



**Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Family Assistance  
Region IX**

**2011 Regional Tribal TANF Directors' Meetings**

**Short Summaries**



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## **Region IX Tribal TANF Meeting for Tribes of California and Nevada**

*San Francisco, California | July 2011*

The Region IX, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance (OFA) convened a meeting for the Region IX Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grantees in California and Nevada in July 2011. The meeting, the first of two, provided TANF directors and administrators with an open forum for discussing critical issues impacting their TANF participants and to network with other meeting participants and Region IX leadership. The meeting brought together TANF programs to discuss and share information on detecting and investigating fraud and supporting victims of domestic violence on their path to achieving self-sufficiency.

### **Day One**

The meeting began with an open dialogue with Region IX staff to discuss critical issues and challenges impacting their programs; in addition, participants shared best practices and lessons learned with Regional staff and other Tribal programs. During this facilitated, solutions-focused session, the Region provided updates on outstanding issues and topics that were discussed in previous Tribal TANF meetings.

Following the morning dialogue, Dana Eisenberg of the Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network (Peer TA) team provided participants with an overview of technical assistance opportunities available through the Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network. The presenter shared information about technical assistance that was requested (and fulfilled) by other TANF programs, and specifically Tribal TANF programs and provided a step-by-step overview of how to request technical assistance to address each Tribe's unique needs. Peer TA, a federally-funded initiative through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) ACF OFA, is a vehicle for facilitating information sharing about promising practices and lessons learned in implementing TANF programs. Peer TA helps to establish linkages among TANF agencies, low-income families, and their partners at the State, Tribal, county, and local levels.

In the final session of the day, Fraud Detection, Prevention, Investigation, and Prosecution participants learned the essential basics of fraud detection, prevention, investigation, and prosecution from Guy Christian, a professional investigator and representative of the California Welfare Fraud Investigators Association. Participants were encouraged to discuss and share best practices, challenges and successes for the prevention, identification and investigation of both internal (staff) and external (TANF participant) fraud. The presentation was followed by an open forum to discuss specific issues related to fraud where panelists also responded to questions from Tribal TANF programs.

Mr. Christian defined welfare fraud and explained the threat that fraud poses to the welfare system. He emphasized the importance of having well-defined policies and procedures in place to provide clients with assistance while also protecting and safeguarding resources. Concluding the session, Mr. Christian discussed the various steps and procedures involved in a welfare fraud investigation. He shared the types of technology needed to carry out an investigation, arrest and transport considerations, investigator duties, documentary evidence needed, investigation interviews, jurisdictional considerations, as well as courtroom procedure and personnel.

## Day Two

The second day opened with a session that focused on addressing issues of domestic violence in Indian country and how to build partnerships to better serve participants impacted by domestic violence. Tina Olson, Co-Director of Mending the Sacred Hoop, facilitated discussions around service delivery strategies including crisis management, advocacy, medical assistance, counseling, and peer-to-peer personal strengthening. To open her presentation, Ms. Olson provided a brief historical analysis of oppression of American Indian and Alaska Native women and the impact of the confluence of culture, gender bias, xenophobia on Native American culture and Native women. She stressed the importance of cultural sensitivity and the influence of cultural mores in the development of effective strategies for engaging with and providing services to Native survivors of domestic violence. Ms. Olson shared lessons learned and encouraged open discussion around addressing barriers for victims of domestic violence, including transportation, access to childcare, limited work experience and ability to earn livable wages, geographic isolation, and access to adequate housing and education opportunities. Ms. Olson closed the session by addressing safety planning and barriers to confidentiality that can affect caseworkers' ability to effectively serve victims of domestic violence. On one end of the continuum, caseworkers' immediate goal is to help the victim get away from imminent physical violence and on the other end of the continuum is the goal of creating opportunities that will allow victims and potential victims to be self-sufficient, minimizing the threat of re-engaging in an abusive relationship. Ultimately, the uppermost priority of any program that addresses domestic violence should be the safety of the victims.

## Meeting Summary

Throughout this meeting, Region IX sought to provide their Tribal TANF programs with hands-on how-to sessions on identifying and dealing with fraud cases and providing intensive case management and support to victims of domestic violence. Region IX Tribal TANF programs had the opportunity to discuss these topics with experts in the respective fields that provided them with ideas and strategies for contextualizing, evaluating, and improving their own programs. Additionally, the meeting provided a forum for those seeking further technical assistance from the Welfare Peer TA which provides technical assistance that is directly responsive to the unique needs of each individual requestor. Overall, the meeting gave Tribal TANF participants an opportunity to meet with Region IX staff to discuss ongoing questions and concerns regarding Tribal TANF in California and Nevada and the reauthorization of Tribal TANF.

Using information gleaned from this session, the Region IX Tribal TANF grantees can share the strategies learned with their own staff to work towards improving their programs' ability to identify and handle cases of fraud and provide support and services to victims of domestic violence, two very critical issues impacting Tribal TANF programs nationwide.

## Region IX Tribal TANF Meeting for Tribes of Arizona

*Phoenix, Arizona | August 2011*

The U.S. DHHS ACF OFA, Region IX hosted six Tribes from Arizona, community stakeholders, and topical experts at the 2011 Tribal TANF Meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, on August 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The conference agenda featured experts and presenters who helped Tribal TANF representatives strategize to develop stronger programs that would better serve their participants. Tribes were provided with ideas and models for handling data management, working with domestic violence survivors, implementing programs that respond to TANF Purposes Three and Four<sup>1</sup>, and ensuring that fraud is detected and addressed. The conference was designed to provide an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning to enhance Tribal TANF programs and create opportunities for self-sufficiency while maintaining each Tribes' individual culture and traditions.

To begin the meeting, the six Tribes were given the opportunity to provide information about their recent work within their Tribal TANF programs and to discuss their ideas and concerns regarding TANF reauthorization. The Tribes had previously met to discuss their recommendations regarding TANF reauthorization. A representative from the Pascua Yaqui Tribe presented the written recommendations to Mr. Rick Wever, Co-Acting TANF Program Manager at ACF, OFA, Region IX, to forward to OFA Central Office.

The meeting provided Tribal TANF program representatives with the opportunity to address a number of important issues and topics. Regional office representatives engaged participants in a discussion about their data questions and needs. Mr. Wever and Ms. Emily Zoellner facilitated this session with the aid of a document that outlines the process of collecting, reporting, and sharing Tribal TANF data. After reading through the document, Mr. Wever opened the discussion for participants to comment. Tribal representatives shared that the data transmission to the Federal government is improving and discussed how each program reports data with one another.

Ms. Dana Eisenberg, a representative from the Welfare Peer TA, shared how Tribal representatives can request technical assistance from Welfare Peer TA. Previous technical assistance requests were shared to provide participants ideas of the types of Tribal-specific requests that Welfare Peer TA has fulfilled in the past. A step-by-step overview of how to request technical assistance was also presented.

Mr. Lester Alford, who serves as the Database Administrator at the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, presented information about Tribal TANF data management. Currently, the Washoe Tribe serves nine counties in California and two in Nevada. Mr. Alford emphasized Tribal control of services being provided through the

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<sup>1</sup> **The four purposes of TANF are:**

- assisting needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes;
- reducing the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage;
- preventing out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and
- encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Tribal Family Assistance plan, data collection related to services being provided, and the ability to plan for or adjust services based on the data.

Violence against Native women is an issue in many Tribal communities and within the Tribal TANF caseload. Ms. Janet Deschinny, Trainer with the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence, spoke to participants about the cultural impact of domestic violence within Native communities. The presentation offered a brief description of the Coalition and its resources, general information on domestic violence in Native communities, its effects on the self-sufficiency of families, and options for building and finding partnerships between Tribal TANF and domestic violence services.

Many of the Arizona Tribes were interested in learning how to implement programs that addressed TANF Purposes 3 and 4. Mr. Glenn Basconcillo and Mr. Tilford Denver of Owens Valley Career Development Center (OVCDC) shared with participants the development and operations of their programs that address Purposes 3 and 4. Examples of programs that meet the goals of TANF Purpose 3 that OVCDC operates include teen pregnancy programs, national teen pregnancy day activities, youth peer presentations, family planning workshops, adult pregnancy programs, adult relationship programs and adult marriage programs. Programs that address TANF Purpose 4 include fatherhood programs and caretaker relative programs with the purpose of family formation.

Mr. Guy Christian, a representing the California Welfare Fraud Investigator's Association, covered how to address fraud in TANF programs. During this session, participants learned the basics of fraud detection, prevention, investigation, and prosecution. Participants discussed and shared best practices, challenges, and successes for the prevention and identification of both internal (staff) and external (client) fraud.

Lastly, Ms. Pat McBrayer, from the Arizona Department of Economic Security, spoke to participants about the Claims Resolution Act of 2010. This act extended the TANF block grant until September 30, 2011 and while it did not change any reporting requirements for Tribes, it did for States. Ms. McBrayer provided an update on new State reporting requirements in case these changes are applied to Tribal programs in the future. Ms. McBrayer also provided additional resources, such as instructions on engagement, Arizona's State TANF plan, and an Engagement in Additional Activities Summary and Analysis. Sally Ann Gonzales, an Arizona State legislator, was present during the session and expressed her interest in hearing more from Tribes related to their needs.

### **Meeting Summary**

The 2011 Tribal TANF Director's Meeting for Arizona Tribes provided time for representatives from six different Tribes to come together and share promising practices, discuss pertinent issues such as reauthorization, and learn from experts in the field. Evaluations show that participants found the session on fraud detection particularly helpful and plan to apply some of the fraud detection and reporting principles in their own Tribal TANF Programs.

## Region IX Tribal TANF Meeting for Tribes of California and Nevada

*San Francisco, California | July 2011*

The Region IX ACF OFA convened a meeting for the Region IX Tribal TANF grantees in California and Nevada from September 26-27, 2011. The meeting, the second of two, provided TANF directors and administrators an open forum for discussing critical issues impacting their TANF participants and an opportunity to network both among themselves and with Region IX leadership. The meeting brought together TANF programs to discuss and share information on a number of topics. The meeting was moderated by Ms. Julie Fong, TANF Program Manager, ACF, OFA, Region IX.

### Day One

This first session of the meeting included dialogue with Region IX Staff on current critical Tribal TANF issues. Attendees had the opportunity to discuss specific program needs, such as information on timely data reporting and TANF Reauthorization.

Following the morning discussion, participants heard from Dr. Walter Hillabrant, a co-author of “Operating TANF: Opportunities and Challenges for Tribes and Tribal Consortia”, a report produced under the ACF, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, which describes the experiences of 10 Tribal grantees in planning, implementing, and operating TANF programs. Dr. Hillabrant explained the challenges of operating a Tribal TANF program, including negotiating how to work with the State.

A panel session on *Best Practices for Managing Tribal TANF Programs* included several speakers addressing various topics. Mr. Glen Basconcillo, Chief Operating Officer at Owens Valley Career Development Center (OVCDC), spoke to participants about OVCDC’s partnership with the child support enforcement program in their area and how to use strategic planning to improve programs. Ms. Rondii Nieto, Site Project Coordinator at OVCDC, spoke about the program’s Porterville Site Teen Pregnancy Project which specifically addresses TANF Purpose 3. The project engages teen parents and encourages them to record their stories and experiences of becoming a parent. Lastly, Ms. Carolyn Stalcup shared best practices of the Southern California Tribal Chairmen’s Association (SCTCA)’s internal case audit system. SCTCA put an internal audit system into place so that the program could be better prepared when external audits occurred. The program serves five different offices and TANF cases often get transferred back and forth between offices.

TANF participants are faced with many employment barriers that often occur in tandem with other barriers such as substance abuse or depression. These co-occurring issues present challenges for diagnosis and create a need for additional emotional and professional support from case managers. During the next session, Ms. Racquel Morrison, Outreach Services Coordinator for Native American Communities, Rural Breaking Down Barriers Program, Mental Health America of San Diego County, discussed some of these barriers. Ms. Morrison provided several suggestions for working with Native communities around mental health issues:

- Identify programs that are already in place and learn what they provide;

- Work with community stakeholders to identify mental issues that plague American Indian and Alaska Native communities;
- Advocate for funding to provide programs through Indian Health Services and other funding agencies;
- Provide education and awareness on mental health through outreach and trainings; and
- Collaborate with Tribal governments, Indian Health Clinics, Tribal non-profit organizations, universities or community colleges, and Tribal governments.

## Day Two

Day Two of the meeting began with a session entitled *Leveraging Partnerships and Developing Career Pathways in Indian Country* in which participants learned strategies for increasing and improving partnerships with career sectors to create and support increased employment options for Tribal TANF participants and low-income Tribal families.

First, Ms. Robin Bearchild, Issksiniip Project Coordinator, and Ms. Katelin Loring, Issksiniip Placement Counselor, discussed the Issksiniip Project which is operated by the Blackfeet Community College in Browning, Montana and is funded through the ACF Health Professions Opportunity Grant. The goals and objectives of the project were built around improving education, employment, and health care opportunities targeted to TANF or TANF-eligible participants. The project includes a strong cultural component that engages students, families, and the community at-large. Each year, the Issksiniip Project offers 10 to 15 scholarships for students to earn health profession degrees. The scholarships include tuition, fees and books, mentoring, tutoring, support services, and career placement.

Mr. Andy Miritello, Building Trades Instructor at the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC), discussed the Career Pathways Initiative, a workforce development program that was started at the GRIC in Arizona through a grant from the Department of Labor. The Career Pathways Initiative was created in their community as an example for other Tribes to mimic. GRIC organized a core team of representatives from schools and colleges, employers, and the community and identified partnerships that would most benefit the community and make a successful initiative. They began by partnering with their Tribal Employment Rights Office and their Department of Education to train targeted job applicants with skills that were in demand by local employers. GRIC developed curriculum to match the skills needed by local employers, specifically in the health care, construction, and hospitality industries.

The last panel speaker, Ms. Bonnie DeWeaver, Workforce Development Program Coordinator at the Phoenix Indian Center, Inc. (PIC) discussed PIC, which is located in the city of Phoenix and was founded in 1947. PIC is one of the oldest urban American Indian centers in the country and administers employment, training, and social services programs. PIC also offers self-enrichment programs in four key personal development areas -- social services, adult education, language and culture, and native workforce services. Over the years, PIC has evolved to meet the continually growing community needs.

Tribes were interested in learning about asset building, an approach to overcoming poverty that enables individuals and families to plan for long-term economic success. During this discussion, Ms. Sierra Solomon, Assets for Independence Regional Consultant, Region IX, provided an overview of Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) and financial literacy for Tribal communities and shared strategies for engaging partners to further expand asset building options for Tribal families. Tribal TANF programs applying for an AFI grant can

offer IDAs and financial education for working and transitioning TANF participants. Participation in IDAs does not count against the TANF assistance available to families; that is, savings matches do not count as income. Through AFI, grantees can train eligibility screeners and case workers to refer TANF participants to local asset building services, offer financial education and credit counseling as job search and job readiness activities, conduct outreach about the Earned Income Tax Credit, provide referrals to free tax preparation services, and train caseworkers to include asset building activities and goals in participants' TANF plans.

Tribal TANF program meeting participants heard from Mr. David Madison and Mr. John Bausch, Region IX Grants Management Specialists, ACF, on *Program Management within the Fiscal Guidelines*. The presenters discussed recent findings from A-133 – the Office of Management and Budget circular requiring audits of TANF programs – audits and discussed important reporting forms that Tribes must complete.

The last session of the meeting included presenters Mr. James Whelley and Ms. Bernadette Santos from the Employment and Business Services Division of the San Francisco Human Services Agency. They shared lessons learned about their highly successful subsidized employment program component, "JobsNow!". Currently, the city is on its third iteration of the program, referred to as JobsNow3. The program was designed with three tiers to accommodate all job seekers. Tier 1 provides more traditional transitional jobs for low market participants in 25 hours of paid work at nonprofits. Tier 2 provides participants public sector employment with the Human Service Agency (HSA) and other city agencies. Tier 3 is a wage subsidy program that provides jobs with private sector for-profit businesses and nonprofit employers. Relationships with businesses are managed by Business Account Representatives (BARs) who provide services to the local business community and do not carry a client caseload. Currently, under Jobs Now3, a \$5,000 subsidy is paid to employers in \$1,000 increments over a five-month period. One positive secondary outcome of the program is that local businesses are provided an additional opportunity to grow; further increasing employment growth and local economic development.

### **Meeting Summary**

Following the final presentation, Ms. Fong provided a meeting wrap-up. During the meeting, the Region IX Tribal TANF grantees shared lessons learned and gathered strategies to improve their own programs' ability to identify and address multiple barriers, develop career pathways, create subsidized employment and asset building opportunities for participants, and effectively manage fiscal requirements. Region IX Tribal TANF programs had the opportunity to discuss relevant topics with experts in the field that provided insight, ideas, and strategies for enhancing their own programs. In addition, the meeting gave Tribal TANF participants an opportunity to meet with Region IX staff to discuss ongoing questions and concerns regarding Tribal TANF in California and Nevada.