

[Operator] Office of Child Support Enforcement webinar, Tribal Child Support and Tribal TANF, Beyond the Basics. Today's webinar will be moderated by Amelia Popham, Program Specialist at the Office of Family Assistance, and Paige Hausburg, Tribal Coordinator at the Office of Child Support Enforcement. Please direct your questions to the Q&A pod. Questions will be aggregated and answered at the conclusion of the webinar. As a reminder, today's webinar is being recorded. With that, I'd like to turn over today's webinar to Amelia Popham. Please go ahead, ma'am.

[Lynn Carrier] Good afternoon. If you would like to ask a question during the webinar, please direct it to the bottom, right corner to the Q&A pod, Type your question into the open field at the bottom of this pod, and click Send Question and/or press Enter. We will not be taking questions over the phone during this webinar, so if you would like to ask a question, please type your question in the Q&A pod.

[Amelia Popham] Hello, everyone, and welcome to the Tribal Child Support and Tribal TANF, Beyond the Basics webinar. I am Amelia Popham, Program Specialist in the Division of Tribal TANF Management in the Office of Family Assistance under the Administration for Children and Families. There are currently 68 Tribal TANF programs across the country. Together, these programs represent over 299 federally recognized tribes and Alaskan native villages and receive over \$183 million in Tribal TANF funding. The Office of Child Support Enforcement and the Office of Family Assistance, Division of Tribal TANF Management, have worked together to create this webinar for the purpose of providing technical assistance and guidance on the collaboration of Tribal TANF and Tribal Child Support programs. Both offices previously asked existing Tribal TANF and Tribal Child Support program staff what your interests were, and we thank you again for your input.

This is the second in a series of webinars that we are planning to work together to develop and present. We hope that today's webinar will increase your knowledge of Tribal TANF and Tribal Child Support collaboration. Our goal is to provide information that will assist you in your efforts to work collaboratively, enhance your current partnerships, and provide you with information that will maximize program resources and provide more streamlined services to the families being served by your programs.

You will have an opportunity at the end of the webinar to ask questions through the chat function. Thank you for your participation. Next, I will turn it over to Paige Hausburg.

[Paige Hausburg] Thank you, Amelia. I'm Paige Hausburg, Tribal Coordinator for the child support program. The Tribal Child Support program has grown since the publication of our regulations in 2004. In 2004, we had nine tribes providing services. We now have 54 tribes providing child support services, with seven more tribes receiving startup funding. In fiscal year '12, the most recent year for which we have statistics, child support programs collected over \$41 million in child support obligations. This year we have 50 tribes receiving funding and eight more receiving startup funding, and this amounts to \$42 million in grant awards for the tribal



programs. It's more important than ever for the Tribal TANF and child support programs to work together. We hope this webinar provides you with information to help in your collaboration.

[Chad Sawyer] Thank you, Paige. I am Chad Sawyer, a Policy Analyst for the Child Support programs. I'll take a few minutes to talk about our last webinar and to introduce our speakers for today's presentation. We held our first webinar on July 17, 2013, titled Partnering for Children: Collaboration between Tribal TANF and Tribal Child Support. The webinar included information on the goals and objectives of Tribal TANF and Tribal Child Support programs, differences between state and tribally administered programs, as well as examples of collaborative approaches from the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe and the Winnebag Tribe of Nebraska. Over 100 Tribal Child Support and Tribal TANF staff participated. If you missed this webinar, you can access the audio, PowerPoint, and transcripts at the web address listed on today's presentation. I am honored to introduce our two speakers from the Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, Miss Amanda Blackgoat and Miss Brenda Chapman.

Miss Amanda Blackgoat graduated from the University of Montana. She started working for the Tribal TANF program in March of 2000, when the Tribe first implemented the program. While working in the TANF program, she held a variety of positions, from benefit technician to finance systems analyst. In April of 2007, she began working in a Tribal Child Support Unit. She has over 14 years experience in Tribal TANF and Tribal Child Support. Amanda's current position as Tribal Child Support Specialist includes financial management and monitoring of the Tribal Child Support department, reconciling data from TANF, completing the 34A and 75 reports, and training staff.

Miss Brenda Chapman is the Tribe's TANF manager and has worked with the TANF's 477 Program for 14 years. She has held numerous positions with the Tribal TANF program, such as TANF benefit technician and TANF supervisor. Recently, she returned back to the University of Southeast to obtain her bachelor's degree in social services. She has knowledge of the TANF program, Workforce Investment Act, Adult Vocational Training, Native Employment Works: Burial, Elderly, and Welfare Assistance programs funded through the Department of Interior 477 Program. Her ability to clearly understand state and federal regulations has given her the expertise to manage the TANF program. She works hard and is passionate about helping tribal citizens. She believes in helping those in need and providing them with the tools needed to be successful. And now, today's presentation: Beyond the Basics.

[Brenda Chapman] Good morning, my name is Brenda Chapman. This is Amanda Blackgoat, and we'll start our presentation by first introducing the directors and the manager of the Tribal Child Support—Eddie Brakes, who is Tribal Child Support Unit Manager, and Georgia Finau, who is the 477 Director. In today's presentation, we will explain the collaboration, and how we work as a team to provide the best services to our clients and to our children.

[Amanda Blackgoat] So this is Amanda, and so we're going to review our philosophies because that is at the endpoint of how we deliver our services; that's our starting point. So the philosophy of the Tribal Child Support Unit is to ensure that all the tribal children receive the financial and



emotional support they deserve from both parents, and to provide quality customer service to both custodial parents and noncustodial parents. The services that TCSU provides is family assessment on child support needs: paternity establishment, establishment and modification of child support orders, enforcement of child support orders, tracking, collection and distribution of payments, intergovernmental case processing and assistance, and location of noncustodial parents.

[Brenda Chapman] So this philosophy of the Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is to assist families with children to become self-sufficient through case management and maintaining self-sufficiency; we promote two-parent households; we address codependency; we encourage our fathers to attend the fatherhood and to provide [for] children [born] out of wedlock, working with families to help in those four purposes of TANF, to strengthen the family ties. That's our philosophy.

So the availability of services under TANF—TANF provides the following services to applicants: training assistance, dental assistant training, Penn Foster Long Distance Training. This is in particular to our rural communities who don't have access to universities. We're able to connect through that distance learning. GED—also Penn Foster does have a diploma, high school diploma, program, and we've had our returning students go back to school, especially our younger mothers and families. Work experience, career assessments, at-risk child assessments, and intense case management to obtain self-sufficiency. Basically, removing barriers to employment to allow our families to be self-sufficient and to continue to be self-sufficient.

[Amanda Blackgoat] So our offices through the years have been together and been apart and been together. Currently, because of construction of our main building, the TANF office is currently located 8 1/2 miles from the TCSU office. It's located in the Valley, along with several of the other service programs, trying to create that one-stop shop. TANF also has two satellite offices, one in Sitka, Alaska, and another in Ketchikan, Alaska. And the Tribal Child Support is located downtown along with the Tribal Court. We felt that keeping those two close together was beneficial. Tribal Child Support also has a satellite office in Ketchikan, Alaska.

[Brenda Chapman] Going back to our program locations, the other thing that helps the communication—I just want to put in this—that we have a courier service that goes daily, twice a day, between both—actually, we have three offices— but through all the offices.

So, the program structure—477 Employment & Training Department and TANF Program is overseen by the 477 Director, Georgia Finau. She communicates and coordinates different types of projects, and how the program is structured with the TCSU program manager and that would be Eddie Brakes, who is also overseen by the Office of the President.

Program communication—we communicate very well together. Both TCSU and TANF programs have strict confidentiality requirements. Basically, child support can ask questions of the TANF families, or the TANF case through the case manager, but if we need information, we need to be very specific on what type of information we need to even continue to look at eligibility for TANF or maintain some type of case management for the family.



[Amanda Blackgoat] Disclosure of personal information to TANF must be directly connected with the administration of the program. And then TANF communications for confidential information must be via written communications. Typically, they're via email. One-on-one case management for mutual clients—we do a wraparound approach for the hardest to serve cases. TCSU will attend those wraparound meetings. We're not always free to disclose but usually in those wraparound cases, having a lot of minds work on the obstacles that a family is having to struggle against is—has been a good approach for a lot of those families. And having child support present has, I think, been very beneficial. And then, lastly, TCSU orientation for clients is part of the TANF service plan. We started implementing that as part of their service plan or their self-sufficiency plan that they go through and understand what child support is all about.

[Brenda Chapman] So just to elaborate on that. For the TANF folks out there, TANF has been questioned by several clients about why they had to fill out another absent parent form every time they come in to apply. This type of orientation that TCSU provides gives them a better outlook on not only their Tribal Child Support case, but the NCP and what can be done to help benefit the child.

[Amanda Blackgoat] So when we started creating policies and procedures, the TANF program had already been providing services since April of 2000. Tribal Child Support became Comprehensive Child Support Program in April of 2007. So TANF had already been going for a good seven years and been established.

So currently, our policy is every time a client applies for TANF, they have to fill out an absence parent form, which includes the assignment of rights to child support. This helps keep it clear, on paper, when they're on TANF and when they're off TANF. And that's for each section that they've assigned their rights over to TANF. TANF's clients get a pass-thru of \$50.00 per client, not per case. And then TANF determines good cause if they're not going to—can determine good cause whether or not to pursue child support if it's going to be physically harmful or detrimental for the family or the children. Currently, there's no memorandum of understanding or agreement needed between Tribal Child Support and TANF. We're both underneath the same tribe, and we both follow our strict confidentiality guidelines, so. Let's see.

[Brenda Chapman] So the creation of policies and procedures—so TANF's policies and procedures were developed several years to advance the Tribal Child Support policy and procedures. Tribal Child Support established policy and procedures per the federal regulations in CFR 309 to receive federal funding to become a Comprehensive Child Support Program. Tribal Child Support and TANF policies and procedures work in tandem with the goal of empowering our people to reach self-sufficiency. Tlingit and Haida's philosophy is the first resource for the custodial parent should be child support.

[Amanda Blackgoat] So to add a little bit more about this process, it sounds really simple on the slide, but when Tribal Child Support was establishing itself, in order to smooth that transition from the state of Alaska, a lot of its policy and procedures were mirrored to keep the consistency between the two programs. And so some of those policy and procedures as Tribal Child Support



was being established was done to keep that smooth transition and to not upstart anything with the families. So that they knew what the services were, and they could continue that. And we found that to be very helpful. I don't—I think that was a smart move on their part—our part.

[Brenda Chapman] So finances and shared resources—TANF and Tribal Child Support coordinate the following: 477 and TANF and Tribal Child Support specialists participate in ongoing training, annual training, for the state mainframe database, which is the state child support NSTAR.

[Amanda Blackgoat] So just to clarify that. That means that both child support and TANF can view the state of Alaska's mainframe for child support cases, and it's a selected few—

[Brenda Chapman] Frames?

[Amanda Blackgoat] Screenshots that we can see to see what the status is of that case. And that's been—actually that's been a lifesaver, and I strongly encourage if you can have that, with your state, that would be very helpful.

[Brenda Chapman] It gives the TANF case managers the ability to review and see if the family has a state case in their—coming into TANF, and their rights will be, of course, coming through the Tribal Child Support, but it gives the TANF case manager the heads up that this transition will take—it will be a process, but we can prepare the family for the transition. And to determine eligibility if they're getting any type of ongoing payments from the state.

[Amanda Blackgoat] TCSU provides tribal—oh, we already did that. Well, we provide tribal child support training annually for the 477 and TANF caseworkers. There's always turnaround?

[Brenda Chapman] Mm-hmm.

[Amanda Blackgoat] And so it's always good to have a refresher. And then the Fatherhood program includes participation from 477, TANF, and the Tribal Child Support staff. I think that's been the biggest key of making that program a success is that we have at least four staff members. And actually there's another department that's doing that, and that's our finance department. Our finance department felt that this was important enough to have one of their—actually, a couple of their staff members also participate.

[Brenda Chapman] And so how—the Fatherhood is just having—we have fathers in different departments within Central Counsel that come together and help strengthen the fathers, and they—we find it very, very helpful to our second parent households.

[Amanda Blackgoat] We have a satellite office collaboration in Ketchikan, Alaska, both of us. Both departments have offices there. They're located right next to each other. They are often a resource for each other. Because they're smaller offices, I think it's been beneficial for camaraderie as well. And lastly, we have a shared database to help offset cost of allocating funds.



[Brenda Chapman] So our database is RiteTrack. And TANF access—we can access to know the child support—if there's child support payments being provided. TCSU accesses it to provide information on whether or not the TANF client is a former client or if they're closing out and funds need to be reviewed, or the Tribal Support Child case needs to be reviewed.

[Amanda Blackgoat] It's always good to verify who's in the household. The ability to draw reports from the one database cuts on data entry mistakes and duplication. We're not having to enter it into two places, and when you enter it into one, it's there so you can find it.

Aids in tracking movement of children of cases—TCSU can see when child support becomes steady and is equal to or greater than the TANF benefit. This then can alert TANF and the client to see if TANF case can close or save a month by suspending a month. And then it also helps TCSU confirm the TANF household composition or assignment of child support.

All right. So some of our child support has challenges. I'm not sure we're not alone in some of these that we'll go, so we'll probably name a few, and then we'll also name how we dealt with some of that, these challenges. So what is on the TANF record does not match what the custodial parent, the noncustodial parent are stating. This usually happens in court, and that's what we'll go over a little bit of how we tried to address that. And then another challenge is the noncustodial parent is in the home and then out again and in and out and in and out. And tracking when an NCP owes child support on that.

[Brenda Chapman] So tracking where the children are among multiple households. You know, this would be for TANF families that have, you know, multiple kids by multiple spouses or ex-spouses.

[Amanda Blackgoat] Overpayment of child support versus recoupment for TANF—two different things, but our shared database provides information. So if a participant is overpaid by Tribal Child Support, the Tribal Child Support caseworker will contact TANF and put it in our database system, and that's how recoupment would start for that—for Tribal Child Support.

[Brenda Chapman] For TANF, if there's a recoupment for TANF, then we would just follow the regulations for overpayment.

[Amanda Blackgoat] The closure of the TANF case does not close the child support case. Oftentimes, we really need—we educate our clients and reiterate this—that just because their TANF closes doesn't mean that the child support case closes.

Another child support and TANF challenge is, "Why fill out another child support form when already have open child support case?" Again, this is going to tracking and making sure that the assignment is being applied each time. And seven is resistance from grandparents and third parties to fill out form. This—I'm interested to hear what other tribes might be able to do on this, but it's—what do you with this?

[Brenda Chapman] Because—speaking in the TANF, coming from TANF, we do have grandparents who are providing for their grandchildren, and they don't want to assign their rights



to the absent parent. Sometimes a fear is that the mother or the father might come back and get the kids even though it may not be the most stable situation. So those are some of the things that the TANF case managers will explain to grandparents about, you know, the regulations of having to fill out the form so that that their rights are assigned to Tribal Child Support.

[Amanda Blackgoat] So this is going back to explain, yes, they have to fill out a child support form every time they apply for TANF because the assignment of rights is in there. So, yes, they have to fill out an absence parent child form every time they apply for TANF. So, yes, they fill out two applications.

All right. So other Tribal Child Support and TANF collaborations. All right. So when I had spoken about what—when we have custodial parent and noncustodial stating that they—it doesn't match what TANF has and they start saying, "No, he was in the household." And this happens in our Tribal Court a lot. We developed a TANF Caseworker Declaration. There's an example of it at the end of the presentation, but it helps alleviate the discrepancies while at Tribal Court and, at times, remove the need for the TANF caseworker to attend Tribal Court. But it helps clarify when we're in court, and it gives us a chance for the TANF caseworker to review their file and to make sure everything is accurate and on task, and that can be presented at court. And that helps alleviate that. Sometimes even with a TANF Caseworker Declaration, we still need to—if they're adamant then lot of times what we'll do is we'll ask that the hearing will be continued, and then we'll ask the TANF caseworker to attend the next hearing so that everybody is at the same table, so that it can be hashed out, what's happening.

[Brenda Chapman] And this is most common. This is for the TANF families that tend to apply and leave out the absence parent, but then when the absence parent gets their withholding order and contacts Tribal Child Support, it's usually in the case of the absence parent saying, "No, I've been in the home all this time." So TANF will pend the case for collateral contacts to confirm information like is the noncustodial on the lease of their place. We'll verify with food stamps, Medicaid, those types of tools that we do to investigate and confirm information. And then when we come prepared to court, we also give copies of their eligibility review forms and their initial applications and their timesheets so that it indicates on paper and confirms that the applicant either has not provided accurate information, and then we decide in court how much the withholding is actually going to be.

[Amanda Blackgoat] So along with our Fatherhood programs—so currently, what happens—just to give a little more about this. The staff members from the three different, four different departments usually meet and plan out and they do—meet and plan out their 12 week session, and they do it twice a year, usually in the spring and in the fall. They do it on Friday, Friday nights?

[Brenda Chapman] Thursdays.

[Amanda Blackgoat] Thursday nights, and——



[Brenda Chapman] So just to expand on that, the Fatherhood Program, if we have second fathers on the case, the TANF case manager will make it part of the case plan to provide—to attend the Fatherhood Program. This helps give the father structure, provide parenting, some life skills, some support from the male community. They do outings; they do camping; they do picnics; they're very involved in culture; they've done carving classes. So it's been very beneficial to all types of households, also for the absence parent as well.

And also, the biggest thing that we've found helpful in having a child support caseworker be with the Fatherhood Program is that we make referrals to our child support caseworker saying, "Okay, we're referring this noncustodial parent to you." And what we've implemented is a program where if the noncustodial parent participates in the Fatherhood Program, that they can forgive TANF arrears. It can be for arrears that are owed to TANF, but it's—right now, currently, it's \$50.00 a class that they attend. And if they attend all 12 week sessions, then they get a bonus of another \$100.00 forgiven off of their TANF arrears. Oddly enough, a few dedicated noncustodial parents have taken that opportunity to do that, and it's actually been very beneficial for those that have. Some of them start and then they don't finish, but it's still a way for a non-custodial parent that may not have the means to still chip away at their debt that's owed for TANF arrears, at least. We don't allow it for custodial parents, custodial arrears, or family arrears, I'm sorry, because they should still be owed that money. But it does help chip away a little bit at it.

[Amanda Blackgoat] So other TCSU and TANF collaborations is the TANF penalty for non-cooperation for child support. This helps motivate clients to finish child support process. It's very helpful when establishing paternity and child support orders. We use this tool quite a bit, unfortunately. We find that a lot of times we can use it on a noncustodial parent that is failing to apply for the Permanent Fund Dividend. And if he has—if he's on an open TANF case, we can penalize him for not applying until he's provided proof of that. If they're not utilizing all the resources that they have available to them, we can find that they're not compliant with their Tribal Child Support case. And, therefore, we can then issue a TANF penalty. Only Tribal Child Support Unit can lift the penalty. TANF is not able to do that, and they just tell them that you have to go see your child support caseworker in order to get it lifted.

I don't know if anybody has any questions regarding that specific—I'm not—okay, so we'll move on.

Other challenges—we as presenters, we were wondering what other tribes do. We recently had a case where they had a same-sex household, and they added to the family through a donor kit. You know, our Tribal Court is currently dealing with that, and how do you go about that? So we would like to see that.

A couple of other challenges for the audience out there and that are administrating their own Tribal Child Support in partnership with their TANF. When clients come in and they indicate to the program that they don't know who the father is, but they're seen in the community throughout the pregnancy, throughout after the pregnancy. So verifying information to that. And then how to verify domestic violence, whether domestic violence is current, or if it's, you know, household



that is still going through counseling. We have the ability to verify it, but how long is it—I mean, how long does it stay in the household before it becomes healed? Because it is a process and it is a case-to-case basis.

[Brenda Chapman] And she brings this up because TANF determines good cause. TANF does determine good cause based upon a big variable of domestic violence. And so when TANF is deciding whether or not good cause is granted, sometimes it can be granted for the first application, but it may not be granted for the second application. And how do you continue to grant good cause when you see him in and out of the household? So that's something we struggle with as a tribe. Some cases are easier than others, but how do you draw that line to say, "We're going to do that. We're going to count him in the household or we're not."

[Amanda Blackgoat] And one suggestion that we've had is—and something that child support deals with or when we're dealing with a noncustodial parent saying, "I was in the household." And he might have been in for a week and then out for the rest of it. I say to them that, "You haven't filled out a work participation; you have not filled or done hours for TANF, and, therefore, until I start seeing hours that you're participating in fulfilling your service plan with TANF, I can't count you in the household. So I'm going to count you in until either Tribal Court determines otherwise or TANF makes some different resolution with you. But that's how I present it to noncustodial parents that they were in, that they were out, and I simply state, "I don't feel that you've turned in a timesheet for this month, and it doesn't look like you were on the service plan." So that's kind of where Tribal Child Support draws that line.

Children with caretakers doesn't apply for child support/TANF, and money is still going to the custodial parent.

[Brenda Chapman] This would be for our grandparents that, you know, just will not—they don't apply for TANF because of the fact that they have to assign rights, child support rights to their mother or the father, and going back to feeling a little under—just feeling that pressure of what's in the best interest of the child. But in the meantime, the NCP is working and is giving money, and it's filtering through the parent that is not taking care of the child.

[Amanda Blackgoat] A lot of times this comes up because a noncustodial parent is angry because it's going to the custodial parent, and they want it to go to the grandparents. And that's easier to handle because then I say—then what I give the noncustodial parent is a letter of introduction to give to the grandparent saying—or they can give me an address, and I'll say to the noncustodial parent, list their names for these children and state that you are caring the children and that you would like to see that the child support owed to you that it also be sent to you. And so that's how we kind of deal with that issue to get the caretaker some help, or at least let them know—sometimes some noncustodial—I mean some caretakers don't realize that child support is being paid, and so that's when they can apply. And several of them do do that once they realize that there are payments coming in and that they could be getting some help for the child without having to go after their own daughter for child support, especially if they're not on TANF. We do not require that. If they're not on TANF, if they're just applying for child support, they can apply



on the father or the mother. They're not required to apply on both. If they're on TANF, they are required to apply on both, but.

Is there a penalty imposed for not applying for all resources? We see that the—we see that there was a question that asked if there are different types of penalties for noncooperation for child support. And we just kind of put it all underneath one. If they're noncomplying, if they're not doing what we're asking, it's called a non-cooperation; they're noncompliant. So pretty much anything falls underneath that. We haven't seen or heard anything that tells us we can't issue a penalty, especially if we're trying to establish paternity or a child support order for a child.

[Brenda Chapman] So the penalty for TANF—once we—once the TANF worker receives the letter from Tribal Child Support indicating that a penalty has been imposed, the TANF worker will impose a penalty, which is the 40 percent of the needs standard is taken out of the benefit. And that is the actual—the 40 percent represents that parent who is noncompliant, their needs. Oftentimes, TANF will get that phone call or our person will get the phone call about that penalty amount and about taking money away from their family. But we do our best to connect with the family to prevent them from going on penalty by trying to meet with them and get them engaged.

[Amanda Blackgoat] So fraud is another thing. How do you address fraud? There are two different types of fraud that we've come across. How can we put it? It's tapering down now that the general population, tribal members that we serve, realize that we are now checking the state child support. We're checking each other's programs, and we're checking not just the TANF programs, but we can also check General Assistance when General Assistance is issued or Energy Assistance or Employability Assistance. We can see that, and they can see the child support case—they can't see a child support case, but they can see a child support payment. And so they can check that off of our system as well. So they can see when child support has been issued so they can count that as income or however they do that for each of those programs. So that's been helpful in that respect.

But we have found that—we realized that when we started transitioning cases from the child support state of Alaska, that the state of Alaska always—doesn't necessarily track the TANF month correctly. And so sometimes they're months of TANF that should have been—should of have gone to TANF but actually was paid out to the child support custodial parent. And so that—and then it wasn't reported to TANF that they were receiving child support. So then that created an overpayment from TANF, so that was a recoupment. And yet it also created an overpayment of child support. So those are sticky situations, and you have to take it directly head on with each one and that's—truthfully, the only way that we seem to do that is just work closely with each other to make sure that each one is monitoring what that recoupment is or what that overpayment may be. TANF does not collect for overpayments to child support, but they can recoup for overpayments of TANF. And so that's how we been dealing with that.



[Brenda Chapman] The overpayment for TANF is at 10 percent of the maximum benefit received. This is to avoid hardship to the family, but also to make them accountable for paying that money back.

[Amanda Blackgoat] So, all right, so let me go on. Okay. The benefits of operating both TANF and TCSU program—it's the family; it's the kids. Being able to coordinate that assisting—we've found that assisting noncustodial parents even though we can't transfer the case from the state of Alaska, but assisting noncustodial parents and understanding what they're reading has been greatly beneficial. I think it's gotten some noncustodial parents to get a handle on where they stand, and how to be more active in being able to handle it.

So we have a question regarding, "Could you speak more to how you work to ensure the payments are correct after the problem with the Alaska records?" We just—we have to work closely with the state of Alaska as well to get their financial information. It can sometimes take quite a few months for that to be cleaned up and cleared up going back and forth between the state of Alaska. And how do you reassign or recoup that? So you have to look at the state of Alaska records; you have to look at when they were on TANF, and you have to look at when they receive the payments. And that's a big—it's a long process. You have to line it all up and then give the information to TANF so they can figure out what the recoupment is. And then monitor how if there's a child support overpayment as well, not to double dip. You can't double dip when you're trying to recover that because, yes, they received child support and didn't report it to TANF and TANF over issued. But it's kind of the same monies because child support that was overpaid to them has been paid out already, so it's hard to track, and you don't want to do it—you don't want to do it twice. I could speak for hours on that so—but all I can say is that you have to get the other departments involved in order to get that straightened out.

And so at the back—so we're currently on this. This is our—our orientation form for TANF clients. When it's put on the TANF service plan that they need to come and meet with us, especially for clients that are brand new; that are just applying; they're a brand new baby; they don't know; this is all new to them. So they referred them to the child support, TCSU, and then we sit down and have an orientation. And this is our checklist, and we go through it and send it back to the TANF caseworker, so that they know that they've completed their service plan for this particular item.

This is our declaration for the 477 caseworker for TANF. And we say for the 477 caseworker because it can also apply to general assistance or energy assistance if that is needed for whatever. But this helps associate with months used. We try to make it a one page form and simplified as possible for the TANF caseworker, so that they can turn that in and not take up too much of their time.

[Brenda Chapman] And just to expand on what Amanda had indicated. Our 477 programs: the Employability Assistance program, the General Assistance program that are—or they're grant is from the BIA. Well, the regulations state that all clients have to apply for resources because



they're a secondary resource, so this is how we've come together. And I just wanted to mention that if there are tribes that do administer 477.

[Amanda Blackgoat] This is an example. I think we have updated it since then, but this is an example of when there's noncooperation with child support, and a TANF penalty letter has gone out. Usually these are also reviewed by Brenda to know or understand what's going on, so we try and do that. I have sent the letter out if Brenda has not been in the office, but we try to have that come from the TANF office so that they know and are familiar with what's going on with the case right now.

So I think we're pretty much done with our presentation. Is there any other questions?

[Brenda Chapman] We'd be happy to answer them, but if not—I don't know if our contact information is in there, but we're happy to answer questions at all, and our emails are directly. Let's see. It looks like that there are copies of the slides at the webinar. It says, the link to the path that we are talking about will [Unintelligible]

[Amelia Popham] I'll jump in here real quick. The PowerPoint slides, as well as the entire audio recording, will be posted to the Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network website in the coming weeks, and everyone who is participating in this webinar will be sent a direct link to that location.

[Paige Hausburg] So, Amanda, this is Paige. I think there was an earlier question about getting copies of these letters, the copies of the forms.

[Amanda Blackgoat] Oh. I can do whatever. They can either email me, and I can furnish them. Or I can give you guys a copy of the forms, and you guys can put it with it. I'm not sure what's the best way.

[Paige Hausburg] Okay.

[Amanda Blackgoat] They can contact me, and I'll be happy to email them to them.

[Paige Hausburg] Yeah. And your contact information is not on the slides, so.

[Amanda Blackgoat] Oh, okay. So my contact information——

[Brenda Chapman] Do you want to put it down there so that they can all look at it? She's going to input it on the Q&A for everyone.

[Amelia Popham] Actually, everyone won't see it on the Q&A, but if you can say it aloud, I'll put it on a note and post it so that everyone can see it.

[Amanda Blackgoat] Okay. It's ablackgoat@cchita.org.

[Brenda Chapman] So, if they're any questions about the partnership or TANF questions, my email address is bchapman@cchita.org.



[Amanda Blackgoat] So we have a question. Did TCSU department develop the RiteTrack database? I think we were the first department to put it on there, but I know that a collaborative effort among the tribes to get a database that everybody, all departments, could use. And so TCSU was pretty much brand new at the time, the same time, that RiteTrack was being developed and implemented, and so we—I think we were the first department on there, even before TANF and we—because we were the first department, we got everybody's full attention, so we were able to tweak things and do things initially to our specifications. So that was actually really cool, but some of our other departments felt that they weren't getting the attention—some of our departments have had to wait quite a few years in order to their departments, their section on the database, tweaked to best fit their program.

[Paige Hausburg] I think that we have one more question about the Penobscot Nation moving towards getting a TANF program, but we can't quite—let's see, the question is, "The Penobscot Nation will be moving towards getting a TANF program. Can you ask again if other tribes can speak to these challenges, please. It would be helpful." So what kind of challenges tribes are having getting to a TANF program?

[Amelia Popham] If you submit them through the Q&A function, we can share them with everyone on the call.

[Brenda Chapman] So for our program for TANF, of course, you knew you'd have to do a resolution to your counsel, and you'd have to submit that to ACF. I think it would be more appropriate to have ACF maybe expand on some of the challenges they've seen or helped with or if there is any other tribes that are going through that process.

[Amelia Popham] Hi, everyone, this is Amelia Popham again. I just wanted to maybe speak to that briefly without derailing from the topic of this webinar, but we actually did another webinar last year, also with the Welfare Peer TA Network, so that would also be on that website, that was about starting up a tribal TANF program and included the challenges that we've seen that other tribes have faced, as well as a report on the challenges that we've seen. So, if the individual from Penobscot or anyone else wanted—can't find that on the Welfare Peer TA Website, you're welcome to contact me, Amelia Popham, and my contact information is included in these slides here. And I will make sure that you have that information and those resources. I hope that's helpful.

[Brenda Chapman] And to just speak briefly about specific challenges to this question in our PowerPoint, you know, database—having a unified database is important, ongoing annual training. We are state and federal funded, so our MOU with the state is we have to be comparable to the state when we're at—when we're giving grants out. So their specific regulations, not just for the federal but for the state, and so trying to implement that, and get everyone cross-trained has been a challenge, but that's what our ongoing training is. That's how we're able to—be able to offer those consistent services to all of our family members.

[Amanda Blackgoat] So, as for what other tribes are doing, we are, on our site, other challenges, we are definitely interested in what other tribes are doing in regards to some of these



challenges, and I will be down at the—I will be presenting down at the end—oh, I can't remember what it's called—in June at the NTCFA Conference in Phoenix. I'll be presenting down there, and I—hopefully, we can have more of a back-and-forth of what other tribes are doing with some of these challenges. I totally would be curious. I know Brenda and I, you know, we would—any input would be helpful to see what other tribes—how they're dealing with this issue—issues. Other than that, that's where we're at.

[Amelia Popham] This is Amelia again, and I just—I want to acknowledge that I know that the technology that we had available today doesn't allow every one to participate via discussion, but we're definitely noting that this would be a good discussion topic for future webinars that do have that feature, in person meetings that ACF hosts and other forums, so we hope to be able to continue that as part of the conversation as well.

[Amanda Blackgoat] Thank you, Amelia.

[Paige Hausburg] So at this point—this is Paige—so at this point, we just wanted to ask some polling questions just to kind of gather some information so that people can see what's happening out there. So our first polling question is, "Do you currently have an MOU in place between your Tribal TANF and your tribal child support program?" So, if you could just look at that and vote, then we can see how many folks out there do have those agreements in place and who doesn't. Take a look at that; wait for a minute. And it looks like—so far, it looks like that most of the people that have voted do not operate both programs or aren't interested in creating an MOU. And the rest of you are split between yes, you have an MOU in place, and no, you don't, but you're interested in creating one.

So, okay. Let's go to the next polling question, "Are your policies regarding assignment of rights, distribution, etc., created jointly between your Tribal TANF and your Tribal Child Support program?" So we heard from Tlingit and Haida that they did work together. So, all right. So again, the majority of the people responding don't operate both programs. Two programs look like they work together, and four did not. Oops, three worked together to create those, so.

Let's go on to our third polling question, which is, "Have your Tribal TANF and Tribal Child Support programs ever held joint training?" So even though there are some tribes that don't have both programs, it looks like for those that do, the majority of the programs have joint training for both Tribal TANF and Tribal Child Support.

[Amanda Blackgoat] Paige, can I add something?

[Paige Hausburg] Sure. Absolutely.

[Amanda Blackgoat] Okay. So I think the one thing that has been very beneficial in having both programs in Tlingit and Haida was having—I don't mean to brag—but having me, a person that goes from TANF to child support or vice versa, having somebody that knows child support in and out, and then going into the TANF program because then it went that weight to the other coworkers that are going to be in that new department that you're in, and it's a resource. And, you know, I can look at a TANF benefit, and say, "Hey, that only shows one child. What's going on



here? There should be three." And so a lot of times, I can ask those questions and see something wrong just by what I know from TANF. And I think I can't stress that enough for tribal organizations. If they have that capability, if they have somebody that is prime in TANF and be able to correspond or correlate that in their child support department, I strongly encourage that. I think that's been very helpful for us.

[Brenda Chapman] Thank you for adding that, Amanda, I do think that's a really great point. Cross-training is always wonderful, but having somebody that's intimately familiar with both programs really makes a huge difference in the collaboration. You're always more willing to work with somebody, you know, if you came from another agency or office that you actually had a working relationship with them. Then it's easier to sort of get the programs working together.

[Amanda Blackgoat] Absolutely.

[Paige Hausburg] Let's go on to the next polling question, which is, "Do your Tribal TANF and Tribal Child Support programs have integrated data systems?" We know sharing data between the two programs is important. Very few have an integrated data system. But it looks as if the majority of those that do operate both programs do share data, even though they don't have an integrated data system, so. Hopefully, at some point, there's a way we can get an integrated data system. That would ease everyone's workload a bit and help out.

Let's go to the fifth polling question. "Do you ever provide joint case management for mutual clients?" And this one seems to be split. Amanda or Brenda, I didn't know if you wanted to weigh in on this question, or any of the other polling questions, again, since you to have the ability to jump in and talk to us and others don't.

[Amanda Blackgoat] I think that being on the same page, kind of being on the same page for the sake of our children, having joint case management is only going to strengthen our families. Having that wraparound approach, really looking at the dynamics of our families and trying to share information that is pertinent to [audio cuts out] great together and not make it a hostile type of environment. It's not healthy to have that type of communication between our families, and we really strive on communicating together communicating with our families so that we all know what our role is. We all understand why child support is in place, and what TANF does to help our families.

[Brenda Chapman] The other thing—by having the same system and being able to see whether or not the TANF benefit is greater than child support or not, and being able to, in say a month or two, close the TANF case, I think, has been greatly beneficial because sometimes it's a budgeting issue. The custodial parent is not used, you know—we tell them that, "Hey, you can close your TANF and get your child support, you know, we've been reviewing it for the last couple months; it's steady." And they're really nervous because they're used to getting that check at the beginning of the month and paying their bills, and they don't want to close TANF because they're scared they are going to need it again, and then they'll have to go through all that paperwork.



But what we have found is that we—what we do is we ask TANF or TANF decides to suspend for the first month so that the mother can get used to how the child support comes in. And sometimes I can tell them, "You know, it'll come weekly or it'll come twice a month so that you can start budgeting." So so the TANF caseworker then works with that client to say, "Okay, the first child support check is coming around this time, you need to make sure that you pay these bills and pay ahead to get them prepared." Or you've got to save it this month so that you can pay the beginning of next month because you're going to need it for the next month because it's already—so helping the custodial parent learn to budget and to be self-sufficient, I have found to be very successful, especially since TANF is not just going to pull the rug right out from under them and close the case. They're going to suspend it and still provide that case management and get them used to, "Okay, this is when the child support checks are coming, and this is how I need to budget so that I can meet the needs of my kids and stuff." We have had quite a few families that have been successful in that aspect.

But I also wanted to note that we—recently, ACF has put out a report stating that there's been a general decline in funds for TANF because more families are coming off of TANF or—but that there is a general decline of money going through—the reimbursement that's reassigned to TANF from child support. And we have also seen that decline, and we're having to budget for that. But, you know, in a lot of ways, that's what we've been working for is to get these family self-sufficient and to issue that child support to families so that they can, you know, not have to depend on us. And so yes, it's kind of scary to not have that income for the TANF program, but, on the other hand, we must be doing some right.

[Paige Hausburg] Well, it sure sounds like it. You guys have provided us with a lot of information, and I know that everyone on the call appreciates hearing about your experiences and your collaborative efforts. So thank you for that. I'm going to turn it over to Amelia, and let her close us out.

[Amelia Popham] Okay, well, I know that Amanda and Brenda were fielding questions during the presentation, so thank you for that. You're very talented multi-taskers. So, seeing no further questions at this time, we would like to thank our presenters so much for the information that they've provided today. And I'd also like to thank everyone for participating the webinar today. We look forward to hearing your feedback on today's webinar, as this will help us plan and improve future webinars on topics of interest to the tribe. You can provide feedback to your regional office contacts or through the Welfare Peer TA Network. And finally, as was mentioned earlier, there will be a transcript and copy of this webinar posted on the Welfare Peer TA Network and emailed to all participants. If you have any additional questions after this, our webinar for today.

[End of video]