



Region IX and X Virtual Tribal TANF Technical Assistance Meeting
Building Capacity to Support Families in the New Reality
December 8–10, 2020

Biosketches

Administration for Children and Families Staff



Clarence H. Carter, Director, Office of Family Assistance, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Clarence H. Carter is the Director of the Office of Family Assistance and the Acting Director of the Office of Community Services at HHS' Administration for Children and Families. Mr. Carter comes from the Institute for the Improvement of the Human Condition, which he founded. At that organization, he worked with state and local safety net agencies to meet the emergency needs of socially and economically vulnerable citizens.

Mr. Carter served as the Director of the Arizona Department of Economic Security, in addition to other state, federal, and local human services management positions. During his service in the Bush Administration, he managed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and served as the Director of the Office of Community Services. As Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Social Services, his program was instrumental in growing the capacity of its citizens. In his first 5 years, more than 25,000 public assistance recipients obtained gainful employment, earning in excess of \$200 million. During his tenure, Virginia's public assistance rolls were reduced by more than half, from an all-time high of 74,000 families to a 30-year low of 31,000.

On the local level, while serving as the Director of the Washington, D.C. Department of Human Services, Mr. Carter led the design and operation of an initiative to house more than 1,000 homeless residents. It was this effort that transformed the District's shelter-based homeless system to one based in permanent supportive housing as the primary mechanism to reduce homelessness.



Denise Edwards, M.A. (Tuscarora Nation), Branch Chief, Division of Tribal TANF Management, Office of Family Assistance, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Denise Edwards is the Branch Chief for the Division of Tribal TANF Management in the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Ms. Edwards is an enrolled member of the Tuscarora Nation, which is located 10 miles north of Niagara Falls, New York, and is a member of the beaver clan. Ms. Edwards works from the Region VIII office in Denver, Colorado. She honors and acknowledges that the land on which she resides and works is the traditional territory of the Ute, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Peoples. She recognizes the 48 contemporary tribal nations that are historically tied to the lands that make up the state of Colorado. She wishes to honor Elders past,

present, and future, and those who have stewarded this land throughout generations. She also wishes to recognize that government, academic, and cultural institutions were founded upon and continue to enact exclusions and erasures of Indigenous Peoples.

May this acknowledgement demonstrate her commitment to working to dismantle ongoing legacies of oppression and inequities and recognize the current and future contributions of Indigenous communities in Denver, Colorado.

In the capacity as the Branch Chief for the division, Ms. Edwards has responsibility for overseeing the daily activities related to the OFA tribal programs including tribal TANF, Native Employment Works, and Tribal TANF-Child Welfare discretionary grants. She has served in this position since April 2016. Previously, she worked in ACF for two other agencies including Administration for Native Americans and the Office of Head Start. Denise received her master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education from the University of Colorado-Denver and her bachelor's degree in Human Rehabilitative Services from the University of Northern Colorado.



Julie Fong, Region IX TANF Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Julie Fong is a human services professional with over 27 years of experience in social service, program and public policy, government relations, and social justice. In her 20 years with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), she has served as a Tribal Program Specialist, providing policy guidance, training, and technical assistance to Native American tribes in California, Arizona, and Nevada in Tribal TANF, Child Care, and Native Employment Works programs development and administration. Since 2011, she has served as ACF Region IX TANF Program Manager, leading the Region IX team in providing regulatory and program oversight and technical assistance to tribal, state, and territory governments in the administration of 30 federally-funded TANF programs totaling over \$4.3 billion.

Prior to her ACF tenure, Ms. Fong worked as a diversity and organizational development consultant in Chicago, a program development and civil rights mediation specialist in Los Angeles, a civil rights mediator at the U.S. Department of Justice, and the principal lead for a nationally-recognized “Teen Court” program. She possesses a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Whitman College and a Master of Social Work from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.



Patrick Heiman, Region X Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Patrick Heiman is an OFA Region X Children and Families Program Specialist. Mr. Heiman works with Oregon and Alaska state and tribal TANF programs. He has 12 years of workforce and community development experience, the majority of which has been providing technical assistance to TANF grantees to help resolve program, policy, and operations challenges.



Stan Koutstaal, Ph.D., Division Director, Tribal TANF Management and Regional Operations, Office of Family Assistance, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Stan Koutstaal is the Division Director for Tribal TANF Management and Regional Operations in the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). In this role, he has responsibility for OFA tribal programs and implementing OFA priorities across ACF regions. He has served in this position since March 2016. Previously, he provided leadership for several other ACF programs including the Health Profession Opportunity Grants, Abstinence Education, Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs, Mentoring Children of Prisoners, and Family Violence and Prevention Services. Before his Federal service, he was the Director of Counseling for a non-profit organization in St. Louis, Missouri. He has also served as an adjunct faculty member for graduate classes at St. Louis University and Virginia Tech University. He received his Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy from Texas Tech University.



Elma Reber, Region IX Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Elma Reber is a Family Assistance Program Specialist in the Region IX Office of Family Assistance (OFA). She has been with OFA for 5 years working with states and tribes on state TANF grant programs and Tribal TANF grant programs. Prior to her joining OFA, Ms. Reber served in a leadership role in a Tribal TANF Program and provided underserved communities with public health and health services in Los Angeles County, California.



Jennifer Senechal, Region IX Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Jennifer Senechal is a Family Assistance Program Specialist in the Region IX Office of Family Assistance (OFA). She has been with OFA for 4 years working with states and tribes on state TANF grant programs and Tribal TANF grant programs. Prior to her work with OFA, Ms. Senechal provided technical assistance and held administrative and direct service roles related to youth empowerment/anti-bullying, Head Start/Early Head Start, family support, and child abuse prevention.



Mikaela Smith, Region IX Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Mikaela Smith is a Family Assistance Program Specialist in the Region IX Office of Family Assistance (OFA). She has worked for OFA for 11 years working with states, territories, and tribes on state TANF grant programs, Tribal TANF grant programs, and Native Employment Works grant programs.



Sam Stitt, Region X Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Sam Stitt is a Tribal TANF Program Specialist for Region X for the Office of Family Assistance. He has been with the Administration for Children and Families since 2009. He is an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Speakers

Maria Aguirre-Mendoza, DPA, TANF Executive Director, Soboba Tribal TANF Program

Dr. Maria Aguirre-Mendoza, member of the Gabrielino-Tongva Tribe of Los Angeles, California, serves as the TANF Executive Director for the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians. While in this position, she has helped serve hundreds of American Indian families in both rural and urban settings. In her early years, Dr. Aguirre-Mendoza obtained her bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley and went on to earn her Master and Doctoral degrees from California Baptist University in Riverside, California. Over the past 10 months, she has worked with her team at Soboba Tribal TANF to ensure that mental health counseling in the COVID-19 era has been a priority in their case management approach. The unique needs of individuals and families have come to the forefront during these times of crisis.



Nicole Bossard, Ph.D., Consultant and Positivity Strategist, ICF Consultant

Dr. Nicole Bossard's vision of a perfect world includes thriving communities overflowing with bodacious people and dynamic organizations actively working together to turn great ideas into great futures! Equipped with a Ph.D. in Leadership and Change and infectious enthusiasm, Dr. Bossard leverages the power of purpose and positivity to initiate, plan, and sustain system change initiatives with organizations and communities across the country. She creates engaging and safe learning environments where groups can identify what they really want more of, uncover innate strengths and drivers of success often hidden in plain sight, and create innovative solutions to achieve real outcomes that matter. Her clients report renewed passion for their work, greater trust amongst staff, stakeholders, and partners, strengthened resourcefulness and resilience, and improved clarity and shared accountability.

With over 25 years' experience consulting, Dr. Bossard has helped community and social service agencies align organizational values and business practices, strengthen accountability processes, improve collaborative partnerships, improve employee engagement, and dramatically expand leadership capacity throughout the agency or partnership. Her client list includes the Tanana Chiefs Conference Client Development Division, Mesa County Workforce Center, Action for a Better Community, Adams County Human Services Department, The Workplace, Montefiore Health Profession Opportunity Grants Program, Central State University, Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, New York City Administration for Children's Services, the Office of Family Assistance, Colorado Office of Economic Security, and Climb Wyoming.

Katy Ciotti, TANF Director, The Morongo Band of Mission Indians

Katy Ciotti has over 10 years of professional experience in Tribal Administration with the Morongo Band of Mission Indians. She has served as the Director for the Morongo Tribal TANF Program for the past 6 years, and prior to that served as the Job Development Specialist for 2 years. In that time, Ms. Ciotti was responsible for the development and implementation of various career advancement and job training programs, including the subsidized employment program and community outreach. Her professional background in marketing and public relations has allowed her to help promote Native American self-reliance through her work with Tribal TANF in two of the largest counties in Southern California. As a graduate of California State University, San Bernardino, her degree in psychology and interest in child development helped foster a commitment to serving families in her local community.

Geni Cowan, Ph.D., Eagle Blue Associates

Geni Cowan (Choctaw/African American) is a Professor of Educational Leadership at Sacramento State University and has worked with tribes and county/state human services organizations on tribal TANF programming and case management for 25 plus years. Dr. Cowan has a doctorate in Education and a master's in Counseling Psychology. Her experience and expertise is in leadership development, assessment, coaching, diversity, and program evaluation.



Evette Cullen, Tribal Liaison, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services

Evette Cullen oversees several outreach programs with the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services at the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services. In addition to working with community-based organizations, she also works with Nevada's Tribal representatives and Nevada emergency management staff. She was also recently assigned to the Nevada Health Response team to improve community engagement messaging for resources during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Irene Flannery, Director, Critical Infrastructure, AMERIND

Irene Flannery is the Director of AMERIND Critical Infrastructure and leads the team in AMERIND Risk's groundbreaking business line designed to help Tribal Nations develop and deploy the most important 21st Century critical infrastructure – high-speed “broadband” internet.

Prior to joining AMERIND, Ms. Flannery served as Deputy Chief of the FCC's Office of Native Affairs and Policy, where she worked on policies to promote the deployment and adoption of communications services and technology throughout Tribal lands and Native communities. During her first tour of duty at the FCC, she served as Chief of the Telecommunications Access Policy Division when the FCC created the Tribal Lands Lifeline program in 2000. She also wrote the original rules for the FCC's E-rate program. Between tours of duty at the FCC, Ms. Flannery served as Vice President of the Universal Service Administrative Company's High-Cost and Low-Income Division, where she was responsible for the annual disbursement of over \$5 billion in High-Cost and Lifeline subsidies. She is a graduate of Duke University, the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education, and Georgetown University Law Center.

Drew Hanson, Director of Academic Success, Salish Kootenai College

Drew Hanson is the Director of Academic Success at Salish Kootenai College, located in Northwest Montana on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Starting his career as a primary teacher, Mr. Hanson realized the need for professional support for the appropriate use of technology in teaching. He moved to higher education in 2009 and started at Salish Kootenai College as the Educational Technology Specialist. Over the past 11 years, Mr. Hanson has expanded his role to include student and academic and technology support for staff, faculty, and students. After the rapid online transition in response to COVID-19, he is supporting his institution in strategically sustaining and developing the best possible opportunities for current and future structures.

DeeAnn Harris, Workforce Development Programs Manager, South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency (SPIPA)

DeeAnn Harris is South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency's (SPIPA) Workforce Development Programs Manager. Her workforce development experience exceeds over 12 years in both the government and non-profit sectors including program start-up, development, implementation, and facilitation. Her boots on the ground experience as a case manager (WIA/WIOA -- Youth, Adults and Dislocated Workers), a career broker (Washington State Employment Security Long-term Unemployed), and for the last 7 years with SPIPA in various capacities for Tribal TANF Vocational Rehabilitation and Native Employment Works Programs make her unique in this field. Ms. Harris' success in building relationships with SPIPA's tribal partners, as well as her development of SPIPA's two Workforce Development urban sites that provides Tribal TANF Services in Pierce and Kitsap Counties have further facilitated her insight into removing barriers and promoting individual, family, and community success through education and training.



Ryan Howard, Executive Director, Owens Valley Career Development Center

Ryan Howard, a citizen of the Bishop Paiute Tribe, serves as the Executive Director of the Owens Valley Career Development Center (OVCDC), a tribal consortium providing education and human services to twelve federally recognized tribal communities in central California. Mr. Howard has been employed with OVCDC for the past 11 years, holding previous roles as TANF Director and Deputy Director before being promoted to Executive Director in 2018. Mr. Howard holds a bachelor's degree in Native American Studies from Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Theresa Lujan, Director, Indian and Native American Employment Rights Program (INAERP)

Theresa Lujan has 35 years of service in the federal government with 26 of these years in the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). Ms. Lujan worked in many roles in OFCCP from starting out as a secretary to becoming the first director of OFCCP Indian and Native American Employment Rights Program. Under her leadership, many positive changes are happening in OFCCP, including partnering with tribal employment rights organizations and tribal colleges and universities, educating federal contractors on the benefits of implementing Indian Preference, and putting together best practices for an inclusive workforce for Native Americans. Throughout her career, Ms. Lujan has been a leader and resource to her coworkers and colleagues in the federal government and the private sector.

Barbara Pierce, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Social Work at Indiana University; Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholar Fellow

Barbara Pierce, Ph.D., LCSW is an Associate Professor of Social Work at the Indiana University School of Social Work where she coordinates the children, youth, and families practice area. She is also Chair-Elect of the Title IV-E Child Welfare Track for the Council on Social Work Education. She has over 35 years of experience as a clinical social worker and 20 years' experience teaching and mentoring students. Her research centers on children, youth, and families with regard to safety, permanency, wellbeing, and the child welfare workforce. She has served as the Principal Investigator of several studies including the Indiana Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project, Kinship Navigator project, Peer Recover Coach project, and a grant under the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute. Data collected during the Waiver project is now included in Family Centered Treatment, which is now a well-supported intervention cited in the Federal Title IV-E Prevention Clearinghouse. Most recently, she was a selectee for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholars Fellowship and recipient of the 2020 SOGIE award as part of a team of researchers led by Dr. Richard Brandon-Friedman, for whom Dr. Pierce was chair of the doctoral committee.



Carey Reyes, Program Manager, Colville Tribal TANF

Carey Reyes has worked with the Colville Tribal TANF Program since 2004 in various positions and has been the Program Manager since 2008. Ms. Reyes has lived on the Colville Indian Reservation her whole life and knows the areas of service, members, and challenges very well.



Mike Yoder, Workforce Development Manager, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services

Michael Yoder is the Workforce Development Manager for the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS). He brings 15 years of workforce development experience to the newly formed Workforce Development Unit created by DWSS in 2017 in response to new WIOA guidelines and the workforce system integration efforts being led by Nevada's Southern Workforce Investment Board, Workforce Connections. His team works together with local elected officials, community-based organizations, educators, and employers in efforts to provide career pathways for Nevada's poverty level populations participating in the SNAPET and TANF programs.



Amber Young, IT Director, California Tribal TANF Partnership

Amber Young is IT Director of the California Tribal TANF Partnership with more than 25 years of IT experience. Her background includes expertise in different industries, including banking, mortgage banking, payment card gateway, and hospitality. She has experience with HIPAA, SOX, PCI, and other IT security standards. Cybersecurity is not only her passion -- it's a way of IT life.



**Isla Young, Senior Program Development and Engagement Specialist,
Nevada Governor's Office of Workforce Innovation**

Isla Young is an experienced professional with over 20 years of leadership in education and workforce development. Ms. Young is the Senior Program Development and Engagement Specialist for the Nevada Governor's Office of Workforce Innovation (OWINN). She builds partnerships and collaborates with local and national leaders in the high-growth/high-priority Industry sectors, K-12 Education, Institutions of Higher Education, professional organizations, and key community stakeholders to develop and drive a skilled, diverse, and aligned workforce in the state of Nevada. She is focused on engaging and inspiring her Nevada community by connecting them with amazing, innovative, and meaningful opportunities that will positively change lives for the better. Prior to joining OWINN, Ms. Young spent 17 years developing STEM education and workforce development programs in the State of Hawaii. Her programs focused on project-based, place-based, innovative interdisciplinary learning programs with a focus on science, technology, engineering, and math. Her programs reached over 40,000 students and teachers per year in K-12 STEM Education and workforce development throughout Hawaii.