

State - Tribal Relations

Build, Foster and Preserve



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Acting State Director of Indian Affairs

ACF Regions V & VII Tribal TANF Meeting
August 16, 2011

State of Montana – Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs



Governor's Office of Indian Affairs

- Established in 1951 as part of Executive Branch;
- Serves as the Governor's liaison with Indian tribes and Indian People, including Urban Indians;
- Facilitates meaningful state-tribal communications;
- Provides information and policy support on issues confronting the Indians of Montana;
- Serves as advisor to Governor, Executive Branch, Legislative Branch and Congressional Delegation.

State of Montana – Governor's Office of Indian Affairs



TANF – MOE - NEW

- 4 Tribes operate a Tribal TANF program;
- 2 of those Tribes get MOE;
- Other 2 chose to serve a different service population so they get no MOE;
- Use of MOE funds expanded to include supportive services (2011 Session - Senate Bill 156);
- 4 Tribes operate their own NEW program;
- 6 Tribes excluded from time clock.



Flags of Montana's Tribal Nations



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A Commitment to Change

- The State of Montana is committed to developing meaningful relationships with the tribal nations, guided by the statutory principles of:
 - Mutual understanding and respect;
 - Regular and early communication;
 - Cooperation and collaboration;
 - Accountability in addressing issues of mutual concern, and
 - Preservation of the state-tribal relationship.



Implemented Major Changes

- **Hired Native American Policy Advisors & Directors;**
- **Established Internal High Level Policy Team;**
- **Elevated OIA Director to Cabinet Level;**
- **Made over 120 appointments to Boards and Councils;**
- **Funded Indian Country Economic Development;**
- **Funded Indian Education for All;**
- **Recommended Major Legislative Changes;**
- **Institutionalizing Major Policy Changes; etc.**



Mutual Understanding and Respect

- Important to acknowledge and respect:
 - History
 - Sovereignty
 - Individuality
 - Unique Characteristics
 - Culture
 - Protocols
 - Importance of Significant Events



Regular & Early Communication

- Frequent contact builds the relationships;
- Helps create a strong foundation;
- Communication has to work both ways;
- Can be formal and informal;
- Utilize Indian Affairs Office;
- Inclusion in the best decision.



Governor Schweitzer and Blackfeet Councilman Willie Sharp, Jr.



Do Tribes Benefit?

- Have direct access to the Governor;
- Participation is impacting state policy and laws;
- Financial:
 - Dollars from Revenue Sharing Agreements
 - Accessing State Grants and Loans
- Improving Infrastructure;
 - Legislature provided \$5 million ARRA funding
- Creating jobs & developing economies.

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Ideas

- Find a bridge builder
- Seek and commit to change
- Be an active partner
- Find access points
- Educate and guide others
- Share
- Keep good pressure on



Governor's Tribal Leaders Summit
April 2008



Preservation

- Strong, solid relationships matter
- Commit to them
- Build them
- Foster them
- Preserve them



Governor Schweitzer & Fort Peck Chairman A.T. Stafne



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