



# Region X Tribal TANF Case Managers Training

May 3 – 5, 2011

Anchorage, Alaska

Summary Report



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"TANF Training and Technical Assistance"



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## Acknowledgements

The Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance Region X would like to thank all who participated in the planning and implementation of the Region X Case Managers Training.

## Overview of Meeting

The Region X Alaska Tribal Case Managers Training was held in Anchorage, Alaska on May 3-5, 2011 to address Alaska Tribal TANF organizations' request for case management training. The complete agenda can be found in the Appendix.

## Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011

### Welcome, Blessing, and Opening Remarks

Ms. Carol Wren, Department Director of the Cook Inlet Tribal Council, began the three day training with participant introductions, providing each training participant an opportunity to share information about themselves and their programs. Representatives from seven Native organizations in Alaska were present:

- Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP); and
- Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA);
- Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA);
- Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. (CITC);
- Maniilaq Association;
- Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA); and
- Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc. (TCC).

Ms. Judy Ogiore, TANF Program Specialist of Region X, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance (ACF/OFA), introduced other Region X staff: Ms. Melodie Rothwell (Immediate Office of the Regional Administrator Program Specialist) and Mr. Sam Stitt (Financial Operations Specialist, Office of Grants Management (OGM)).

### Tribal TANF History in Alaska

*Ms. Melodie Rothwell, Program Specialist, ACF Immediate Office of the Regional Administrator, Region X*

Ms. Rothwell provided a brief background of Tribal TANF in Alaska and ACF/OFA Region X's role in setting the context for participants. The session provided information for new Tribal TANF programs, specifically Maniilaq Association and KANA who both started programs in 2009.

### Background

Ms. Rothwell discussed the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). PRWORA allows Federally-recognized Tribes to independently host welfare programs with two specific restrictions related to Tribes in Alaska. These restrictions include:

- Eligible entities are limited to the Metlakatla Indian Community and the twelve non-profit Native corporations.
- Tribal TANF programs in Alaska must be comparable to the state of Alaska's program. The Sec of DHHS, in consultation with the State of Alaska and eligible Native entities, was responsible for developing program criteria for comparability.

In November of 1996, ACF/OFA Region X began working with the eligible Native entities and the State of Alaska to develop program criteria for comparability per the restrictions. In order to create specific program criteria, ACF/OFA held meetings to reach consensus with all Native entities and State representatives. Consequently, a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) group was developed which was comprised of a representative from each of the thirteen eligible Native entities, Alaska's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and ACF/OFA Region X. The SPOC still exists today and meets regularly.

Throughout 1997, the SPOC group met regularly but had difficulty reaching a consensus. The thirteen Native entities agreed not to move forward with a Tribal TANF program for a year because of the expected difficulty of getting it through the State legislature. Together, they decided to make a united effort to introduce a bill for a State match of funding. The SPOC put forth their bills in 1998 which called for a State match for Tribal TANF programs and specified requirements that would be included in a Tribal plan in order to be eligible for State funds. Neither bill made it out of Committee.

After, the Tanana Chief Conference (TCC) decided to move forward with the TANF plan that they submitted without a State match; therefore the comparability criteria needed to be finalized and signed by the TCC. The comparability criteria established covered major areas governing the State's TANF program such as eligibility, benefit levels, minor parent requirements, work participation, and child support. Although it was only signed by the TCC at that time, it was widely supported by all and eventually all the entities signed and accepted them.

In May 2000, Alaska's H.B. 98 Public Assistance: Programs, Grants, Contracts<sup>1</sup> passed. H.B. 98 limited State matching fund grants for Tribal TANF programs to four pilot projects including Metlakatla Indian Community, AVCP, TCC, and CCTHITA. The Act became effective January 1, 2001 but was repealed June 30, 2005.

### Role of the Region X Office

The next session provided additional background information on the role of the Region X Office and staff. The Region X Office performs both programmatic and fiscal/grants management functions.

Part of the responsibilities of Region X is to review the Tribal TANF programs' required three year plans. Region X staff provide support and feedback on the proposed plan and then submit it to ACF/OFA Central Office. The ACF/OFA Region X Office serves as a resource when Tribes have questions about their programs, allowable activities, and approval for certain costs. Tribes submit program reports and data to ACF/OFA to Region X staff who calculate the Work Participation Rate (WPR), and then determine whether Tribes have met their determined WPR.

Each Native organization's Tribal TANF program determines the WPR for their program every three years after it completes its new TANF plan. During the development of the new plan, TANF programs are requested to raise the rate slightly. The WPR is submitted to ACF/OFA on a monthly basis and analyzed by ACF/OFA on an annual basis. If a program does not make the WPR, it does not necessarily mean it did not have participants participating in work activities; a low WPR could be related to

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<sup>1</sup> House Bill 98, Public Assistance: Programs, Grants, Contracts. 21<sup>st</sup> Legislature, Number 2278 (2000) (enacted).

improper coding. ACF/OFA allows Tribes to correct its numbers, if they are legitimately incorrect, so it will not receive a penalty. To ensure that the needs of Tribal TANF programs are met before the programs are faced with not meeting WPR, ACF/OFA reviews the determined WPR regularly. ACF/OFA will visit the Tribes, if possible, to look for ways the WPR can be improved before issuing a penalty letter. If the organization cannot prove it met the WPR, it receives a five percent cut on its grant year that has to be paid back by the Tribe

Currently, all Alaskan Tribal organizations meet on a regular basis through the designated Single Point of Contact (SPOC), which allows organizations to provide each other feedback and technical assistance around program information and activities. Older Tribal TANF programs can assist the newer organizations with challenges or questions.

While the State of Alaska is a member of the SPOC, it was not present at this training. The State is a key player in helping TANF programs provide effective supports to low-income families by providing Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds (a matched dollar amount to pay for benefits or supportive services) to each Tribe. Each Tribe has a unique relationship and level of partnership with the State.

## Individual Native Organization Program Recaps

This session provided each Native organization with an opportunity to share information about their current programs.

### Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)

AVCP has fifteen employees in its TANF program including:

- Six eligibility technicians.
- Two case managers that work with participants by phone.
- Two specialists.
- One floating case manager position that is currently open.
- Several assistants.

AVCP provides services to 56 villages. Of the 56 villages, 14 have case managers available in person. AVCP is currently implementing measures to enhance their program's case management capabilities. The program believes that this current Region X Alaska Case Manager's Training will provide a means to that end. The few case managers located in the 14 villages provide significant support to TANF participants, serving nearly 500 participants throughout the 14 villages.

AVCP did not meet its WPR in 2005-2006 and are trying to improve its system for the future. AVCP is focusing on expanding its allowable work activities and improving their WPR. TANF participants are required to be in 30 hours of work activities per week. AVCP's current WPR is about 41 percent, with a WPR requirement of 35 percent. The WPR is not always fulfilled by mainstream job activities; program directors are creative with producing qualifying activities that meet the WPR. Some villages within AVCP are exempt from the 60 month time limit, but none are exempt from the WPR. Lastly, AVCP participants noted that they are beginning to provide supportive services and are taking measures to ensure that participants are aware of these services.

### Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA)

BBNA received 120 cases from the State when its TANF program began and now provides services to 103 cases. The BBNA is composed of four sites, three are located in villages and one is located in Dillingham, Alaska. BBNA determines eligibility for all cases at its main office. BBNA's current WPR is 35 percent and requires families to complete 25 hours of work activities a

week. Eleven villages are non-exempt from the 60 months. For the first three years of its program, BBNA concentrated solely on distributing its benefits but is now initiating efforts to provide supportive services. Ms. Rae Belle Whitcomb, the P.L. 102-477 (477) Program Director for BBNA, has been instrumental in instituting gardening as a cultural work activity which is an innovative step towards expanding work activities.

For many years, BBNA Tribal families used their land to hunt and gather food needed to feed their families. Recently, staff at the 477 program started to consider re-introducing these hunting and gathering skills that their parents, grandparents, and relatives once taught. The BBNA families specifically focused on self-sufficiency through agriculture, which was the impetus for the Gardening Program. The Gardening Program is a result of partnerships between TANF, the University of Alaska Fairbanks Bristol Bay Campus, the School of Natural Resource and Agricultural Research, BBNA workforce development, the Marston Foundation, and Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation. The Gardening Program's planning committee started its first gardening class last fall. The Gardening Program organized meetings with local agencies and partners to offering gardening education and activities. Example activities include:

- Food preparation classes from locally grown products;
- Garden tours;
- Gardening classes;
- Gardening conferences; and
- School classroom education.

The Gardening Program held its first Southwest Garden Symposium in September 2010, which attracted 30 individuals from 11 Bristol Bay villages. After the September class in the fall, the Gardening Program held a March 2011 class on Practical Gardening. A third class, Composting, was offered in April 2011 and involved 39 participants from nine communities. Gardening is an allowable TANF activity for BBNA and helps participants gain skills needed to become self-sufficient. Gardening is a highly beneficial activity because it saves on the cost of food since growing vegetables is cheaper than purchasing them at a market and it promotes healthier lifestyles by requiring physical activity, promoting healthy activities, and encouraging nutritious food consumption.

The Region X Office commended BBNA's gardening program as an excellent example of creating work participation activities. BBNA qualified the activity in their policies and procedures.

### Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA)

CCTHITA is a 477 program that provides a one-stop shop for program services. CCTHITA's co-located program services include:

- An employability assistance program that is related to general assistance;
- Monthly financial assistance while job searching;
- Support services programs to eliminate barriers;
- TANF; and
- A training assistance program that includes Adult Basic Education, a vocational training component, and assistance for short-term training.

#### **The BBNA Gardening Program is supported by local partnerships.**

- *University of Alaska-Fairbanks Bristol Bay Campus*
- *The School of Natural Resource and Agricultural Research*
- *BBNA Workforce Development*
- *The Marston Foundation*
- *Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation (BBAHC)*



Over the years, CCTHITA's caseload has increased by 100 families but its funds have remained the same. CCTHITA is composed of three sites in the southeast, one of which has two case managers, and a site in Juneau that has three case managers and a "floating" case manager. The services are dependent on the location of each individual's community. TANF provides support services that allow Tribal citizens to find and maintain employment that coordinates with child support enforcement. Many TANF participants enter the program with goals to become child educators and staff match these participants with jobs based on assessment results. In Juneau, TANF support services work with elementary schools to train TANF participants to become para-educators. Another TANF support activity provides participants access to Fatherhood programs. In this program, fathers are taught how to cook and have an opportunity to discuss the different dynamics of being a male role model in the home. Single fathers attend and program graduates speak to others about the program.

CCTHITA requires 20 hours of work activities per week but this will be increased to 25 hours. The WPR is set at 35 percent. CCTHITA uses many assessments to measure the abilities of their participants, including the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), career assessments such as the CAPS, COPS, and COPES, a literacy assessment, and the Preserving Native Families (PNF) assessment. CCTHITA's Tribal vocational rehabilitation services conduct separate assessments as well.

Many CCTHITA participants from Seattle are migrating up to the CCTHIA service areas because their benefits and support services are being reduced. CCTHITA expressed interest in the status of TANF programs nationwide in relation to the current economic situation and their caseloads. The Region indicated that caseloads had leveled off in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. President Obama passed the Emergency fund hoping to help out those families taking hits from the economy. The caseload in Tribal TANF generally has leveled.

#### **Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. (CITC)**

CITC has operated TANF programs since 2004-2005. It currently has 500-600 families on its caseload and their staff includes 13 case managers and six eligibility technicians. CITC serves the municipality of Anchorage, which includes one village. CITC could expand to the other villages; however, it has not reached out to other Tribes about being part of its TANF service area. CITC uses the State EIS eligibility system and has an internal case management system. Currently, CITC is at 35 percent WPR and requires 30 hours from its participants per week. Within its system, CITC provides initial intake, eligibility, case management, and houses a fraud unit that receives referrals for any allegations of fraud for investigations. Other services CITC provides include:

- A career readiness program;
- A diversion program;
- Drivers to provide participants with transportation to and from their appointments;
- Child care assistance within TANF and a CCDF program which allows participants to leave their children at the drop-in child care center at the Tribal building for up to three hours;
- Cultural classes that include beading, dancing, soap stone carving, story-telling, and drum-making;
- Life skills instruction to provide life skills on a consistent basis; and
- A case manager specifically for youth.

In its recently submitted TANF plan, CITC included a career ready placement program for noncustodial parents. CITC views this program as a stepping stone to unsubsidized jobs. Additionally, to address the needs of families whose children were removed by the Office of Children Services (OCS) and who were removed from TANF, CITC added a provision of benefits for

up to six months after children are removed in order to help with reunification of families. CITC also included in their updated TANF plan mechanisms for providing non-recurring short term benefits for families that have the need.

### Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA)

The KANA TANF program includes two staff members -- a case manager, and an intake staff person. KANA currently has between 22-25 cases. Participants in the KANA caseload are exempt from the TANF time limits. While KANA is meeting their WPR, they are uncertain they are accurately and correctly reporting their WPR. KANA addresses many Adult Not Included (ANI) cases where grandparents and other family members are raising the children. KANA's community has very limited work activities but provides opportunities to participate in cultural work activities, such as berry picking, canning, and hauling wood. KANA also offers a workforce development program and a Tribal rehabilitation program. KANA is establishing a one-stop shop for Women, Infants, and Children programs, Workforce Investment Act programs, vocational rehabilitation, job club, summer youth services, and other supportive services. KANA also offers financial supportive services such as paying a first month's rent and paying for car repairs.

#### Kodiak Area Native Association TANF Program's Supportive Services

- *Workforce development program;*
- *Tribal rehabilitation program;*
- *Women, Infants, and Children program;*
- *Job club;*
- *Summer youth services; and*
- *Financial support services.*

### Maniilaq Association

The Maniilaq Association serves 11 villages; two of which are non-exempt. The Maniilaq Association's WPR is 25 percent and it requires 16 hours of work activities a week. The Maniilaq Association serves about 200 cases total. The number of participants per village ranges from one to 50 participants. A significant proportion of cases involve ANI cases and the ratio seems to be growing. The Maniilaq Association staff serve as advocates or case managers. Advocates are funded through a separate grant and work with men, women, and children of domestic violence and sexual assault. Advocates also conduct paternity testing. The Maniilaq Association uses Eaglesun for case management and has access the State EIS site. The Maniilaq Association distributes benefits and hopes to provide supportive services in the future. At the Maniilaq Association's location, gas prices are \$8.99 a gallon and their main source of fuel, stove oil, is nine dollars a gallon. Due to these high costs, most people have heating assistance provided to them. The Maniilaq Association has a 477 program and a child care facility but it keeps the TANF program separate from the 477 program.

In June 2011, the Maniilaq Association will implement a debit card system with the support of Wells Fargo. The Maniilaq Association has attempted to establish a debit card system unsuccessfully in the past. The Maniilaq Association learned from this initial experience the importance of working with the finance department in the process for the debit card services that needed to be provided to participants, including card activation and mechanisms for addressing lost cards. Employing these lessons learned, the Maniilaq Association case managers will activate the cards with the participants to ensure that the participants understand how to use the cards.

#### Lessons Learned using Debit Card Systems

*CITC paired with JP Morgan to create the prepaid debit card. CITC uses JP Morgan's financial system to protect all participants against fraud. Each participant has their own account. CITC has to have releases of information to obtain access to information on the accounts. CITC can control the opening or closing of accounts and can stop payments. When participants lose their card, they are allowed one replacement card, but after the first replacement card, each following replacement card costs five dollars.*

### Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc. (TCC)

TCC operates as a consolidated program under 477 that includes TANF, general assistance, child care, head start, vocational rehabilitation, and other services. Under these services, TCC has an Athabascan Self-Sufficiency Assistance Partnership (ASAP) program. TCC's program oversees 48 villages, including 155 individuals on the TCC's TANF caseload, 38 of which are ANI cases. TCC uses most of its funding for the city of Fairbanks as 63 of its cases are located in Fairbanks. Eighty percent of TCC villages are exempt from the TANF time limits. Within TCC, TANF operates with three caseworkers and 15 Tribal workforce development specialists that travel to TCC villages. TCC's WPR is around 70 percent. At TCC, there are many community events and ways that participants can complete work activities.

### Family Self-Sufficiency Plan (FSSP) Intake Process

During this session, each Native organization was given an opportunity to share their Family Self-Sufficiency Plan (FSSP) intake process.

### Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)

When a participant asks for a TANF application, AVCP staff mails the application to the participant and follows up with a phone interview to determine baseline needs. Since AVCP works with people in remote villages, AVCP often has to communicate over the phone. Only three of the villages that AVCP serves have case managers within the village.

Mainstream employment in AVCP remote villages is scarce; therefore, work activities are often subsistence activities. AVCP staff provide a multitude of services, including assistance in completing budget worksheets with their participants and GED preparation. The AVCP provides tutors and books to study for the GED. One village offers a program with a rural education grant that assist participants in attaining their GED. One of the approaches that the AVCP staff use to motivate participants to attain their GED is to ask the participant what they would do if they needed to leave the village and to discuss the importance of setting an example for their children by achieving a long-term goal.

### Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA)

During the intake interview, BBNA staff conducts a background check, determines any prior TANF months and past penalties, determines who is in the household, and provides examples of acceptable work activities. BBNA's Interview Form asks for household information, support systems, unemployment insurance, education, trainings, work skills and experience, as well as employment goals. During the intake interview staff also discuss supportive services needed to help with work and training activities. Staff ask participants if they have a driver's license and whether or not the person is registered with Alexsys (the Alaska Labor Exchange System). If not, the caseworker registers the participant and coordinates a time to update the participant's resume.

On participants' FSSP, four to five goals are set for the following six months. Goals may include completing work activities such as employment, self-employment, education, training, work experience, community work service, traditional subsistence activities, or cultural activities.

During intake, BBNA also includes a form on participants' rights and responsibilities and assessment tools, such as the BESI (Barriers to Employment Success Inventory).

To engage participants, BBNA staff conduct in-person and phone interviews, provide assistance with goal setting, and contact participants about upcoming trainings, work activities, etc. BBNA staff is encouraged to show excitement when working with a

participant and to engage the participant through more collegial means, such as starting a conversation in their own language, Yurok.

For follow up, BBNA caseworkers conduct phone calls when work activity calendars are due and uses the calls to discuss community service work. Case managers conduct in-person meetings to update the participant's FSSP and to discuss supportive services and job club. Case workers notify participants of upcoming classes through the mail. Classes are offered on a range of topics including: healthy relationships; job readiness; cultural activities, such as basket weaving and ivory carving; and financial skills training.

When a participant is in penalty status, it is usually due to lack of required hours. When a participant does not meet the required hours, the participant receives a penalty for four months or until the participant meets the required hours. Participants have a month to make up the hours. When a participant is failing to meet the hours, BBNA reminds them to turn in their calendars and if the participant remains in penalty status, the BBNA conducts a home visit. One TANF family has been on penalty for a year now. When in penalty, the TANF participant only receives 75 percent of their benefits. As soon as they reach 40 hours in a work week or remediate the penalty behavior, BBNA case managers lift the penalty.

### Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA)

CCTHITA has completed many changes in the past year. Currently, CCTHITA has two intake staff who handle all of the program services that CCTHITA offers. CCTHITA intake design involves participants coming to the office and meeting with intake staff as they go through the application together. Intake staff determine which services would benefit the participant. These services may be diversion, general assistance, TANF, etc. Once the paperwork is completed, the participant leaves

#### **How does CCTHITA handle cases that are timing out?**

*During the 58-month review, the supervisor and any other service provider who was involved with the participant's case attend the meeting with the participant. This meeting determines whether the CCTHITA staff extends the participant's 60 month TANF program. Every third Thursday of the month, CCTHITA staff perform case staffing for hard-to-serve participants. CCTHITA conducts these reviews with hardship cases such as domestic violence.*

with an appointment card based on the services for which they are applying. Meyers-Briggs and other assessments help staff determine how to relate to the families/participants and they develop a plan for them accordingly.

CCTHITA has identified education as one of its highest priorities. The CCTHITA has an education taskforce<sup>2</sup> and staff complete case plans for youth in TANF families. CCTHITA staff conduct outreach to schools and have a service provider from each department in each school in the area. The TANF program sends quarterly letters to the schools asking for the report cards to be provided one each of the children. CCTHITA finds that the child's report card is a good way to hold each child accountable.

For employment, CCTHITA partners with the State to provide job club. Currently, three CCTHITA TANF participants are working fulltime through work experience.

For medically incapacitated participants, CCTHITA reviews an eligibility form every three months to determine if a participant has a progressing incapacity. If the incapacity is permanent, CCTHITA staff start the SSI process with the participant. The

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<sup>2</sup> The Education Task Force is a pilot program run out of Juneau, Alaska. It is supported by six staff members.

SSI process is lengthy and CCTHITA staff work with the participant throughout the process. Due to the length of the SSI process, a person can reach his or her 60 months on TANF and not be approved to be on SSI.

For home visits, CCTHITA partners with their Office of Children Services (OCS), the school districts, and Head Start. One example of a home visit involved a discovery of methamphetamines in the home. As always, the safety of the children was the top priority. Home visits provide CCTHITA with a better understanding of an individual's circumstances which helps them to better address their needs.

CCTHITA is seeing participants more frequently who have reached the 60 month TANF limit and are then transitioning to the general assistance program. CCTHITA has a system that allows the staff to access the participant's information and begin working with the participant from where they left off with TANF.

### **Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. (CITC)**

When CITC staff meet with participants for the first time, the staff focus on defining the TANF program, communicating expectations with participants, and developing trust. CITC offers a professional introductory brochure that explains the CTIC TANF program, available to participants the first time they enter the TANF office. TANF families are required to develop a budget with CITC staff. The budget sheet outlines very basic needs. CITC staff work with participants on saving each month, even if the saved amount each month is as little as 25 cents. The caseworkers and participant complete budget sheets each time they develop an FSSP. Staff also work with TANF participants on resumes. Recruiters in the career development centers are most effective in placing participants into jobs. Using a local employment resource that is co-located with CITC TANF - Alaska's People, CITC identifies participants' skills and matches participants with training or employment opportunities.

CITC focuses on grant compliance. CITC reviews all of its TANF cases using file reviews and constantly audits files to make sure that all files meet grant compliance. CITC documents and tracks all participants' work activities.

The CITC offers supportive services such as transportation and child care. Occasionally, CITC distributes movie tickets or other incentives to encourage participants' attendance. Incentives are also offered to youth who have good attendance in school. CITC provides clothing, haircuts, and other services in order to help participants become job interview ready. CITC offers GED classes in partnership with Nine Star Education and Employment Services who conduct the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and have excellent instructors.

Within CITC, there is a significant high school dropout rate. CITC focuses on combating the dropout rate by working with children in TANF families. Children develop an action plan that is similar to an FSSP; this plan includes short term and long-term goals that are appropriate for each child's educational needs. CITC works closely with Children in Transition Services and the Education Department, which provide peer mentoring.

To address any hesitations that parents may have with case managers working directly with their children, CITC staff make their approach to the participant family friendly and welcoming. Part of the CITC TANF plan includes school attendance. Children must attend school or the family could undergo a 40 percent penalty. In order to prevent this penalty, cooperation is important. Within the FSSP, case managers must include that TANF participants accept the referral from the youth case manager. CITC obtains school verification and grades from the schools. In addition, excessive absence lists are given to the youth case managers and then cross-checked to uncover whether anyone on the list is part of a TANF family.

CITC offers cultural activities that include a segment on, "Who are you?". This segment usually sparks children's interest in their culture and prompts them to research their ancestry and cultural history.

From this discussion, two programs indicated interest in establishing more family-oriented services, particularly the Maniilaq Association learning from the excessive absence model and BBNA in creating a youth case manager position.

### Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA)

KANA shared their program's Interview Form which includes the following sections:

- Applicant Information.
- Case manager signature.
- Employment.
- Explanation of Applicant's Previous and Current Situation.
- Forms Enclosed.
- Income/Money.
- Reporting Requirements.
- Resources.
- Shelter Costs.

KANA is given 30 days to decide if an applicant is approved. Similar to other Tribes, KANA has a 40 percent penalty for noncompliance.

KANA does not have a high caseload in its village. Participants within KANA conduct work activities such as wood gathering, berry picking, and elder assistance. KANA also offers participants jobs in KANA's office and teach participants skills that they may not be able to acquire elsewhere.

In order to maintain confidentiality and boundaries with participants in the KANA TANF office, KANA will be creating protocols specifically outlining procedures catered to their participants.

### Maniilaq Association

Before Maniilaq hired their eligibility specialist last year, the case managers handled both eligibility and case management tasks. Once a participant is approved for TANF, the caseworker creates the FSSP. The FSSP includes identifying participant's intermediate goals and the steps necessary for the individual to achieve self-sufficiency. The goals within the FSSP are realistic and tailored to participants' needs. The FSSP is updated twice a year through in-person sessions. The Maniilaq Association has case managers in all of the villages they serve. Participants are also encouraged to attend community and advocacy functions. If participants do not attend the functions, the Maniilaq Association contacts the participant. If the participant fails to comply, the participant is penalized 40 percent of his or her TANF check.

#### Shifting the Mindset of TANF

*A common issue for programs was the mindset of TANF being permanent, entitlement assistance. Programs are working to change this way of thinking by focusing on changing the attitudes of the youth and emphasizing the importance of employment.*

The Maniilaq Association has identified innovative work activities since there are not many open job opportunities within the villages. Subsistence activities are common. Work activities can consist of volunteering when there is a death in the community, when schools need assistance, or when elders could use an aid for errands.

To address generational poverty, the Maniilaq Association initiated measures to alter participants' mindset from one of entitlement to one of self-empowerment. Generations of participants within the Maniilaq Association are born into TANF are continuing the welfare cycle by

rearing their children into it. The Maniilaq Association reiterates to their participants that TANF is not permanent assistance, it is temporary assistance. Each individual's FSSP plays an important role in helping participants realize that assistance is temporary. The FSSP establishes goals for each individual to achieve in order to step closer to self-sufficiency. In order for the FSSP to be successful, it is essential that the caseworkers follow through with the FSSP as well.

### Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc. (TCC)

Under TCC's structure, caseworkers determine eligibility and provide case management. During intake, caseworkers conduct in-person or phone interview. TCC conducts interviews over the phone in order to process their benefits faster. Caseworkers ask questions about how participants are supporting themselves; if participants are receiving help from families, friends, or services from other agencies such as SNAP or WIC; and what variables in their situations have changed that have caused them to need help. The caseworkers review the participants' rights and responsibilities and work on the FSSP, which includes determining short-term and long-term goals. TCC case managers reference a supportive services manual so they can locate resources for participants. Supportive services provided by TCC include clothing, shoes, and haircuts to prepare for job interviews. As a part of the FSSP, participants also work toward their GED or high school diploma.

TCC offers various job opportunities. The Job Start program within TCC pays the wages for participants to become baristas. The job does not close the participant's TANF case or count against their 60 months. The participant's maximum benefit amount is subsidized. The job pays \$10.85 an hour and participants work in this fulltime position for six months. TCC also received an ARRA TANF grant last year to support subsidized employment for three months.

## Wednesday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011

### Home Visits

*Ms. Holly Snowball, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. (CITC)*

During this session, Ms. Snowball shared CITC policies for home visits, eligibility home visits, and concluded with a discussion among a panel of experts on home visits.

### Case Management Home Visits

Case managers conduct home visits:

- Before implementing 75 percent or full sanction, which is after the 40 percent penalty for four months;
- Once each following year following the development of a participant's FSSP;
- To identify participant needs or barriers;
- To observe a family's situation and environment; and
- Within the first six months of review or development of an FSSP.

Eligibility technicians accompany case managers to home visits six times per year. Case managers also visit participants at their workplace. Exceptions to home visits occur when participants are homeless or living in a shelter. Overall, home visits are an effective way for CITC staff to identify the needs and strengths of participants.

## Eligibility Home Visits

The purpose of CITC eligibility home visits is to verify information. Home visits are CITC information assurance measures and can be conducted without notice to the participant, which is laid out in participants' rights and responsibilities. If CITC has received a fraud referral and the participant refuses to comply with a home visit, the participant's case can be closed; however, refusal of a case management home visit cannot terminate the case.

Following the presentation, participants were provided an opportunity to discuss their own programming with the session presenter. This discussion is captured below.

**CITC has a Code of Conduct that participants sign. If a participant knows the case manager is coming to conduct a home visit, is given appropriate notice, but becomes aggressive, what should the case manager do?** Case managers should leave if home visiting conditions are unsafe.

**If there is a single parent and a case manager of the opposite gender is conducting the visit, should the case manager be accompanied by another case manager of the opposite gender?**

Yes, this is an example of a step that case managers must make to ensure that the participants' family is comfortable.

**How should a case manager react to piles of garbage inside of a house or other unsanitary conditions?** If the home environment is unsafe, the case manager is required to report the situation to the Office of Children Services (OCS).

## Fraud Home Visits

*Ms. Cheryl Facine, Certified Welfare Fraud Investigator, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. (CITC) Employment Training Services Department (ETSD)*

As CWFI TANF Fraud Investigator, Ms. Facine is responsible for conducting unannounced home visits to verify cases of fraud. During home visits fraud investigators are responsible for examining household compositions, participants' income, participants' resources, discrepancies, and other household circumstances. Overall, fraud investigators scrutinize participants' reported information with information detected within the participants' household. If participants suspected of fraud decline a home visit, the case is then closed with the potential for the participant to reapply. Upon reapplication, a home visit of the participant's household must be completed immediately.

### CITC Home Visit Guidelines

1. Determine the purpose of the home visit while reviewing the participant's case and FSSP.
2. Contact the participant via phone or letter to schedule the home visit with at least 10 days' notice and verify the participant's home address.
3. Notify supervisor of home visit and location.
4. Determine who is conducting the home visit.
5. Clarify each staff member's role for the home visit. State purpose of home visit when entering the participant's home.
6. Bring home visit form and refrain from bringing other handouts as documents risk breaking confidentiality.
7. Verify the participant's household composition.
8. Confirm the children's schools, if applicable. Ensure that all children who are household members are accounted for.
9. Inquire about the household's most recent employment and determine whether the household is receiving support from sources other than TANF.
10. Review the visiting frequency of the absent parent and determine the amount of support provided by the absent parent, if applicable.
11. Obtain the landlord's name and phone number.
12. Bring business cards, company identification, and other applicable forms, including a report of change form.
13. Report any child abuse or neglect immediately.
14. Complete home visit form and case note.



Following the presentation, participants were provided an opportunity to discuss their own programming with the session presenter. This discussion is captured below.

**How should case managers address cases where a grandparent is watching the children, yet the single parent is receiving TANF checks every month?** These circumstances require a household visit and other background research, such as a visit to the child's school or a verification of the child's attended bus route, to be completed by the fraud investigator.

**What are the rules regarding parents and grandparents living in the same household?** All hours of work contributed by members of the household are factored into the FSSP plan. If the parents and grandparents are in the same household, whoever has custody or Tribal adoption of the child, receives the TANF payment.

**How should fraud investigators approach situations when the case manager knows that a participant is home, but the participant will not answer the door?** In this circumstance, fraud investigators should call the participant. Fraud investigators must possess a verbal or written refusal from the participant in order to close the participant's case.

**Is it the fraud investigator's responsibility to notify the landlord if someone who is not a part of the lease agreement is in living in a participant's household?** It is the fraud investigator's responsibility to ask the participant directly whether someone who is not listed on the lease is living in the household and if the landlord has been notified.

### Home Visits Panel of Experts

Each panel member discussed a home visit experience:

- The first panelist discussed a workplace visit to a participant's career readiness position. The case manager's observation provided the opportunity to observe the participant's work environment and interactions with co-workers. This visit enhanced the case worker-participant relationship and also provided additional insight into the participant's career readiness position.
- The second panelist discussed an ANI case. The participant had recently become pregnant, was being raised by her grandfather, and lived with ten cousins in the grandfather's home. The home visit provided insight to the participant's life and interests, which allowed the case manager to better assist the participant. With this improved assistance, the participant maintained focus, received her high school diploma, and is attending college.
- The third panelist conducted a home visit and was concurrently working on a budget for a family with five children. During the home visit, the case manager discovered that the family's cable bill was \$200.00 as cable boxes were present in every room. With the help of the case manager, the family reduced the cable bill to \$30.00, which allowed the family to purchase necessary household items.
- The last panelist was an eligibility technician who accompanies case managers to home visits. On an eligibility home visit, the case manager and he discovered that the participant's father was living in the home. This discovery allowed the case manager to verify suspicions of fraud as the participant was claiming full rent despite the father's contribution.

#### **Additional Services Provided by Child Support Programs:**

- *Child support prevention;*
- *Engagement of fathers from birth;*
- *Economic stability;*
- *Healthy family relationships;*
- *Health care coverage; and*
- *Family violence collaboration.*

Overall, home visits enhance case manager's relationships and service delivery methods with participants.

## Child Support – A Federal Perspective

*On Video Conference: Mr. David Johnson, Program Specialist, Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), Region X*

Mr. Johnson gave an overview of the Federal Child Support program and how it works hand-in-hand with TANF. The TANF program functions as a financial safety net for families by providing financial assistance to support children in the home of caregivers and relatives. Child support programs also hold parents accountable by enforcing parents to live up to their obligation of providing financial support to their families.

The child support program is under ACF/OCSE, an executive branch agency. Congress sets forth the laws, the program must operate under. Regulations of child support are set by the Federal government and States and Tribes to run the child support programs. The location of child support programs in each state varies; in Alaska, the Child Support program is tied to the Department of Revenue.

The core mission of the child support program is to increase parental support of children. Child support programs advocate for an increased amount of money to flow to the children. Fathers can only be legally obligated to provide child support after a paternity has been verified. About 60-70 percent of child support due in any given month is paid in that month; the other 30 percent is added to the arrearage due.

Child support programs use various methods and collaborations to improve efficiency. Technology helps streamline delivery with automated data matching and social media is also used to engage customers. Child support programs need a more versatile set of strategies to collect child support payments from parents; currently, the program depends on parents' employment and connection to their children.

### Generation of Child Support Cases:

- *IV-A TANF referrals;*
- *IV-E foster care referrals;*
- *Medicaid referrals;*
- *Court orders' requirement of services and*
- *Application for services.*

As a method of holding parents accountable to their obligation of providing financial support to their families, child support programs assist parents with employment and connect them with other supportive services such as workforce, fatherhood, prisoner reentry, and domestic

violence prevention programs. The most effective method of encouraging parents to provide financial support emphasizes a family-centered approach.

Tribal TANF programs are not required to have a Tribal child support program. In Region X there are 13 Tribes with Tribal IV-D Programs and CCHITA has a Tribal Child Support Program. Tribes without child support programs access child support program services through the State.

In FY 2009, \$31.2 billion dollars was collected across the United States for child support and the bulk was received directly from employers. Ninety-four percent of the total \$31.2 billion went directly to children's custodial parents. Due to assignment rules, the other six percent of collected payments were retained by Tribal or State child support programs to offset the cost of hosting the child support program.

### Demonstration through Role Playing

Using a skit, participants were provided an overview of the interaction between child support and TANF programs. Characters within the skit included a judge, a TANF worker, a Child Support worker, a dad, and a mom. In the skit were the Child Support Office, Family Court, and TANF Office.

The skit portrayed fictitious characters, Jason and Kristin. Jason was a salesman at a local Home Depot earning \$50,000 a year and living a comfortable life with money in savings. Kristin was enrolled in a nursing program on her way to becoming an RN and living off of student loans. After dating for about a year, Kristin became pregnant and the couple had a baby which caused the couple to argue over finances, life styles, and other aspects of living. Eventually, Jason moved out and Kristin dropped out of school and became dependent on her parents. A few months later, Jason and Kristin worked out their differences, moved back in together, married, and within a year had a second child. Over the following year, additional problems arose and the couple filed for a divorce.

In a divorce, the judge determines who will have primary custody of the child as well as the amount of the other parent's child support payment. Other divisions as a result of a divorce involve the couple's property, belongings, and a visitation schedule. In this situation, the judge gave Kristin a divorce decree. The couple divided the property and based on Jason's income he is responsible for providing \$600 a month in child support. After the first two months of paying child support, Jason stopped making payments. Since Kristin was not receiving Jason's child support payments, Kristin visited a TANF office where her eligibility to receive TANF was determined. Kristin decided to give up her rights to child support in order to receive the TANF grant on a reliable basis. Since Kristin received TANF, the TANF program should now collect the \$600 a month from Jason.

To collect Jason's monthly child support payments, the child support office sent a notice to Jason informing him of his payments due. Since Jason is failing to make payments, the child support office can garnish his wages and revoke his driver's license. Instead, Jason speaks with a child support worker who determines a payment of \$700 per month to compensate for his missed months of payments. This new monthly payment will come directly from his paycheck to the TANF office. If Jason's income changes, the original \$600 a month divorce decree may change but only under the discretion of a judge.

### TANF Fraud Detection and Reporting

#### Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. (CITC)

*Ms. Cheryl Facine, Certified Welfare Fraud Investigator, CITC Employment Training Services Department (ETSD)*

Ms. Facine gave an overview of fraud and common trends during this session. Fraud exhibits a potential personal gain for an individual. Investigations of fraud can lead to savings for TANF programs as CITC's fraud unit in FY 2010 yielded savings in cost avoidance, direct savings, and fraud claims for an approximate total of \$287,000 saved.

CITC defines two separate types of fraud investigations within TANF: early fraud and Post Certification Investigation (PCI). Early fraud investigations occur when a participant completes his or her application and must be received within four months of the application. Post Certification Investigations (PCIs) are referrals for ongoing cases that exceed the early fraud four month timeframe. It is the participant's responsibility to report all sources of income and any failure to report an income source is a committal of fraud.

Intentional program violations occur when a participant makes a false or misleading oral statement, written statement or misrepresented information. When determining intentionality of program violations, one should ask:

- Did the participant know it would affect benefits?
- Did the participant know to report?
- Did the participant previously report changes?

Fraud within household composition involves the participant application. If the participant inaccurately lists residents of a household, the participant has committed fraud. If a case manager uncovers a scenario where a participant is not listing all mandatory filing units, he or she should ask:

- Whether the additional resident lives in the household and how often the resident is in the house;
- Why the resident was not listed on the application;
- If the resident is visiting, how frequently the resident visits; and
- Names of collaterals.

**How long can a child be away from the home before it is considered that the child does not live there?** If a case manager is unsure about the determination of child residence, the case manager reports the estimated length of time that the child has been at home. The eligibility technician determines residence. A child can be gone up to 90 days before a court order visitation can be ordered.

**How much follow up is involved with participants who fail to report earnings?** In certain cases, case managers are responsible for a considerable amount of follow up with participants who fail to report earnings. This follow up involves investigations of current circumstances, issuing TANF penalties, and sending notifications to participants.

**How do you track your fraud referrals?** CITC has an electronic database used to track fraud referrals. Fraud investigators receive an automatic email from eligibility technicians reporting fraud referrals. This automatic email includes the form to be filled out within the database.

### Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA)

*Shaun Guthrie, Financial Analyst, Employment and Training 477 Programs, CCTHITA*

CCTHITA's TANF fraud policies are comparable to the State's fraud policies. CCTHITA hosts an internal program compliance department within their organization. Types of fraud addressed within CCTHITA include failure to disclose information regarding household composition as well as failure to report income such as unemployment, direct child support payments, wages, or other income sources.

A findings document includes:

- Specification that the case audit is documented in the CCTHITA's Rite Track software system;
- Budget calculations that are reconfigured and have an established overpayment;
- Copies of case notes with Food Stamps, Social Security benefits, employment statements or pay stubs;
- Documentation of a home visit in order to verify household composition.; and
- A notice sent to request three collateral contacts.

Within CCTHITA, fraudulent disqualification levels result in an intentional program violation warning letter to the participant. When this occurs, case managers request a face-to-face meeting to review the overpayment. Recoupment is ten percent of the maximum monthly grant payment. The first offense is a six month case closure, the second offense is a 12 month case closure, and the third offense is a permanent case closure.

**Are fraud cases the responsibility of the case worker who is assigned to the specific case?** Case managers are responsible for eligibility, fraud, case management and home visits. In circumstances of fraud, the case manager's supervisor notifies the case manager of the format of questions to ask during the home visit. If the fraud case becomes aggressive, the case manager needs a second person to verify the participant's interaction with the case manager. Since CCTHITA does not host a fraud unit, the case manager plays a key role in fraud cases.

## Supportive Services Panel Presentation

### Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)

*Jolene Geerhart, Director, AVCP*

Ms. Geerhart recommends that case managers read the supportive services section of their respective Tribal TANF plans. AVCP wrote a letter with staff to notify current participants of Tribal TANF supportive services. Participants whose cases have closed within the past year due to employment, may also be eligible for post temporary assistance supportive services. Shortly after the supportive services letter was sent, the AVCP was flooded with requests for supportive services and as a result, AVCP created a reference sheet regarding responses to requests from participants. When examining participants' eligibility for supportive services, AVCP ensures that the supportive services meet participants' work activities, and if not, determine what services the participants need in order to fulfill their work activities. AVCP also examines budgets and concentrates on participants' ability to pay for items without the assistance services. After these analyses, the AVCP sends a notice to the participant describing the request assessment and whether or not the request was approved.

### Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA)

*Gwen Sargent, Senior Director of Community Services, and Janet Theis, TANF Case Manager, KANA*

KANA's supportive services include child care, bus passes, clothing, vehicle repair, and financial assistance in obtaining a birth certificate, driver's license, or other forms of identification.

All Tribes' supportive services and all regulations and financing regarding supportive services must be specified within the Tribal TANF plan.

### Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc. (TCC)

*Anita Taylor, Work Assistant Program Director, TCC*

TCC offers supportive services in its five regions and urban areas. Job Coach Contracts provided supportive services to FCC's participants within the Fairbanks service area. Job Coaches were each assigned 3-5 TANF participants and received incentives for helping TANF participants gain and retain employment. Bonuses consisted of \$200 if the participant earned employment above minimum wage and \$300 if the participant remained employed for at least six months. The first four participants to earn employment received a mini notebook computer.

TCC coordinated a two week computer and office skills training to help participants meet the growing demand for employees with computer knowledge. TCC worked with North Star Computing to conduct the training. In order to ensure that participants could attend, TCC arranged child care stipends, transportation and clothing for the interviews following the training. Thirty-two participants completed the training and received certificates as well as an updated resume that was ready to use when applying for jobs.

**In relation to the child care stipends, did the child care providers have to be licensed?** No, participants' training was over a two week session, which allowed parents to choose any child care provider. The federal government does not dictate licensing requirements for child care; each Tribe determines the requirements for child care and whether the child care providers need to be licensed.

**How often or how long do you offer the computer training?** The computer training was conducted throughout the year, in four groups with two months of training.

**Does TCC offer other supportive services for participants?** Yes, TCC offers other supportive services, such as bus passes, taxi services, and financial assistance with rent, vehicles, and vehicle repairs on a case-by-case basis.

## Discussion

The last part of the day included a short discussion regarding definitions of transitional services, diversion, and nonrecurring short term benefits.

Transitional supportive services, or post-TANF support services, typically continue for a year after a participant leaves TANF due to ineligibility. These supportive services include child care, clothing, transportation and other services intended to create positive work habits and contribute to a successful post-TANF year. Money can be provided to a needy participant on a one-time basis. It is to the TANF program's benefit not to put individuals on TANF if there is a way to avoid it.

Nonrecurring short term benefits are not ongoing and can be provided to "needy" participants who are not enrolled in the TANF program. Example uses of nonrecurring short term benefits are purchasing a generator when there is a storm and heat and light has been knocked out or purchasing clothes to help a participant through winter months.

## Thursday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011

### Data-Based Decision Making, Work Participation Rate

*Ms. Geene Felix, South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency (SPIPA)*

SPIPA is a consortium of five different Tribes and is organized as a consortium to make the smaller Tribes more competitive for grants at the federal level. All members of SPIPA use the same forms but the forms have different logos. SPIPA serves about 750 families over the course of a year, and about 300-400 cases at any given time. SPIPA staff includes a program manager, Dr. Clint Hackney, a child support coordinator, a fiscal coordinator, and a logistics coordinator. Ms. Felix works with SPIPA data, using the data to apply for grants, determine what case managers are coding correctly, and discover areas where training is needed.

### How to Calculate the Work Participation Rate

With the 45 CFR, Part 286 Tribal TANF Final Rule, Section 286.80 Minimum Work Participation Requirements, which states, "To assess a Tribe's level of success in meeting its TANF work objectives, a Tribe negotiates minimum requirements that will apply to families that receive TANF assistance that include an adult or minor head of household (mHOH) receiving such assistance."

To calculate the Work Participation Rate (WPR), one refers to 45 CFR, Part 286 Tribal TANF Final Rule and Coding Instructions for Tribal TANF Programs, Section 286.85. The monthly WPR is:

$$\frac{\text{the number of families receiving TANF assistance that include an adult/mHOH who is meeting work requirements}}{\text{the number of families receiving TANF assistance that include an adult/mHOH required to participate in work activities}}$$

This number is then multiplied by 100 to obtain the percentage. Child-only cases, families with children under the age of one, and families that are penalized for non-compliance with the work requirements in that month (as long as that family is not sanctioned for more than three months in a 12 month period) are always excluded from the calculation. These cases are coded from a "19" to a "2" to take them out of the denominator so it does not count against the WPR.

Cases coded as "disregarded" from the WPR indicates the TANF family is not included in the calculation of the WPR. "Exempt" indicates that the individual will not be penalized for failure to engage in work (i.e., good cause exception); however, the TANF family is included in the calculation of the WPR.

### Work Participation Rate Coding

Ms. Felix reviewed the codes that Tribal TANF case managers use for the WPR.

Disregarded codes include 01-03:

- 01=Disregarded from participation rate, single custodial parent with child under 12 months;
- 02= Disregarded from participation rate because all of the following apply: required to participate, but not participating; and sanctioned from the reporting month, but not sanctioned for more than three months within the preceding 12-month-period (Note, this code should be used only in a month for which the family is disregarded from the participation rate). While one or more adults may be sanctioned in more than three months within the preceding 12-month-period, the family may not be disregarded from the participation rate for more than three months within the preceding 12-month-period; and
- 03= Disregarded, family is part of an ongoing research evaluation (as a member of a control group or experimental group) approved under Section 1115 of the Social Security Act.

Exempt codes include 05-11:

- 05= Exempt for reasons specified in negotiated Tribal TANF plan;
- 06= Exempt, single custodial parent with child under the age of six and child care unavailable;
- 07=Exempt, disabled;
- 08=Exempt, caring for a severely disabled child;
- 09=Exempt, under a federally recognized good cause domestic violence waiver; 10=Not applicable to Tribes; and
- 11= Exempt, other.

Codes 12 -18 are for those who are required to participate.

Code 99 is for TANF families who are not applicable. These include TANF child-only, relative caregivers, illegal aliens, etc. It includes a person living in the household and whose income or resources are counted in determining eligibility for or amount of assistance of the family receiving assistance, but not in the eligible family receiving assistance or noncustodial parent that the Tribe opted to exclude in determining the participation rate.

### Work Activities

Tribes should include work activities that adults/mHOHs will engage in within the Tribal Family Assistance Plan (TFAP). It is important to make sure that activities being reported are accurately coded in the database. Tribal TANF directors should ensure the accuracy of the coding with caseworkers. Washington State requires "measures of success". For example, when SPIPA received its funds from the State, SPIPA needed to report how many participants are enrolled in a GED program, working, or participating in a cultural activity.

For job search and job readiness, the limitation is six weeks. If the unemployment rate is 50 percent greater than the national rate, a Tribe can extend this limitation to 12 weeks. Category 62, "other work activities," is defined as "...other activities that will help families achieve self-sufficiency." Within Category 62, Tribes should report total average hours for activities that are not reported elsewhere. Typical activities for Tribal TANF programs in Alaska coded with a Category 62 included:

- Caring for an elder;
- Community dinners;
- Community service;
- Parenting classes;
- Subsistence and cultural activities;
- Treatment such as attending an AA or NA meeting; and
- Youth activities.

One example of "other work activities" could be if a mother has to attend school with a troublesome child. If the first step in becoming self-sufficient is ensuring that the child attends school, accompanying the child to school can qualify as an "other work activity".

In California, one Tribe has an exempt form to show how long the participant will be exempt. The participant signs the exemption form to acknowledge his or her understanding that that the exemption is temporary.

At SPIPA, participants without a GED are required to work to obtain a GED unless they have a disability and are not being given adequate accommodations. In their community, Tribes will not hire TANF participants unless they have their GED.

### Data Collection

Tribes are required to collect and report data every month and complete a quarterly report; some of this data is used for demographic purposes or to calculate the Tribe's WPR. SPIPA composes a summary report each month, which includes all of its data. The WPR for a fiscal year is the average of the Tribe's participation rate for each month within the fiscal year. If a Tribe does not report for a month, then a zero percent is assigned and included in that year's calculation.

### Increasing your WPR

Training is important for accurately reporting WPR. TANF programs should train staff on work participation, policy, TFAP, and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The person responsible for entering work hours should understand the coding requirements, policy, and TFAP. If a Tribe denies a service, it is important that families have a clear understanding of why the assistance was denied. Case managers must also be able to reference the CFR and the TANF plan to support the family's



denial. SPIPA also trains all of its case managers on the Office of Management and Budget regulations. SPIPA also conducts regular audit trainings so case managers understand what will be audited. SPIPA trained current staff over the course of a year and train new staff upon hire.

Case managers must make sure to include all hours possible for TANF participants and count travel and transportation to and from places.

It is also important to have a specific process for reporting hours. How and when participants report their hours affects the accuracy of hours recorded. Established reporting and monitoring processes ensure that case managers know that participants are captured accurately for reporting purposes.

When developing these processes, programs should consider the following:

- What are your Tribal TANF program's practices?
- What case management practices might you change in relation to the limitations of hours reported on job search and job readiness?
- What program decisions could you change? What new decisions could you make?

**What is the minimum documentation required to document hours? CITC feels they require a significant amount of paperwork to verify hours. CITC has work participation logs and what should one do if he or she does not receive verification for every single hour, is that okay?** When an audit is conducted, it is necessary to have every single piece of documentation. In SPIPA, the program cannot physically process a check for someone without the hours, work participation log, and MIRS (a document that detects fraud). Auditors might require the timesheet with the caseworkers' signature signed and dated. There should be a third party signature on the WPR logs verifying that the hours were completed.

**For participants that partake in subsistence activities, it is sometimes difficult to obtain verification, especially if the participant leaves early to go hunting, etc. In Alaska, case managers and participants have to obtain verification for those hours. For seal hunting, one has to leave at the high tides and hunters generally go out independently.** The policy may be able to be changed for those occasions. There is a balance that needs to be in place between policies that are too strict and too lenient for subsistence activities. Every auditor is different. Case managers should have an open conversation with auditors about what the auditor is looking for when the auditor is checking the audits. For auditors, consistency between case files is most likely a high priority when creating policies. SPIPA has a policies and procedures manual describing eligibility and explaining work.

## The Asset Initiative

*Mr. Thomas Jenson, AFI Regional Consultant, and Ms. Caron Dwyer, Program Specialist*

Mr. Thomas Jenson works in community development and finance in Oregon at a nonprofit organization. He has worked with Assets for Independence (AFI) for about ten grant cycles and is currently a consultant to ACF/OFA on the Asset Initiative. Mr. Jenson, along with Ms. Caron Dwyer, spent this session discussing the Asset Initiative. The objectives of the session included learning about the Asset Initiative collaboration across ACF/OFA, asset-building tools to increase financial stability, and income and asset poverty, by State in Region X.

The Asset Initiative's promotes collaboration across different programs and provides support to grantees and the families they serve. The Asset Initiative incorporates lessons learned from the Assets for Independence (AFI) demonstration program and related research. The Initiative seeks to help families move past paycheck to paycheck existence, toward financial stability.

Assets range in types that include social assets, human capital assets, financial assets, spirituality, natural resources, education, community, sovereignty, Native language and other values. Financial asset-building tools typically include savings, going to a bank, obtaining a credit card, financial education, or visiting a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site.

Poverty can be defined in various ways but it is often described as insufficient income to meet basic needs. However, poverty also needs to be thought of in terms of resiliency and financial security. This is where the concept of asset poverty comes into the poverty conversation. Asset poverty is defined as having insufficient financial resources to live at the federal poverty level for three months.

Individuals who suffer from asset poverty often live paycheck to paycheck and do not have savings. Assets are important as they establish wealth through ownership. Additionally, assets build wealth over generations, transferring the wealth and ownership through generations.

The Assets for Independence (AFI) Program is centered on individual savings accounts (IDAs) that are matched by community and Federal dollars. The savings account program requires that the participants save money and provide supports, such as financial education. The AFI program focuses on three different methods of asset building: home ownership, higher education and training, or starting a small business. In order to be eligible for an AFI program grant, the applicant must live at 200 percent of the poverty rate and have a net worth of less than \$10,000.

Several models of AFI programs showcase a variety of strategies that provide financial services. Some AFI programs are supported by a TANF program and others may be supported by a community-based organization. Some models apply community partnerships in which the AFI programs are responsible for the administrative component and community partners are responsible for the services provided. Other programs are responsible for all the administrative and other services, education, and training for participants. Programs meet a certain match rate ranging from 1:1 to 1:8. The most successful programs are multi-site networks of organizations where grantees in these programs work with many community organizations. The AFI program is intended to add to and support additional services that are currently underway.

Since 1999, there have been 25 Tribal grantee programs. Currently, there are seven Tribal grantees and eight Tribal sub-grantees. All of these grantees collaborate with financial institutions.

The AFI Program has very limited funding and, thus, only allows 15 percent for administrative costs over a five-year period. Additionally, because States and Tribes are governing entities, they cannot be a sole AFI applicant. However, States and Tribes can be the lead applicant and grant recipient. A non-profit is needed for AFI grant administration.

Some new funding sources for AFI include the Indian Community Development Block Grant Program, the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act, and Public Law 93-638. Additionally, TANF legislation allows for TANF funds to be directed towards IDA programs. TANF funds cannot be used as a federal match, but Tribes can use the funds toward IDA programs.

### Questions and Dialogue on Assets for Independence Presentation

CITC's housing authority took over their AFI grant and it is focused only on housing. Are there any Tribal TANF programs using TANF funds for AFI grants? CITC is looking for information on how existing TANF agencies use TANF funds for AFI grants. The Coleville Tribe in Washington uses its TANF funds for IDA's. Much of the Region's conversations regarding IDAs relative to TANF have focused on youth programs or subsidized employment for youth. In order to be a participant, the individual must earn an income, but there is no specific income amount qualification. AFI grantees determine the amount contributed to the IDA accounts.

**The only individuals who can receive housing loans in our Region live in our hub; banks will not give these individuals loans or capital. Is funding provided for materials to complete construction for building new housing?**

Yes, AFI funds can be used to acquire the material or working capital for a small business construction or the material to construct a new home. The Federal match can only be up to \$2,000 per account or \$4,000 per household. The State of Oregon also provides non-federal money as a match, which could contribute to the funding.

**Is the AFI program funding cycle three or five years?** There is an annual grant cycle with three application dates in a year. The next upcoming application date is May 25<sup>th</sup>. The actual grant upon award is for a five year period.

**What is the administrative component of the AFI program?** For the five year term, up to 15 percent of the grant amount can cover administrative costs. Many AFI programs rely on AmeriCorps or VISTA members.

**If an agency originated with an IDA, do you have to know how many people the agency will serve as a maximum cap?**

**Can you increase this? What is the grant amount?** There is not a minimum grant amount and the maximum cap is one million dollars. If an agency asked for \$50,000 and received a waitlist of people requesting to participate in the program, the agency cannot apply for an increase on that grant. Instead, some grantees will apply on an annual basis for a new five year grant. An agency is allowed to run multiple grants and move participants between the grants as necessary.

**If participants complete a subsidized work experience, and use TANF to match the money earned, is that okay?** Yes, staff can place participants' earned income for subsidized work into an IDA account and match it. If a person comes onto TANF for 60 months, the TANF funding may not be sufficient to buy a home or purchase a small business, but may be enough to purchase a vehicle. This specific TANF funding is not part of the AFI program, but it can be part of the TANF program because it is essential that the participant owns a car in order to go to work. Within the AFI program, participants can purchase a vehicle for a business, but not for personal, use. TANF allows participants to purchase a vehicle for personal use.

**What are the reporting requirements?** The AFI grant is a federal grant; therefore, it is required that participants report on a semi-annual basis. At the conclusion of the AFI program, participants can apply for a no-cost extension for a year. At the end of the grant's duration, participants submit a final report that covers the five years.

**A significant portion of income is spent on utilities; can funds from the AFI grant support energy efficiency renovations?** No, funding from the AFI grant cannot contribute to energy efficient renovations. However, a TANF funded IDA can contribute to energy efficient renovations. Participants can be creative in writing IDAs if the participant has it in their TANF plan.

## Region X Tribal TANF Grants Management

Mr. Sam Stitt, Financial Operations Specialist, and Ms. Patty Fisher, Senior Financial Management Specialist, Office of Grants Management, Region X

The Office of Grants Management (OGM) is responsible for financial reporting, budget and plan request review, audit resolution, On line Data Collection (OLDC) accounts and access, and technical assistance regarding budgeting and audits. Audits are prescribed in OMB Circular A-133 (Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations).<sup>3</sup>

### Audits

The Single Audit Act of 1984 and Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 mandate audit requirements for State Governments, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations. Audits possess significant control over the propriety of expenditures under grants and cooperative agreements. Audits are assessments of eligibility, allowable activities, and allowable costs. Anyone with a grant over a \$500,000 threshold may be audited on an annual basis. If an organization has not conducted its audit in a timely manner, it may undergo sanctions, which include a suspension of federal funds or a termination of grant award. These sanctions are uncommon as issues are usually resolved by working with the Region before sanctions are necessary.

The audit review examines Tribal mandates, Federal regulations, the TANF plan, any prior findings, any known fraud affecting a federal award, internal controls, and any known questioned costs greater than \$10,000 for a program.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Compliance Supplement is an audit guide.<sup>4</sup> Program specific audit guides provide auditors with specific guidance with respect to internal control, compliance requirements, suggested audit procedures, and audit reporting requirements.

#### Top 10 Ways to Prepare for an Audit

1. Assemble an Audit Book.
2. Answer auditor questions directly.
3. Know the terms and conditions of the award. Have terms and conditions in your Audit Book.
4. Ensure expenditures are allowable, reasonable, and allocable.
5. Maintain documentation.
6. Develop written internal policies and procedures. Update them regularly.
7. Keep time and effort reports.
8. Obtain written prior approvals.
9. Submit timely and accurate Financial and Performance Reports.
10. Maintain a working relationship with Financial and Program Staff.

**What happens if the auditor chooses a file that is an obvious agency error that the agency has already detected and is remedying?** Maintain the record of the file and show the agency's corrective plan to the auditor. Even though the auditor can locate the corrective file, the agency can show it already has a corrective action plan in place. The auditor could record the agency's error as a finding and the agency would concur. Many times an auditor would not record the error; instead the

<sup>3</sup> OMB Circular A-133. Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations.

[http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/a133/a133\\_revised\\_2007.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/a133/a133_revised_2007.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Compliance Supplement.

[http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a133\\_compliance\\_supplement\\_2010](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a133_compliance_supplement_2010).

auditor would focus on the agency's progress with the corrective action plan. The next year, auditor will follow-up with the agency error to see if it has been resolved.

### Audit Steps

Auditors generally follow systematic procedures for conducting an audit:

- Auditors provide an Audit Package to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse (FAC) within 9 months after the end of the Grantees Year End.
- FAC checks Audit Package for completeness, assigns a unique Common Identifier Number and submits the audit to the National External Audit Review (NEAR).
- NEAR performs initial review of findings, recommends action on findings, sends an initial letter to the grantee and assigns the findings out to the appropriate Federal Agency.

### ACF/OFA Responsibilities

The Office of Grants Management works with Program Staff of the Office of Family Assistance to determine if the TANF Penalty Process should be pursued or if an audit will be resolved without penalty.

### Penalties

Penalties are usually up to five percent of the grant award but a penalty does not necessarily result in a reduction in the grant.

### Grantee Responsibilities

The grantee is responsible for understanding award terms and conditions. It is important to know if one is addressing the terms and conditions of the grant awarded. The grantee is also responsible for submitting required federal reports in an accurate and timely manner. Next, the grantee must ensure required audits are performed and submitted within the required timeframe. Finally, the grantee must follow-up and must perform corrective action on findings where necessary.

**If you receive prior approval, is the funding of proposal requests considered sub-grants?** Funding for your proposal request is included in the TANF grant, not a sub-grant.

**What about sub-grants? When the agency runs a big project, it is questioned whether or not this project's funding is a sub-recipient award.** There is a significant concern between sub-recipients and vendors within ACF/OFA. If the agency provides funds and contracts with someone else to perform an activity within the agency's grant, depending on the contract, this could be a vendor or a sub-recipient of the grant. If a project is a sub-grant, there are responsibilities of the grantee to meet certain guidelines per the federal regulations.

**In SPIPA, we like to be prepared for auditing, we would like to know about this up front Could you put together something that clearly lays this out for us?** Yes, Region X will provide that information to the Tribes.

### Tribal TANF Grant

There are 63 approved Tribal TANF grantees serving 298 American Indian Tribes, Alaska Native Villages, non-reservation American Indian and Alaska Native populations of over 121 counties. The Tribal TANF budget is \$181 million dollars nationwide. Region X has 37 percent of the Tribal grantees and receives 22 percent of the national budget, \$41 million dollars.

OMB Circulars are being combined into a single Circular rather than having the three Tribal specific circulars (A-87, A-102, A133). The 2 CFR will replace the individual Circulars and will serve as the umbrella circular for distributing information.

Understanding allowable costs is important. The Federal Regulations serve as the baseline for identifying allowable costs, but Tribal TANF Programs may also institute regulations for allowable and allocable costs. Administrative caps are in place at the Federal level. Programs are allowed up to 35 percent for administrative costs in year one, up to 30 percent in year two is, and up to 25 percent in year three is. Activities that fall under administrative costs include: budgeting, coordination, direction, planning, payroll, personnel, property management, and purchasing.

Anytime TANF programs expend funds, the funds must be allowable under the Four Purposes of TANF.

Several terms may need further clarification. These include:

- **Unobligated balance** – the remaining Tribal funds after allowable expenditures have been reported against the total TFAG. These funds have not been encumbered (e.g. contracts or any legally binding financial agreement).
- **Unliquidated balance** – the balance of funds that have been obligated but not “spent down” at the time of report. These funds have been encumbered and obligated but not expended.
- **“Needy”** – for TANF purposes, financially eligible for the benefits per Tribe’s income and resource criteria established in the Tribal TANF plan.
- **“Assistance”** – for TANF purposes, this includes benefits directed at basic needs; child care, transportation, and supports for families that are not employed; family members only; and family meeting Tribal TANF definition of “needy”.

Fiscal-related regulations can be found at the following:

- 286.35 – Proper use of Tribal TANF Funds.
- 286.40 – IDAs.
- 286.45 – Improper use of Tribal TANF Funds.
- 286.5 – Definitions of Administrative Costs.
- 286.50 – Administrative Cost Limits (“Admin Cap”).
- 286.55 – Costs subject to the Administrative Cost Limit.

Before the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), carry forward funds had to be spent on “assistance” or administrative costs associated with providing that assistance. ARRA changed this regulation. Now, carry forward funds can be spent on allowable TANF activities without limitation.

### TANF Grant and Funding Process

Award letters are generated from the Central Office and the letters are sent to the general Tribal contact address. If a TANF program would like to have copies of the Grant Award letter, contact Mr. Sam Stitt. Awards are generally cut on the fiscal year schedule and come out on a quarterly or quasi-quarterly schedule. If the Award Letter has “Award Letter Notes”, TANF programs should pay special attention to them. Also attached to the Award Letters are the terms and conditions of the Awards. TANF programs should obtain a copy of the terms and conditions each fiscal year.

### Financial Reporting

Quarterly reports (196T) follow the Federal fiscal year and are due 45 days after the end of each quarter. Use the most up-to-date 196T available on the ACF/OFA Tribal TANF webpage. The original signed copy of the 196T must be submitted to

Federal, but a copy (digital is acceptable) should also be sent to the Regional Office. If using funds from a previous fiscal year, two 196T reports must be submitted. One 196T must be from the previous year and include the expenditures from that year's grant. Another 196T must be completed for the current year that notes that funds are obligated but have not been spent.

Once Region X has received a copy of the 196T, the information is entered into the On Line Data Collection (OLDC) system. The OLDC captures any errors in the report that might have occurred, rather than the Regional fiscal staff capturing the errors at later date and resubmitting the 196T. ACF/OFA is starting to rely on the OLDC system for financial reporting. The benefits of using OLDC include electronic submission of quarterly reports, availability of the latest forms, automatic calculations, immediate capture of warnings and errors, email notification of submission, and the ability to report and retrieve information on specific grants. Programs must have two staff members, a data entry staff and a certifier, to use the OLDC program.

### Individual Discussions

Financial folders were given to each of the four Tribes that have directly funded TANF programs reporting to OFA (not 477 programs that go through the Bureau of Indian Affairs). These Tribes included Maniilaq, BBNA, Kodiak, AVCP. The folders contained the award letter, terms and conditions, reporting due date cycles, instructions for the 196T, the most recent 196T submissions, and a snapshot of the inventory of reports for the Tribal program. There were individual discussions with each Tribe to review their financial folders.

### Subsidized Employment Work Experience Discussion

The last session, an informal discussion among all participants, focused on subsidized employment. Tribal TANF programs have the flexibility of defining their own programs. The Quinault Nation, for example, can pay wages for a work experience program but have to count those months toward the participant's 60 month total. If a person was in subsidized employment, those months would not be counted against the 60 months. The Quinault Nation felt strongly that these regulations were unclear, and since they did not receive a clear answer they pursued the question. The Quinault Nation was correct and was given permission to continue how their program began.

#### **Understanding On-the-Job Training, Subsidized Employment, and Work Experience**

*Because ACF/OFA's TANF regulations do not specifically define these three terms, Tribes have the flexibility of defining the terms. Definitions were provided in a handout that was developed from ACF/OFA in consultation with the Department of Labor.*

Participants discussed the mechanics of how the Quinault Nation counted the subsidized employment and work experience as assistance. The Quinault Nation TANF program counted the subsidized employment and work experience as assistance by giving the participant a paycheck during the month. To count the assistance for the whole month, they had to wait until after they gave participants the paycheck. Because

participants are considered an employee of the TANF program, the program had to make sure they provide worker's compensation and benefits and provide participants the same benefits as an employee. The TANF program would have to give them fair wages as well. The challenge with giving participants a TANF grant and a wage is that one is inflating the participant's wage. Work experience is more of a job sampling, to see if the participant is interested, there is not an anticipation that there is going to be a job after work experience. For subsidized employment, there is anticipation that employment will result in a job.

Working with employers could determine if the individual is in WEX or subsidized employment, depending on what the employer is comfortable with, and if the employer wants to pay the wages or wants TANF to pay the wages. One could also use a step approach, and for three months conduct WEX and for three months conduct subsidized employment.

**What about for villages? There is work to be done in villages, but no wages or income to pay for the work.** The Zuni Pueblo “steps people up.” If a participant volunteers to be placed, then the individual is placed in a paid work experience. If the individual successfully demonstrate his or her abilities with paid work experience, the participant can approach an employer for a real job.

**Lessons Learned with Work Experience and Subsidized Employment Programs**

*The Eastern Shoshone TANF program paid three dollars an hour to a participant receiving \$12 an hour from employment. Then, when the participant obtained a real job, she received a pay decrease. That is the challenge when one continues the grant on top of wages. That is why some Tribes provide participants with the wages in lieu of the TANF grant.*



## Appendix

## Agenda

Alaska Case Managers Training  
May 3 – 5. 2011

### Tuesday, May 3rd

- 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.           **Registration and Networking**
- 9:30 a.m.                   **Welcome and Opening Remarks**  
Welcome & Blessing: CITC  
*Judy Ogliore, TANF Program Specialist, Region 10, Administration for Children and Families (ACF)*
- 10 – 10:30 a.m.           **Tribal TANF History in Alaska**  
*Melodie Rothwell, ORA Program Specialist, Region 10, ACF*
- 10:30 – Noon              **Individual Native Organization Program Recaps**
- 12:15 – 1:15 p.m.       **Lunch on your own.**
- 1:15 – 1:30 p.m.         **Video Call with Washington DC**  
*Shannon Bopp & Amelia Popham*
- 1:30-2:30 p.m.           **Case Manager Training - Rae Belle Whitcomb Lead**  
How do you develop a plan?  
How do you interview?  
What tools do you use?  
How do you engage a client?  
What questions do you ask?  
How do you follow up with a client?  
What if you have to do all of this via US Mail?
- 2:30 – 2:45 p.m.         **Break**
- 2:45 – 4 p.m.              **Case Manager Training**

### Wednesday, May 4th

- 8:00 – 8:25 a.m.         **Networking**
- 8:30 – 10:15 a.m.       **Home Visits**  
*Holly Snowball, CITC*
- 10:15 – 10:30 a.m.      **Break**

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10:30 - Noon	Child Support Video Call ACF Regional Office Skit
12:15 – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch on your own
1:30 – 2:45 p.m.	Fraud: Detection & Reporting CITCI: Cheryl Facine Brenda Chapman
2:45 – 3:00 p.m.	Break
3:00 – 4:30 p.m.	Supportive Services Panel Rural Program: AVCP – Jolene Geerhart Village Program Rural Program: KANA- Janet Theis Village Program Urban Program: TCC – Anita Taylor

**Thursday, May 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Primarily designed for the Program Managers and Directors**

8:00 – 8:30 a.m.	Networking
8:30-10 a.m.	Data Presentation Presenter: Geene Felix How do we convert activities into usable code What is the difference between an organization that uses an independent agency vs. doing it themselves
10:00- 10:15 a.m.	Break
10:15 – 11:30 a.m.	Asset Building Opportunities Regional Office Presentation
11:30 – 12:45 p.m.	Lunch on your own
12:45 – 2:00 p.m.	Intro/OGM Audits Allowable Costs/TANF Grant Facts Questions Patty Fisher, OGM, Region X Sam Stitt, OGM, Region X
2:00 – 2:15 p.m.	Break

2:15 – 4p.m.

Funding Process/Flowchart  
Awards, Terms & Conditions  
Reporting Overview (196T)  
OLDC (On Line Data Collection)  
Questions (Fiscal Status Section?)  
Patty Fisher, OGM, Region X  
Sam Stitt, OGM, Region X