

SNAP Tribal Eligibility Determination Project

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services
Economic Services Administration • Community Services Division

Program Description

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Tribal Eligibility Determination Project honors tribes' inherent right to design and operate appropriate, culturally relevant programs on behalf of the population they serve. Tribal governments are uniquely positioned to better serve Native Americans in their communities and may increase access to SNAP for those who may not have the resources and information on how to access public assistance programs through a state agency.

Since 2009, DSHS has operated a demonstration project with Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe through an approved Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service demonstration waiver.¹ In 2023, the agency received federal approval to expand partnership to five new tribes to use their own tribal staff to determine Basic Food eligibility and issue EBT cards to tribal community members. DSHS' Community Services Division has oversight and program-development responsibilities for the Basic Food program and this project.

Newly approved tribes to participate in the program:

- Quinault Indian Nation
- Lummi Nation
- Quileute Tribe
- Spokane Tribe of Indians

This project recognizes tribal sovereignty in developing and delivering programs. See the Tribal Relations one-pager for more information on our continued collaboration and partnership with tribes.

Highlights

- In December 2023, DSHS formed a workgroup to assist in reviewing new processes and procedures needed to implement the new tribal offices, including technology, agreements, operations and quality monitoring.
- In February 2024, DSHS began visiting the four new tribal partners to review program requirements and complete readiness assessments. These assessments help DSHS understand preferences, barriers and limitations for each tribe to process Basic Food.
- DSHS and tribes continue to work together to make individual timelines, identify and acknowledge each tribe's strengths and needs, and pursue collaborative government-to-government relationships to help create a tribal cohort for processing of Basic Food applications.

¹See [USDA Applauds Washington's Tribal Eligibility Demonstration Project Expansion](#) | Food and Nutrition Service

More information:

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