

DCS Tribal Relations

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

Program Description

The Division of Child Support respects tribal sovereignty and promotes government-to-government relationships with the 29 federally recognized Indian tribes in Washington state. Relationships founded on trust and mutual respect have led to increased understanding, shared vision and improved services to children and families. DCS works with tribal nations, Urban Indian Organizations, stakeholders and partners to develop and deliver programs, policy and services that meet the needs of Native families in a culturally appropriate manner.

The Tribal Relations Team

- Facilitates DCS' government-to-government commitments to Indian tribes that help to build and strengthen relationships with tribes and tribal programs, partners and stakeholders.
- Partner with eight tribal child support programs and 11 tribal TANF programs within Washington state.
- Coordinate American Indian Policy (DSHS Administrative Policy 7.01) planning for DCS and encourage tribal input on proposed DCS legislation, policies and documentation.
- Advocate for policies, procedures and laws that respect tribal sovereignty.
- Provide applicable guidance and resources that educate staff and partners to recognize and honor tribal jurisdiction.
- Draft, negotiate and monitor 13 DSHS data-sharing agreements with tribal programs, 10 formal child support agreements, and seven federal treasury offset services agreements with tribal programs.
- Serve as statewide regional contacts to tribes and UIOs, provide outreach and represent DCS at policy meetings, tribal events, conferences and other cultural gatherings.

Highlights

- During state fiscal year 2024, child support collections on DCS's tribal cases exceeded \$8.3 million.
- Child support programs from across the U.S. continue to recognize DCS for its willingness to effectively partner with regional tribal nations.
- To improve services and strengthen its relationships with tribes outside of Washington state, DCS began a pilot project in 2023 to centralize intergovernmental cases referred to DCS by out-of-state tribal child support programs.

More information:

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Transforming lives

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