



***Rural Communities Initiative***  
*TANF Technical Assistance Site Visit*  
*White Mountain Apache Tribe Site Visit to the Navajo Nation*  
*Window Rock, Arizona*



**Rural Communities Initiative**  
**TANF Technical Assistance Site Visit**  
**White Mountain Apache Tribe Site Visit to the Navajo Nation**  
**Window Rock, Arizona**  
**September 15 – 16, 2009**

Prepared for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Family Assistance





***Rural Communities Initiative***  
*TANF Technical Assistance Site Visit*  
*White Mountain Apache Tribe Site Visit to the Navajo Nation*  
*Window Rock, Arizona*



*This Rural Communities Initiative Summary Report was prepared under ICF International Contract No. 233-02-0094, Task Order HHSP233200700009T “Individualized Training and Technical Assistance for the TANF Program and Tribal TANF/Child Welfare Demonstration Projects.”*



**Rural Communities Initiative**  
 TANF Technical Assistance Site Visit  
 White Mountain Apache Tribe Site Visit to the Navajo Nation  
 Window Rock, Arizona



**Table of Contents**

**I. Overview .....4**

**II. Day One – September 15, 2009 .....5**

    Meeting with the Navajo Department of Workforce Development ..... 5

    Fort Defiance Workforce Center Site Visit..... 6

**III. Day Two – September 16, 2009.....7**

    Meeting with the Navajo Nation Program for Self Reliance Program..... 7

**IV. Moving Forward: Future Collaboration between WMAT and the Navajo Nation ...11**

**Appendix A: Site Visit Agenda .....12**

**Appendix B: Participant List .....14**



***Rural Communities Initiative***  
*TANF Technical Assistance Site Visit*  
*White Mountain Apache Tribe Site Visit to the Navajo Nation*  
*Window Rock, Arizona*



## **I. Overview**

In recognition of the needs of rural communities and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) agencies, the Office of Family Assistance (OFA), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is sponsoring the Rural Communities Initiative. The Rural Communities Initiative provides States, Tribes, and local TANF agencies in 16 nominated rural sites from across the United States the opportunity to share information and promising practices on critical issues affecting the rural areas, and barriers to employment such as education, job skills, transportation, and child care. This Initiative was kicked off with the Rural Communities Academy in Kansas City, Missouri on September 3 - 5, 2008.

After finalizing their Technical Assistance (TA) Action Plan during the Rural Communities Academy, the White Mountain Apache Tribe's (WMAT) team identified a series of issues of critical importance to the future health and success of their TANF Program. In addition to serious financial instability, the WMAT team also recognized that their Program required an infusion of evidenced-based practices and ideas that had successfully moved Tribal TANF participants into higher levels of self-sufficiency. Specifically, the WMAT Team was looking for strategies that would:

- Make their case management model more responsive to the needs of their participants;
- Help find solutions for serving participants living in extremely remote locations;
- Improve their ability to implement cross-program collaborations and establish MOAs;
- Increase cost-efficiency across all their service delivery areas; and
- Provide a blueprint detailing the structure and operation of a successful Tribal TANF program, both in terms of office setup, the types of programs available to participants, and how these services are delivered.

Based on these goals, the WMAT team sought to identify and visit a Tribal TANF Program in their area with a proven case management approach and a strong track record of improving outcomes for low-income Tribal members. The WMAT team's strategy was to use this site visit and the subsequent introduction of promising strategies as a springboard for redesigning their Tribal Family Assistance Plan (TFAP) – due for submission in March 2010. After examining several Tribal TANF Programs, the WMAT team selected Navajo Nation due to the Program's sustainability and longstanding history of successfully placing hard-to-serve individuals and dislocated workers into permanent employment.

After a series of planning meetings between OFA, the WMAT Team, Rural Communities Initiative staff, the Navajo Department of Workforce Development, and the Navajo Nation Program for Self Reliance, the site visit was scheduled for September 15-16, 2009.



**Rural Communities Initiative**  
*TANF Technical Assistance Site Visit*  
*White Mountain Apache Tribe Site Visit to the Navajo Nation*  
*Window Rock, Arizona*



## **II. Day One – September 15, 2009**

During the first day of the site visit, the WMAT team met with staff from the Navajo Department of Workforce Development (NDWD). The NDWD office operates the Tribe's WIA program and provides career coaching, job search, job placement, and post-employment supports for youth and adults on the reservation.

### ***Meeting with the Navajo Department of Workforce Development (NDWD)***

On the morning of September 15, 2009, the WMAT team arrived at the NDWD Central Office and met with local staff to conduct an in-depth discussion of the NDWD, program operations, tracking/reporting systems, and efforts establishing cross-agency collaboration.



An overview of the NDWD program was the first topic discussed during this meeting. NDWD operates five workforce program offices through the Navajo Nation. Each agency is responsible for delivering workforce services to local Tribal participants in accordance with the policies and guidelines issued from the NDWD Central Office<sup>1</sup>. NDWD Central also provides ongoing technical assistance to all five programs. Total personnel among all NDWD agencies stands at approximately 115 individuals, though with recent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding, an additional 60 project and support staff were added. Under the NDWD

Program, funds are set aside for both adult and youth workforce support activities. Funds are provided directly from the Department of Labor (DOL) and are divided among each of the five agencies. Total funding provided to each agency is strictly based on past program performance and efficiency.

In addition to preparing adults for success in the workplace, the NDWD Program also has services in place to address the education and employment training needs of Tribal youth. A significant amount of NDWD's youth interventions focus on assisting low-income drop-outs in returning back to school or obtaining their high school diploma/GED. Additional youth-focused activities are discussed below in the Fort Defiance Session.

The NDWD Program is required to follow rules and policies issued by the Tribal President's office, though in terms of financial assistance, the NDWD Program receives less than one percent of funding from the Tribal Government. While not significantly supported financially by the Tribal government, the Program for Self Reliance (PSR)<sup>2</sup> is assigned an oversight committee

---

<sup>1</sup> Those living within the Navajo Nation, or non-Tribal individuals married to recognized Navajo Nation members are also eligible for services.

<sup>2</sup> Within the Navajo Nation, the TANF Program is referred to as the Program for Self Reliance.



**Rural Communities Initiative**  
*TANF Technical Assistance Site Visit*  
*White Mountain Apache Tribe Site Visit to the Navajo Nation*  
*Window Rock, Arizona*



on the Tribal Council. This committee reviews changes to policy in the TANF program, advocates on the program's behalf, and assists with submitting grants through the Tribal government. The concept of an oversight committee was especially interesting to the WMAT Team as they are currently searching for strategies to build support within the WMAT Council for addressing the needs and challenges of the Tribal TANF Program.

Building and maintaining mutually beneficial partnerships with PSR and other service providers is of critical importance to the NDWD Program. Currently, the NDWD Program contracts with PSR as they serve the same participants, use similar eligibility requirements, and conduct many cross program referrals. Agreements are in place to facilitate the sharing of participants' information between WIA and PSR caseworkers, and the directors meet on a regular basis to discuss their collaborative efforts. During the discussion on collaboration, NDWD staff also reviewed a number of MOAs that are in place with PSR and other service providers. The WMAT Team was provided with copies of the MOAs.

The official data tracking system used by NDWD is known as the BearTracks database. The BearTracks database software is run through DOL and provides structure around collecting and reporting data on Tribal TANF participants. Information collected through the BearTracks system is automatically reported to DOL. The WMAT WIA program also uses BearTracks. NDWD staff offered to provide technical assistance to WMAT WIA around operating and/or updating the BearTracks software. Budgeting processes were also discussed during this session. Within the NDWD Program, accounting staff from each of the five agencies conducts direct processing of payroll, cash payments, and time keeping. NDWD's Central Office helps coordinate budgeting guidelines among the five agencies and provides any technical assistance as needed.

***Fort Defiance Workforce Center Site Visit***

After concluding the discussion on NDWD's budget processes, the WMAT team drove to the nearby Fort Defiance Workforce Center. The Fort Defiance site is one of five NDWD agencies tasked with delivering workforce development services in their local area. The Fort Defiance office serves 428 youth and adults and is run by 16 staff members. Residents outside of the immediate Fort Defiance area are served by the agency's two sub-offices in Greasewood and Tohatchi.

The Fort Defiance office provides a number of core job support services under their WIA/NEW contracts such as job placement, job retention, and various incentive programs. In addition to these core services, the Fort Defiance office also operates a Summer Youth Program, GED Training, and an on-site computer learning center, to help support participants' career pathways vision and goals. Both the GED Training Program and on-site learning center are in place to assist participants complete their GED, secure financial assistance, and transition into higher education. Satellite campuses were established with Pioneer College and within the city of Gallup to improve access to education services. For participants without reliable forms of



**Rural Communities Initiative**  
*TANF Technical Assistance Site Visit*  
*White Mountain Apache Tribe Site Visit to the Navajo Nation*  
*Window Rock, Arizona*



transportation, assistance is available for their commute to and from education activities. Tuition and housing subsidies are also in place for Tribal members who study outside of the Navajo Nation.

The Fort Defiance Summer Youth Program provides career and skills workshops to youth aged 18 or below and offers conferences and trainings based on the expressed needs of young people. Past examples of Summer Youth Program events include cultural activities conferences, defensive driving trainings, and computer skills courses. Fort Defiance staff emphasized the importance of tracking results from these events, not simply for reporting purposes, but also to promote an outcomes-focused mentality among its young participants. Due to the high rate of youth unemployment on their reservation, the WMAT team identified the goals and outcomes of the Navajo Summer Youth Program as especially relevant to their Program.

After reviewing the programs and strategies mentioned above, the WMAT Team was provided with a tour of the Fort Defiance office and on-site learning center.

### **III. Day Two – September 16, 2009**

During the second day of the site visit, WMAT team members met with leadership from the Navajo Nation Program for Self Reliance (NNPSR). The NNPSR Program manages the PSR, Navajo's equivalent of the Tribal TANF Program. In 2007, the PSR Program replaced Navajo's Tribal TANF program, placing a new emphasis on more traditional concepts of becoming self-reliant. Much like Tribal TANF, the PSR goals focus primarily on motivating participants to pursue career goals and preparing them for self-sustaining employment.

- **Goal 1:** Promoting employment opportunities so that an increasing number of families become self-reliant;
- **Goal 2:** Promoting educational opportunities so an increasing number of adults in the benefit group become employable; and
- **Goal 3:** Increasing the overall integrity, efficiency, and accountability of case management.

The focus on program efficiency and using cultural traditions as the base for building motivation to achieve self-reliance motivation are the key aspects of the PSR Program.

#### ***Meeting with the Navajo Nation Program for Self Reliance Program***

The meeting began with a discussion of the background, overview of the service delivery area, and eligibility requirements of the NNPSR/PSR Programs. Eligibility for the PSR Program, much like Tribal TANF, is dependent on residency, income requirements, meeting child support enforcement requirements, and the presence of a child deprived of sufficient financial support. All households within the Navajo Reservation and in nearby reservation communities where the head of household is Navajo are eligible to receive PSR benefits. Families receiving NNPSR





**Rural Communities Initiative**  
TANF Technical Assistance Site Visit  
White Mountain Apache Tribe Site Visit to the Navajo Nation  
Window Rock, Arizona



assistance at the time they temporarily relocate to an area outside of the NNPSR service delivery area are also eligible to continue receiving services. Approved participants must attend a program orientation, complete a Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP) (more commonly known as an Individualized Employment Plan), and begin working in approved work participation activities after 30 days of approval.

As described above, cultural values and traditions play a significant role in the promotion of self-sufficiency within the PSR caseload. In creating the PSR case management approach, NNPSR adopted the Navajo concept of *T'aa hwo' ajit'eego* as the foundation and model for guiding low-income families and individuals on a path to self-sufficiency. *T'aa hwo' ajit'eego* translates roughly into “becoming self-sufficient” and entails living life in harmony and balance so that one lives with a purpose, makes conscious decisions requiring personal discipline, and taking responsibility for one’s life. Built into this principle and the NNPSR case management approach, are four developmental stages of learning and personal development (also shown in the graph to the right):



- **Thinking:** Promoting personal responsibility by educating participants on welfare reform while reducing dependency on public assistance by creating educational and career opportunities. Providing assistance to the participant for basic needs while addressing social dilemmas by identifying and providing referrals to key resources;
- **Planning:** Creating an atmosphere encouraging personal change by assisting the participant in identifying specific opportunities which foster a positive change. The participant will begin to recognize their personal strengths which promote the participant’s well-being by encouraging a participant-centered process that instills hope and optimism in their capacity for change;





**Rural Communities Initiative**  
*TANF Technical Assistance Site Visit*  
*White Mountain Apache Tribe Site Visit to the Navajo Nation*  
*Window Rock, Arizona*



- **Doing:** Implementing a plan of action based on identified strengths and barriers while establishing and providing opportunities for participants to develop skills, enhance knowledge and gain experience will help them to become self-sufficient and self-reliant; and
- **Growing:** Developing a plan of action that results in cultivation of long range goals and achievements which will support the concept of self-sufficiency for the participant and their family members.

As described by NNPSR staff, these four cultural components provide guidance and serve as a model for well-being development and promote value in sustaining Navajo livelihood and self-reliance. This case management cycle does not end after a participant completes the fourth component, rather, they return again to the stage of “Thinking” as they reevaluate their past efforts and begin developing a more refined self-sufficiency plan.

In terms of actual services provided, NNPSR provides the following types of assistance to eligible individuals:

- **Case Management/Referrals:** Includes screening, intake/eligibility determination, and assessment, the creation of the Personal Development Plan (PDP), referral services, monitoring, evaluation, reassessment, and follow-up when needed. Referrals are made by NNPSR staff to Federal, State, Tribal, and private organizations necessary to help participants meet work participation rates;
- **Monthly Assistance Payments:** Eligible families are provided with cash assistance payments for their basic needs;
- **Career Mentoring and Guidance:** Participants are provided with one-on-one sessions to identify career interests, assess skills, and to provide access and referrals to available resources. The principle of “Planning” (described above) plays a significant role during these sessions;
- **Educational and Employment Incentives:** Educational and employment incentives are provided to motivate and encourage participants to maintain participation in work or education activities;
- **Support Services:** Adult participants are provided with training opportunities related to their education, employment search, and job retention needs. Trainers are often hired by NNPSR to conduct training workshops on topics such as job preparedness, computer basics, and other life skills. These professionals usually are located off-site in cities like Gallup, New Mexico;
- **Volunteer, Job Coaching, and Placement:** Participants deemed ready for employment are informed of and referred to employment and/or volunteer opportunities that match their employment history, skills, interests, and goals;



**Rural Communities Initiative**  
*TANF Technical Assistance Site Visit*  
*White Mountain Apache Tribe Site Visit to the Navajo Nation*  
*Window Rock, Arizona*



- **Transitional Support:** Families no longer eligible to receive monthly assistance payments due to successful job placement/retention may be eligible for continued benefits while they transition toward self-sufficiency; and
- **Sanctioning:** While not necessarily a type of “assistance,” NNPSR does utilize sanctions as a way to keep participants motivated to meet WPR requirements. There are three levels of sanctions employed by NNPSR: First infractions result in a benefits cut of 25 percent; repeat offenders lose 50 percent of their benefits; a third incident of sanctioning results in loss of benefits for an entire year.

After listening to the cultural components and array of services provided by the NNPSR case management approach, WMAT staff also asked how they manage situations where participants express no motivation for becoming self-sufficient. NNPSR responded that in cases where participants show no willingness to develop a PDP, caseworkers need to ask participants if they are happy with their current situation and “put it back on the participant.” As described by NNPSR, self-sufficiency does not come about strictly through work and education opportunities. Self-reliance is also developed by a participant’s willingness to take responsibility for their own personal growth. NNPSR also suggested that, as a way to show a participant’s time is important, caseworkers should consider any time they spend with participants (assessments, coaching, etc.) as countable work activities.

Around the topic of participant development, NNPSR described the steps they take in completing a participant’s Employment Readiness Plan. Before any job placement is conducted, NNPSR caseworkers assess participant’s employment readiness based on six criteria:

1. Completed all assessments – Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE); Barriers to Employment Success Inventory (BESI); and Strengths, Improvements, and Insights (SII);
2. Must have a high school diploma or GED;
3. Must have a 9.0 or better general education (GE) level;
4. Must have at least one month of hands on job experience;
5. Must have reliable transportation; and
6. Must have adequate child care.

These are the basic requirements all participants must meet before NNPSR will begin negotiating with an employer who matches the participant’s career interests and skills. In cases where barriers exist that would prevent the participant from being successful at the workplace (e.g. low GE scores, no reliable transportation, etc.), NNPSR caseworkers work to address these gaps. After an agreement has been made with a local employer and job placement has occurred, caseworkers continue to follow up on the participant’s progress and mediate in the case of job site disputes and concerns.



**Rural Communities Initiative**  
*TANF Technical Assistance Site Visit*  
*White Mountain Apache Tribe Site Visit to the Navajo Nation*  
*Window Rock, Arizona*



With their new Tribal Family Assistance Plan (TFAP) due in March 2010, the WMAT Team was also highly interested in learning more about NNPSR's recently approved three year plan (expiring in September 2012). During the review of their TFAP, NNPSR emphasized the importance of starting the planning process at least a year before the submission deadline. Staff input is also an important factor in completing a TFAP. The NNPSR TFAP writing team conducted regular brainstorming sessions to give all staff the opportunity to provide input on the structure of the TFAP. The WMAT Team was also given a copy of NNPSR's current TFAP.

Much like NDWD, collaborative efforts are important components of NNPSR's program operations. In addition to their partnership with NDWD, NNPSR also reviewed MOUs in place with two critical service delivery partners: the Navajo Nation Department of Child Support Enforcement and the Navajo Nation Child Care and Development Fund Program. NNPSR emphasized the importance of regular meetings with all service delivery partners, identifying early on the mutual benefits of a partnership, and having any MOU remain flexible and changeable at any time. NNPSR also described the importance of partnering with GED programs and school career counselors. WMAT was provided with copies of all MOUs reviewed during this session.

#### **IV. Moving Forward: Future Collaboration between WMAT and the Navajo Nation**

The Navajo Nation site visit was commended by the WMAT Team for providing them with new strategies, contacts, and resources to assist in the development of their Tribal TANF program. These assets were described as being especially useful to the Team as they began moving forward on designing their new TFAP. Staff from NNPSR and NDWD also offered to provide technical assistance around strategic planning and WPR requirements to assist WMAT's TFAP design efforts. The Director of NNPSR also suggested sending their caseworkers to WMAT to conduct job readiness workshops for their TANF participants. In addition to the direct support provided by the Navajo Nation, staff from WMAT's Tribal TANF and WIA programs also benefited from seeing the outcomes that can be obtained when these two agencies engage in collaborative efforts.



**Rural Communities Initiative**  
**TANF Technical Assistance Site Visit**  
*White Mountain Apache Tribe Site Visit to the Navajo Nation*  
*Window Rock, Arizona*



**Appendix A: Site Visit Agenda**

**Rural Communities Initiative**

**White Mountain Apache Tribal (WMAT) TANF Program**

**Site Visit to the Navajo Nation, September 15-16, 2009**

**Goals of the WMAT Site Visit to the Navajo Nation:**

1. To find an effective case management model that will help us better serve our people;
2. To find creative solutions that increase our capacity to serve people in rural areas;
3. To learn more about implementing cross-program collaborations and establishing MOAs;
4. To find low-cost strategies that help us better serve our participants; and
5. To see the operation of a successful TANF Program, both in terms of office setup and the programs/services that are available to participants.

**Monday, September 14, 2009**

WMAT Tribal TANF and WIA program staff and Patrick Heiman, Technical Assistance Coordinator for the WMAT site, arrive in Window Rock, Arizona.

**Tuesday, September 15, 2009 – Navajo Department of Workforce Development**

<b>9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.</b>	Meet with Navajo Department of Workforce Development (NDWD) management staff to discuss Program Overview, Budgeting Process, Bear Tracks Reporting Process, etc.  <b>Location: Window Rock Administration Office</b>
<b>11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.</b>	Lunch (on your own) and drive to the Fort Defiance Workforce Center (WFC) approximately seven miles away.
<b>1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.</b>	Office tour of the Fort Defiance WFC facilities. WMAT staff meets with caseworkers and other staff to discuss case management strategies.  <b>Location: Fort Defiance WFC</b>
<b>2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.</b>	Visit NDWD Learning Center and Vocational Education Facilities.  <b>Location: Fort Defiance WFC</b>



**Rural Communities Initiative**  
*TANF Technical Assistance Site Visit*  
*White Mountain Apache Tribe Site Visit to the Navajo Nation*  
*Window Rock, Arizona*



**Wednesday, September 16, 2009 – Navajo Nation Program for Self Reliance**

<b>9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.</b>	Meet with Navajo Nation Program for Self Reliance (NNPSR) to discuss Case Management process.  <b><i>Location: Window Rock, Arizona</i></b>
<b>11:00 a.m. – noon</b>	Office tour of the NNPSR facilities. WMAT staff meets with caseworkers and other staff to discuss case management strategies.
<b>Noon – 1:00 p.m.</b>	Lunch (on your own)
<b>1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.</b>	Meet with NNPSR to discuss Participant Development process.
<b>2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.</b>	Meet with NNPSR to discuss Collaboration and Partnership processes.

**Thursday, September 17, 2009**

White Mountain Apache staff and Patrick Heiman depart Window Rock, Arizona.



**Rural Communities Initiative**  
*TANF Technical Assistance Site Visit*  
*White Mountain Apache Tribe Site Visit to the Navajo Nation*  
*Window Rock, Arizona*



## **Appendix B: Participant List**

### **Navajo Department of Workforce Development**

**Roselyn Shirley**  
Department Manager  
Navajo Department of Workforce Development  
P.O. Box 1889  
Window Rock, Arizona 86515  
928-871-7707  
[RShirley@ndwd.org](mailto:RShirley@ndwd.org)

### **Navajo Nation Program for Self Reliance**

**Roxanne Gorman**  
Department Manager  
Navajo Nation Program for Self Reliance  
P.O. Box 2279  
Window Rock, Arizona 86515  
928-810-8553  
[roxanne.gorman@nntanf.org](mailto:roxanne.gorman@nntanf.org)

### **White Mountain Apache Tribal TANF Program**

**Arman Baha**  
White Mountain Apache Tribe TANF Program  
P.O. Box 1870  
Whiteriver, AZ 85941  
928-338-4164  
[eaglebaha@yahoo.com](mailto:eaglebaha@yahoo.com)

**Colleen Faden**  
White Mountain Apache Tribe TANF Program  
P.O. Box 1870  
Whiteriver, AZ 85941  
928-338-4164  
[ColleenFaden@wmat.us](mailto:ColleenFaden@wmat.us)

**Terilyn John**  
White Mountain Apache Tribe – WIA Program  
P.O. Box 520  
Whiteriver, AZ 85941  
928-338-4818  
[TJohn@wmat.us](mailto:TJohn@wmat.us)

### **ICF International, Inc.**

**Patrick Heiman**  
Senior Associate  
ICF International, Inc.  
10530 Rosehaven Street  
Suite 400  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030  
703-383-3326  
[pheiman@icfi.com](mailto:pheiman@icfi.com)