native children and families. TRT advocates for policies that recognize tribal sovereignty, provides input on proposed legislation, negotiates agreements, and assists in the development of processes that address the many challenges in the establishment and collection of child support.

Additional information about state/tribal child support efforts and agreements is available on the DCS Tribal Relations website at [www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/division-child-support/tribal-relations](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/division-child-support/tribal-relations).

Eight tribes in Washington State operate their own federally-funded child support programs: Lummi Nation, Nooksack Tribe, Tulalip Tribes, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, Suquamish Tribe, Puyallup Tribe,

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and the Quinault Indian Nation. Ten tribes and one UIO also operate tribal TANF programs, and the Suquamish Tribe is awaiting final federal approval of their Tribal TANF plan as well. Several other tribes have either requested additional information about, or taken initial steps towards, their own Tribal TANF programs.

### Partnerships

DCS continues to seek out opportunities to establish or enhance partnerships with tribes, UIOs, programs and resources around Washington State, as well as with those regional tribes with whom DCS has cooperative agreements in Idaho, Oregon, and Alaska. For the last year, the Division's "Out-of-State Tribal IV-D" pilot project, suggested and facilitated by a DCS Tribal Liaison, has been specializing cases referred to/from out-of-state tribal child support programs in caseloads managed by Tribal Liaisons. This has led to improved communication and collaboration with tribal child support programs around the nation.

DCS has also been working with tribal programs to manually add tribal case numbers and information to DCS's intergovernmental forms (when able), which allows tribal program staff to quickly identify and locate cases in tribal systems, which has improved response time and overall communication.

The Division was pleased to resume 7.01 planning meetings this year with the Yakama Nation and the NATIVE Project. DCS provided demographic information and an overview of how DCS services benefit parents and families while recognizing tribal sovereignty and Tribal Code. For the tribes and UIOs who have declined to meet with DCS this year, their plans were either approved by the tribe without a 7.01 meeting, or remain in "draft" status awaiting tribal review and/or meeting scheduling. In accordance with Policy 7.01, DSHS Office of Indian Policy Regional Managers, with DCS support as needed, arrange 7.01 meetings with tribes who indicate interest.

### Agreements

DCS has entered into intergovernmental agreements that provide additional collection tools not only for tribes and tribal programs, but for Washington State as well. While some tribes and their businesses have agreed to honor DCS' withholding notices, not all do. In addition to our collaboration with tribal IV-D programs, DCS Claims Officers admitted to appear in tribal courts can ask for wage and tribal income withholding, or other actions that are beyond DCS' jurisdiction.

Child support agreements with tribal TANF programs also permit DCS to offer full child support services to tribal TANF clients and distribute those payments to the TANF program. And since some tribal programs have a "pass through" provision, child support collections can augment those TANF benefits.

DCS's Data Sharing Agreements provide select tribal program staff *limited, read-only* access to State IV-A and IV-D computer data. Tribal staff are able to quickly verify TANF, medical and food benefits, child support payment information, and customer contact information - without having to rely on a state Tribal Liaison. Tribal data-sharing therefore reduces the delay to benefits and services for customers. DCS Tribal Relations Team staff and the CSD State Tribal Relations Administrator, monitor thirteen such agreements. Program and IT staff from the state and the tribes work together to ensure user connectivity and system security.

TRT also negotiates and monitors Treasury Offset Agreements with six Washington State Tribal IV-D programs and one out-of-state Tribal IV-D Program. Offset Agreements allow DCS to certify child support debts to the federal government on behalf of tribal IV-D programs for offset from IRS tax refunds or other federal administrative funds. Offset Agreements result in child support collections reaching tribal families that would not otherwise be available to tribes.

### Tribal Liaisons

All DCS cases with tribal connections are assigned to specially trained DCS Tribal Liaisons in local offices around the state. Liaisons serve as points-of-contact for tribes in their region and provide outreach, training (including “Child Support 101”) and technical assistance, while educating DCS staff about tribal policy and processes. Additional staff around the Division, including Policy, IT, Central Services, the DCS Virtual Legal Office, and the DCS Director’s Office also regularly review programmatic concerns and processes relating to DCS’s tribal relations efforts. DCS encourages Liaisons and staff to participate at tribal events to increase cultural awareness and experience, build trust, strengthen partnerships, and improve service delivery to tribal communities. At the invitation of our tribal partners, Tribal Liaisons have attended and participated in Pow Wows, annual Canoe Journey days, tribal health fairs, job fairs, and conferences.

Tribal Liaisons are required to attend the Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs’ Government-to-Government training and the DSHS Office of Indian Policy’s 7.01 training, and often listen to annual meetings regarding the Centennial Accord, Indian Policy Advisory Committee (IPAC), and the Governor’s Tribal Leaders Social Services Council. Liaisons participate in and take minutes for their regional 7.01 meetings as well.

### Tribal Liaison Meetings

The Tribal Relations Team hosts a quarterly conference call with statewide DCS Tribal Liaisons. This virtual meeting serves to update Liaisons of policy and procedural changes, and provides an opportunity to recognize successes and discuss challenges. TRT hosted an in-person training meeting in September 2024 as well. Attendees to that meeting included staff from OCSS, OIP, ESA and CSD, and topics included 7.01 plan best practices, case coding, federal offset, database usage and outreach.

TRT also provides an on-boarding “check-in” meeting and training plan for new Tribal Liaisons, Program Managers, or any DCS staff who interact with Tribal programs, or who are involved with tribal cases. The training is scheduled about 60 days after hiring and includes an introduction to historical resource documents, DCS tribal policy, links to internet resources and other information around state and tribal relations. The invitation to participate in the 60-day follow up is extended to the entire Tribal Team.

### Bi-Annual DCS/Tribal IV-D Directors Roundtable Meeting

DCS’s Director and Policy staff meet with the eight Tribal Child Support Directors and Office of Indian Policy’s Sr. Manager twice annually – usually in the spring and again in the fall. The Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe hosted an in-person Directors’ meeting at the Tribe’s office in Kingston, WA in November 2024. The next meeting will be held virtually on May 1, 2025. These meetings are an effective venue to discuss legislative proposals, policies and processes, budget and program issues, and other topics. The meaningful work done at these meetings is memorialized in a Directors-level 7.01 plan as well. This plan was suggested by the Directors’ group itself, and includes higher-level objectives and activities that

encourage state and tribal cooperation in the development of child support related legislation, and policies and/or procedures that affect American Indians and Alaska Natives.

#### Tribal and DCS Participation on Hiring Panels

DCS seeks tribal representation during hiring processes for key positions that include working with Tribes and Urban Indian Organizations, and seeks tribal input and suggestions during the development of interview questions and the interviews themselves. DCS has been hiring many new staff over the past several years, and have been pleased to have representatives from tribes in attendance on those interview panels.

Additionally, DCS encourages equal opportunities for all. We regularly share statewide employment announcements from within the Division, as well as from other administrations and organizations, with our tribal contacts and sister agencies. Having tribes and tribal organizations sharing these job opportunities with their members and staff helps the Division to build broad and diversely-experienced candidate pools.