

Community Services Division Tribal Relations

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.

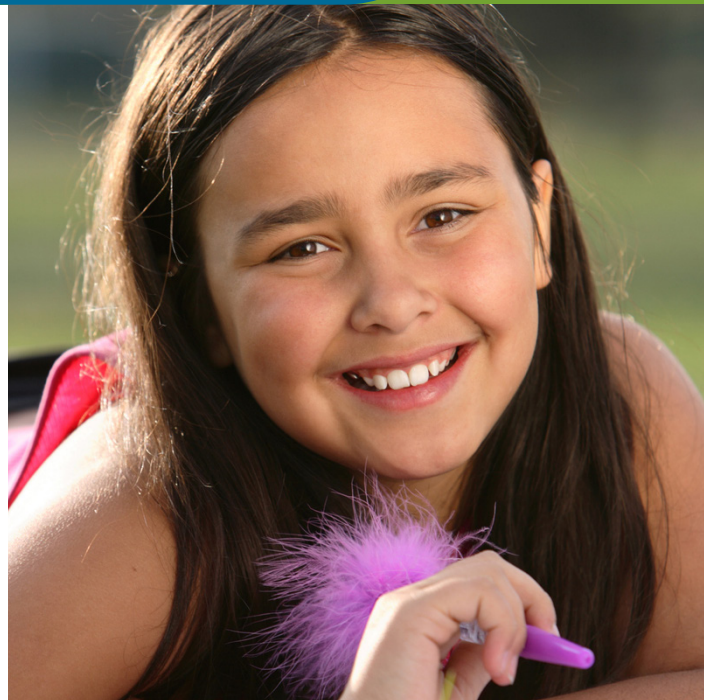
CSD shares information and collaborates with Tribes and Urban Indian Organizations at the Indian Policy Advisory Committee, the Economic Services Administration IPAC subcommittee, DSHS Administrative Policy 7.01 meetings, biannual Temporary Assistance for Needy Families directors' meetings and other 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 onsite 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 issuing electronic benefit transfers 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. CSD works government-to-government with 12 Tribal TANF programs, involving 17 federally recognized Tribes. They provide direct oversight for their Tribal TANF programs.

Tribal TANF programs are designed to address the specific needs of American Indian and Alaskan Native families in their service areas. Washington state provides a fair and equitable share of state maintenance of effort funds to Tribal TANF programs, per RCW 74.08A.040.

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Highlights

- In June 2023, the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service approved expanding the Tribal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Eligibility Determination Project to 5 additional Tribal nations. In response, CSD has been working with the Lummi Nation, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, Quileute Tribe, Quinault Indian Nation and Spokane Tribe of Indians to implement the project to meet the needs for each Tribal community.
- In January 2024, CSD began negotiations with the Suquamish Indian Tribe to provide MOE funds to support their Tribal TANF Program. This plan was finalized and federally approved to begin July 2025 through an intergovernmental agreement. In addition, CSD is anticipating negotiations with other Tribal nations that have formally expressed interest in operating a Tribal TANF program.

More information:

Freda Cogger, Tribal Relations Program Administrator

Phone: 360.522.2155

Email: Freda.Cogger@dshs.wa.gov

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To do this effectively, CSD negotiates intergovernmental TANF agreements, operating agreements and data-sharing agreements with Tribal TANF programs. The CSD Tribal relations program administrator serves as the lead resource for Tribal TANF programs and provides technical assistance and guidance to state and Tribal leadership and employees.

CSD also provides oversight of the Tribal SNAP Eligibility Determination 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 Tribal SNAP Eligibility Determination Project one-pager for additional details

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)
- Suquamish Indian Tribe (2025)