



## Nation to Nation:

Working Across Regions to Strengthen Indian Families and Tribal Nations through Innovative Tribal TANF Programs

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## Biographies

### **Lana Chanda, Employment and Training Department Director, Gila River Indian Community**

Lana Chanda has 35 years of experience in the field of workforce, training, and development. At Gila River Indian Community, she oversees federal and state youth and adult Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act grants, a Career Pathways grant, the Native Employment Works Grant for Natives receiving TANF, an AmeriCorps grant titled “Veterans serving Veterans,” and the Tribal Employment Rights Office, ensuring the employment rights of Natives on reservation. Lana was successful in acquiring a \$3 million “Workforce Innovations Grant” for Gila River Indian Community to develop a first-ever Native American Career Pathways System on reservation land. Additionally, she developed a successful 14-year-old Indian Nations Camp for Native youth for tribes across Arizona. She currently serves as the Vice Chair of the Nineteen Tribal Nations Workforce Development Board and is the Chair of the Arizona Tribal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Directors. She has a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a master’s degree in student personnel.

### **Leticia Hernandez, Workforce Coordinator, Pascua Yaqui Tribe Center for Employment Training**

Leticia Hernandez is the Workforce Coordinator at the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Center for Employment Training. She has worked with the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Social Services Department since 2005. Leticia works with tribal members on the Tribal TANF Cash Assistance Program by creating and increasing training opportunities through the development of career and work readiness training programs. Leticia has a bachelor’s and master’s degree in social work from Arizona State University.

### **Matt Halley, Executive Director, Cookie Cart**

Matt Halley has been the Executive Director at Cookie Cart since 2006. Cookie Cart is a non-profit, youth employment program serving 15- to 17-year-old teens in low-income neighborhoods in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, MN. Under Matt’s leadership, the organization, which has a mission to provide life, leadership, and employments skills in an urban bakery setting, has grown to become the largest year-round provider of youth employment training in the Twin Cities metro region. A Licensed Independent Social Worker, Matt has over 25 years of experience in youth and family programming. He holds a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Earlham College and master’s degree in social work from Augsburg College.

### **Julie Fong, Regional Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance Region IX**

Julie Fong, M.S.W., has over 19 years of professional experience in the social service, program policy, and social justice fields working with tribes and other historically underrepresented groups. For the first 12 years of her 16-year tenure with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Julie served as a Tribal Program Specialist, providing expert guidance, assistance, and technical assistance to Native American tribes throughout California, Arizona, and Nevada in the successful development and administration of Tribal TANF, Child Care, and Native Employment Works Programs. Since 2011, Julie has served as the ACF TANF Region IX Program Manager, leading and overseeing a team of program specialists in providing oversight, technical assistance, and guidance to tribal, state, and territory governments in the successful administration of nearly 30 federally funded TANF programs totaling over \$4.3 billion. Julie earned a bachelor’s degree in sociology at Whitman College and a master’s degree in social work from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

## **Jodie Sue Kelly, President, Cygnet Associates**

Jodie Sue Kelly has been in the workforce development field for over three decades. She is a popular speaker at national, regional, and local conferences. She was awarded the 2004 National Association of Workforce Development Professional of the Year award. Ms. Kelly has a bachelor's degree in psychology from California University of Pennsylvania and a master's degree in information systems from George Mason University.

## **Julie Mendoza, Family Services Supervisor, Stanislaus County Community Services Agency**

Julie Mendoza has 16 years of experience working at the Stanislaus County Community Services Agency. She has worked as a CalWORKs/CalFresh/MediCal intake case manager and a CalWORKs/Welfare to Work case manager. Julie has supervised for 12 years in the Welfare to Work and Subsidized Child Care Programs and in Training/Handbooks. She is currently a Welfare to Work supervisor over Family Stabilization, Child Welfare Linkages, Behavior Health Services, and the Housing Support Program.

## **Mauricio Lim Miller, Founder, President and CEO, Family Independence Initiative**

Mauricio Lim Miller founded Family Independence Initiative (FII) in 2001, with a mission to support and accelerate low-income families' own efforts to improve their social and economic mobility. A first-generation immigrant, Mauricio's personal history deeply informs his life's work. He was inspired to develop FII after researching the histories of communities in the United States that managed to rise from intense poverty to middle-class standing. In his research, he found something simple, yet extraordinary: pathways to success require a group effort. Individuals and families turned to extended family and friends for support and resources, and followed the example of the successful families around them. In recognition of his unconventional approach to generating economic mobility among low-income families, Mauricio was awarded a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship in 2012. He was appointed by President Obama to the White House Council for Community Solutions and is an Ashoka Fellow. Prior to founding FII, Mauricio spent 22 years as the director of Asian Neighborhood Design, a community development agency in San Francisco and Oakland.

## **Denise Litz, Tribal TANF Branch Chief, Office of Family Assistance**

Denise Litz is the Branch Chief for the Division of Tribal TANF within the Office of Family Assistance, where she has worked since January 2015. She is an enrolled member of the Tuscarora Nation, Beaver clan, and holds a bachelor's degree in human rehabilitative services and a master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education. Denise's federal career includes 11 years as a program specialist with the Office of Head Start in Region VIII (Denver) and two years as a program specialist with the Administration for Native Americans (Washington, DC).

## **Holly Snowball Morales, Director, Employment and Training Services Department, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc.**

Holly Snowball Morales is currently the Director of Employment and Training Services Department at Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc., (CITC). She is responsible for the management and oversight of her department budget of over \$18 million. She is responsible for managing multiple programs, including a One Stop Job Center, serving over 1,100 job seekers per year. Prior to being the director, Ms. Morales managed the CITC Tribal TANF Program for eight years. TANF provides cash assistance determination, case management, and employment services to over 500 families per month. Ms. Morales earned her bachelor degree in organization management from Alaska Pacific University. Ms. Morales was born and raised in Anchorage, AK. She is married and has five children. She is of Yup'ik Eskimo and Irish decent.

## **Laura Porter, Co-Founder, ACE Interface, LLC**

Laura Porter is the Co-Founder of ACE Interface, LLC. Laura has more than a decade of experience leading successful implementation of ACE Study concepts in Washington State in partnership with over 30 communities and nine tribes. In addition to her work in Washington, Laura supports leaders in over 20 states, providing education, facilitation, and empowerment strategies for building self-healing communities. Laura provides support and services to a wide range of groups, from parents and youth who are convening neighborhood conversations to philanthropic leaders and government officials who are using ACE science in investment and policy decisions. Laura loves to travel, garden, learn, and play with her children and grandchildren.

## **Mikaela Smith, Family Assistance Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance Region IX**

Mikaela Smith is a Family Assistance Program Specialist in the Office of Family Assistance Region IX. She has worked with the Office of Family Assistance for the last seven years on Tribal TANF, State TANF, and Native Employment Works. She has a bachelor's degree in international political economy from the University of Puget Sound and a master's degree in public administration from San Francisco State University. Prior to joining the Office of Family Assistance, Mikaela worked for a nonprofit addressing homelessness in San Francisco and worked on youth development and HIV education in the Kingdom of Swaziland as a Peace Corps volunteer. She loves sharing smiles and favorite life lessons with everyone she meets.

## **Kaileen Spear, Staff Services Analyst, Shasta County Health and Human Services Agency**

Kaileen Spear has worked for the Shasta County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) for the last 16 years. During her tenure at HHS, she has gained in-depth knowledge of the CalWORKs and Welfare to Work programs, as well as the C-IV automated system, general caseload management, and interactive interviewing skills. She is currently responsible for reviewing and interpreting county policies to identify potential business process changes, reviewing the Work Participation Rate sample files, and preparing and delivering trainings for staff.

## **Sam Stitt, Tribal TANF Specialist, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance Region X**

Sam Stitt is an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

## **Christina Techico, Principal, ICF International**

Christina Techico has over 15 years of experience working on workforce development, social service programs, youth development, and education reform efforts primarily for the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services at the federal, state, and local levels. She currently serves as the project director for the Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool, a comprehensive, targeted, web-based tool that assists California TANF agencies in assessing individuals' readiness for work and identifying potential strengths and barriers in developing pathways to self-sufficiency. Ms. Techico holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Wellesley College and a master's degree in counseling education from San Jose State University.

## **Kim Turner, Public Health Services Advisor, White Earth Nation**

Kim Turner is the Public Health Services Advisor for the White Earth Nation. In this role, Ms. Turner coordinates the White Earth Nation White Earth Care Assessment Resource and Education (WE-CARE) System. Prior to coordinating the WE-CARE System, she spent 15 years as a community health educator for the White Earth Health Education Program and 12 years as an L.P.N. working in various medical settings. In her role as WE-CARE Coordinator, Ms. Turner is responsible for providing the new two-generational method of care for the whole family, which has been customized to fit the needs of the White Earth Nation.