

# **Region 10 Tribal TANF Directors Meeting**

Thursday, August 26, to Friday, August 27, 2004

Portland Hilton

Portland, Oregon

## **Meeting Report**

The meeting opened with a blessing from Leo Smith, TANF Director for the Nez Perce Tribe. Following the blessing, Vince Herberholt, Deputy Regional Administrator for Region 10, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), welcomed participants, offered an overview of the goals for the session, and reviewed the growth of the group and the meeting over the previous five years. Mr. Herberholt explained that Oscar Tanner would not be able to attend the meeting, as expected, but offered that Region 10 staff would work with the tribes to make sure any pressing issues or information requests were handled or passed on. Mr. Herberholt also told tribal representatives that Region 10 Federal staff attending the meeting would be available to address questions or concerns throughout the session. He explained that Lewissa Swanson, Family Life/Marriage Program Specialist for Region 10, ACF, would be attending the afternoon of the second day of the meeting, and would stay throughout the afternoon to provide individual technical assistance, as requested.

The meeting facilitator, Debbie Moller, asked the tribal representatives to introduce themselves and talk about specific goals they had for the meeting. Ms. Moller also noted that representatives from the Eastern Shoshone Tribe asked to be included in the meeting in order to gather ideas and information. The tribal representatives welcomed the visitors. Lily Matheson, Director, Policy Division, Office of Child Support Enforcement, introduced herself and talked about her role as a resource to the tribes during the meeting. Robert Shelbourne, Acting Manager, Division of Tribal TANF Management, and Ray Apodaca, Tribal TANF Team Leader, Division of Tribal TANF Management, also introduced themselves and talked about how they could be a resource to the tribes during the meeting. Region 10 Federal staff introduced themselves and explained their roles.

Lily Matheson, Director, Policy Division, Office of Child Support, talked with the tribal representatives about the final rule for Tribal Child Support Enforcement programs as well as other child support issues of interest to the participants. She explained that the final rule was published in the Federal Register on March 30, 2004 (69 FR 16638.) She provided information related to the requirement that, if a Tribal TANF program opts to require assignment of support rights as a condition of receipt of Tribal TANF, the Tribe must ensure that child support collections in excess of the amount of Tribal TANF received by the family are paid to the family. Tribal representatives noted that their access to State child support information systems is subject to State safeguards and requirements. Ms. Matheson said that they are working on an extensive Q&A that will be coming out in the next few months. Following questions from tribal representatives about the process being used to get input from tribes, she said that their intention is to explore the full diversity of tribal perspectives on child support and how tribes will

handle this program. Ms. Matheson said she recognized that there was a broader scope of thinking in Indian Country than any one work group would represent. The existing work group recently completed their work, and currently a steering committee is being formed to establish “next steps.” At this point, there have been three start-up applications. A suggestion was made to get child support officials to come to NCAI meetings with information and technical assistance. Ms. Matheson shared that they were working on a contract for training about tribal distribution. A discussion of key meetings and activities followed, with tribal representatives noting that the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC is opening soon, and that many tribes will be participating in meetings and activities preparing for the opening.

Using basic charts to identify start-up dates, past caseload and TFAG Federal share funding, tribes added information on current caseload and number and types of positions operating their TANF programs. This information was shared at the meeting to provide a larger context in order to identify similarities and differences across the diverse tribal programs.

Tribal representatives shared information regarding key program and policy issues that are impacting program operations. Definitions of tribal membership, service areas of tribal populations, and funding formulas continue to be challenging aspects of negotiating with State officials regarding Tribal TANF programs.

Don Shircel, Tanana Chiefs Conference, brought several lifelike dolls being used in tribal programs to educate youth about the reality of what caring for a baby is actually like. The dolls are sophisticated, computer-programmed versions of babies – including babies born drug-affected to crack addicted mothers. Caregivers must perform feeding, diapering, burping and other functions in order to respond to the cries of the baby and to show acceptable levels of caregiving, as monitored by the computer doll. One of the dolls was passed around the room for a hands-on demonstration.

Robert Shelbourne and Ray Apodaca presented information on national events related to Tribal TANF programs. At this time, it is expected that reauthorization of the TANF legislation will be introduced in Congress in January 2005. There are differences in child care funding and work participation rates between the Bush Administration’s bill and other versions of TANF legislation. During this period of their presentation, the computer baby cried at random intervals, and it was difficult for many of the participants to react to both what was happening with the baby and the sophisticated information being provided by Mr. Shelbourne and Mr. Apodaca. The group agreed that this dynamic could mirror what often happens with tribal TANF clients as caseworkers give them critical information but their ability to take it in is limited by the distraction related to family and other more immediate issues. The battery was removed from the doll so that the conversation could continue with less distraction.

Mr. Shelbourne and Mr. Apodaca suggested that the tribes have an important opportunity to weigh in on what is needed and wanted for the TANF legislation and unique tribal concerns. They also emphasized that whatever version of the bill is finally passed, they

expect a renewed focus on audits that will ensure that no TANF dollars are being misused. There will be important contractor information and other information intended to improve accountability. Mr. Shelbourne gave the historical background for how certain aspects of coming legislation relate back to treaty standards from the last two centuries. Mr. Shelbourne and Mr. Apodaca will notify the tribes of the comment period for the upcoming reporting format.

Tribal representatives talked about how using 1994 data disadvantages many tribes as new tribes implement their own tribal TANF programs. Tribal populations in the United States are younger and growing faster than the general population and this presents unique challenges. There was general agreement that no one State in the U.S. mirrored many tribes in terms of demographic profile.

Tribal representatives of existing TANF programs emphasized to those considering implementing a program that defining population and service area are critical elements. They also cautioned that State data and tribal data will likely be different as negotiations begin.

A discussion of the challenges to balance effective accounting and administrative safeguards with responsiveness to client needs followed. Tribal representatives shared strategies they employed to maintain the appropriate balance between two often-competing forces. In the case of programs with multiple sites, a suggestion was made to visit each site at least monthly. Bringing accounting staff to program meetings (and vice versa) can help build the capacity of staff to understand and respond to the requirements of each unit of operation. Having one point of signing off and paperwork approval can minimize administrative errors. Many programs use purchase orders extensively rather than issue supplemental support service checks directly to clients. One program noted the success of bringing in Region 10 ACF staff to meet with staff members in the tribal program and provide technical assistance on reporting and accounting issues.

The challenges of multiple sites are dealt with by better technology. A case management system that is computerized and accessible from more than one site eases communication between different areas. Confidentiality can be a more complicated issue because of the closely woven fabric of relationships present in most tribal communities. Some tribes submit certain paperwork by number, rather than by name, to minimize the number of people who will be aware of all aspects of a particular client's case. One tribal representative noted that her program had actually dismissed people for confidentiality issues, and that the tough policy and continued emphasis on confidentiality seemed to be working well. She also emphasized that it was extremely important for every staff member, not just case managers, to be included in both the policy and other training on confidentiality issues.

The tribes discussed the difficulties of bringing up certain services, such as electronic benefits payments, for smaller programs. In Alaska and Oregon, the State has partnered with the tribe for these services. Craig Nolte, from the Federal Reserve Bank in San Francisco, has also been a valuable resource to tribes for these issues.

Tribal representatives talked about the benefits and challenges of collaborating on service delivery with States and other entities. Several tribes mentioned that the different philosophical approach to services between their State and the tribal program makes collaboration difficult. However, there are successful collaborations related to health care services and child support, as well as separate agencies within the states. In one State, the Worksource provider was able to provide the tribe with training space and computers for client use. In Washington State, there have been individual Community Service Offices that have provided space and access to their buildings. Internally, some tribes have collaborated with their Human Resource Departments to set up preferential hiring of TANF clients and TANF funded on the job training. Other tribes commented that they had chosen not to pursue preferential hiring based on prior problems.

Patty Fisher, Financial Operations Specialist for Region 10, ACF, presented information on the Tribal TANF A-133 Audit. The audit is prescribed in OMB Circular A-133. The audit process is one of the Federal government's main controls over the propriety of expenditures under grants and cooperative agreements. Auditors are required to test eligibility, allowable activities, and allowable costs. Ms. Fisher echoed Mr. Shelbourne and Mr. Apodaca's comments by noting that members of Congress are supporting more emphasis on the quality and efficiency of A-133 audits.

Ms. Fisher explained that tribes being audited are those that receive \$500,000 or more each year in Federal funds in all programs. The audits are annual and there are program specific audit guides to provide auditors with all necessary information. Ms. Fisher reviewed the auditee and auditor responsibilities in detail, as well as the responsibilities of the Federal Regional Office.

Tribal representatives noted the difficulty in "training" auditors to understand the specifics of their programs in order to ensure that audit reports were accurate and appropriate reflections of what their programs are doing. Ms. Fisher outlined ways that the Regional Office could provide technical assistance in this area. In addition, tribal representatives noted that confusion on the part of the auditor regarding whose responses related to which areas of the program, coupled with turnover of key staff in some areas, had created audit difficulties for some tribes.

Ms. Fisher detailed what happens when grantees are delinquent in submitting audit results, and how audit costs are allowable charges to Federal awards. She also detailed the possible sanctions that can be imposed based on inability or unwillingness to have an audit.

The auditor is expected to review specific areas of the program. Ms. Fisher talked at length about the importance of repeat findings vs. initial findings. She urged the tribes to use technical assistance from her office or other Region 10 resources to ensure that initial findings were removed prior to subsequent audits.

Ms. Fisher reviewed common Region 10 Tribal TANF audit findings from past years. She especially emphasized the importance of a clear and effective eligibility process and provided information on how tribes could support clarity in eligibility. She recommended ways tribes could avoid common problems, as well as the most effective ways to deal with audit findings should they arise.

Tribal representatives evaluated the meeting together. They noted that it was helpful to have the information charts before the meeting in order to complete the information. Having all the tribes in the meeting together was a particular strength. Tribal representatives appreciated Region 10's immediate responses. The facility worked very well. Several representatives noted that not having Oscar Tanner attend had been unfortunate, and they would like to remedy that during the next meeting. The space was somewhat small for the number of people attending. There was also discussion as to whether it would be possible to orient the new programs or directors separately so that they could have a better basis for participating in the meeting and have questions answered fully.

An invitation was extended by the Spokane and Nez Perce Tribes to hold next year's Tribal TANF Director's meeting onsite in their area. Tribal representatives were strongly in favor of accepting this invitation and Region 10 staff agreed to work with the tribes to facilitate the onsite meeting.

The meeting closed with a blessing from Leo Smith, Nez Perce Tribe.

**Tribal TANF Meeting Representatives  
2004**

M. J. Longley	Cook Inlet Tribal Council	mlongley@citci.com
Molly Merritt-Duren	Cook Inlet Tribal Council	mmerrittduren@citci.com
Jodi Big Knife	Eastern Shoshone Tribe	jlbignife@eshoshone.com
Hilding Ohrstrom	Coeur d'Alene Tribe	hohrstrom@cdatriben-sn.gov
Carol Cordova	South Puget Intertribal	cordova@spipa.org
Gene Felix	South Puget Intertribal	felix@spipa.org
June Krise	Squaxin Island Tribe	jkrisse@squaxin.nsn.us
Cecile Greenway	Lower Elwha Klallam	cgreenway@elwha.nsn.us
Rosi Francis	Lower Elwha Klallam	rfrancis@elwha.nsn.us
Frank J. Quinto	Colville Confederated Tribes	frank.quinto@colvilletribes.com
Dean George	T & H TANF	dgeorge@ccthifa.org
Ed Parris	Tulalip Tribes	ed@go2worknow.org
Diane Henry	Tulalip Tribes	paperpow@yahoo.com
Bonnie Washakie	Eastern Shoshone Tribe	bjwashakie@eshoshone.com
Kristi Brovold	Muckleshoot Tribe	kristi.brovold@muckleshoot.nsn.us
Beverly Hurtado	Eastern Shoshone	307-332-8052 ext.14
John Wadda	Eastern Shoshone	jewadda@eshoshone.com
Patricia Lincoln	Eastern Shoshone	pflincoln@eshoshone.com

Tonya Anderson	Shoshone-Bannock Tribe	tanderson@shoshonebannocktribes.com
Pat Freeland	Bristol Bay Native Association	pfreeland@bbna.com
Jannette I. Taylor	Coeur d'Alene Tribe	jitaylor@catribe-nsn.gov
Leo Smith	Nez perce Tribe	leos@nezperce.org
Susan L. White	Maniilaq Association	swhite@maniilaq.org
Nathan Kotch Jr.	Maniilaq Association	nkotch@maniilaq.org
Charlene Sijohn	Spokane Tribe	fsj@spokanetribe.com
Jim Thomas	Nooksack TANF Consultant	shawyegun@earthlink.net 360-758-2945
Steve Watts	Quinault Indian Nation	wazup2u2day@hotmail.com
Andrea Ebling	Quinault Indian Nation	aebbling@quinault.org
Salvina Valditlez-Patten	Quinault Indian Nation	spatten@quinault.org
Debbie Collier	Port Gamble S'Klallam	dcollier@pgst.nsn.us
Judy Flett	Spokane Tribe	judyjudy@spokanetribe.com
Evelyn Moorhead	Cook Inlet Tribal Council	jmoorhead@citci.com
Don Shircel	Tanana Chiefs	dshircel@tananachiefs.org
Ricard Tupling	Colville Tribes	ricard.tupling@colvilletribes.com
Lorraine Parlange	Spokane Tribe	lparlange@spokanetribe.com

**Tribal TANF Meeting Staff and Resource People  
2004**

Elizabeth Matheson	Office of Child Support Enforcement	matheson@acf.hhs.gov
Ray Apodaca	Division of Tribal TANF Management/OFA/ACF	rapodaca@acf.hhs.gov 202-401-5020
Robert Shelbourne	Division of Tribal TANF Management/OFA/ACF	rshelbourne@acf.hhs.gov 202-401-5150
Vince Herberholt	ACF Region 10	vherberholt@acf.hhs.gov 206-615-3662
Melodie Rothwell	ACF Region 10	mrothwell@acf.hhs.gov 206-615-2118
Patty Fisher	ACF Region 10	pfisher@acf.hhs.gov 206-615-2565
Jan Jensen	ACF Region 10	jjensen@acf.hhs.gov 206-615-3668
Oscar Tanner (scheduled)	Office of Financial Services	otanner@acf.hhs.gov
Lewissa Swanson	ACF Region 10	lswanson@acf.hhs.gov
Debbie Moller	Facilitator	425-455-4322 mollerconsulting@aol.com