

Oregon Housing and Community Services
GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
2003 SUMMARY REPORT

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Oregon Housing & Community Services (OHCS) serves tribal nations and Native Americans in Oregon by providing technical assistance, training, and program assistance, and through cooperation with tribal and other partner organizations.

Technical Assistance

The Department provides technical assistance on housing and emergency supportive services delivery to tribal organizations to help assure effective utilization of program allocations available to tribes. Historically, tribal organizations may not have fully utilized program resources available to them from the department. During 2003, the department continued to reach out to tribal organizations and assist tribal staff to improve utilization.

The department assists in emergency assistance program delivery through training on inventory control, helping to reconcile physical and book inventories with tribal subcontractors. Training on inventory practice and inventory maintenance has been provided. In the past, the department has also provided technical assistance to improve program eligibility determinations, by contacting tribes and developing a specific intake and assessment form for eligibility determination.

With the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) implementation of the Native American Housing and Self-Determination Act, tribal communities have greater responsibility for service provision and housing planning and reporting than in the past. OHCS continues to assist tribes with these new responsibilities, providing technical expertise where invited. Also, tribal representatives are regularly invited to participate in regional Consolidated Funding Cycle trainings, to learn how to access the state's affordable housing resources and also to other department activities across the state.

Much of the department's relationship-building and technical assistance is accomplished through the department's Regional Advisors to the Director (RADs). Since our small department delivers virtually all programs through partners at the local level, the RADs serve as the department's main outreach staff to local organizations and initiatives, connecting

providers with the state office. The RADs report several contacts with tribal housing and service providers during 2003. The Eastern Oregon RAD worked with representatives of the the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla and the Burns-Paiute. Representatives from the Umatilla Reservation Housing Authority have become active participants in the Northeast Oregon Affordable Housing Coalition (NEOAHC), where the Eastern Oregon RAD is also involved. This group meets every other month to address affordable housing issues of the several county area in the northeast corner of the state.

The RADs also serve as department representatives on the regional teams of the Governor's Economic Revitalization Team, Governor Kulongoski's key economic development initiative. These teams replaced the previous administration's Community Solutions Team (CST) initiative. These regional efforts are a key opportunity for tribal representatives to work with all state community development agencies, including OHCS, and tribal representatives are now regularly involved in regional processes across Oregon.

In addition to the work of the RADs, department staff is also assisting with several initiatives to develop Internet web-based resources to assist tribes along with other Oregonians.

- ❑ *OregonHelps.org*, a web-based tool that anyone with computer internet access may use to preliminarily estimate their eligibility for two dozen key social support programs began operating statewide during 2002. <http://www.oregonhelps.org> is now fully operational across Oregon.
- ❑ A web-based tool similar to a multiple listing service for affordable housing called Housing Connections has been operating successfully in the Portland Metro area for more than a year now at <http://www.housingconnections.org/>.
- ❑ Several state agencies, including OHCS, merged their various internal contact databases into a single tool during 2003. This tool, called the Oregon Community Resource Directory, that was soft-launched in November. While focused internally to state agency staff, the information is accessible to anyone with web-service at www.OregonCRD.org.
- ❑ The department is also helping to facilitate and fund the Oregon 2-1-1 initiative, now in the planning phases. This is a 9-1-1-like telephone-based service for health and social service information and referral.

As web-based and other technology tools become generally more accessible to the public, tools such as these can often be provided at no cost to citizens in need generally, including tribal members, as well as all partners who assist and work with Native Americans.

Training for Tribal Representatives

Tribal representatives are regularly invited and included in training opportunities offered by department program staff. Generally, the department helps tribes to utilize department programs and improve efficiency and effectiveness of programs operated by tribes that contract directly with the federal government to provide affordable housing and emergency assistance. The goal is to help tribes improve internal programmatic and administrative capabilities. An example is the on-going training that the department provides for establishing and maintaining effective contract procedures with the Klamath Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla, and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians focused on intake and information systems to enhance program operations.

The Department has also supported tribes wishing to administer the Low Income Energy Assistance (LIEAP) payments. For several years now, OHCS staff has been providing support principally to the Klamath tribe, by providing dial-up support to allocate money into the system and helping to fix client records. Staff also provided trouble shooting services of dial up software and provided phone support for program related questions.

Recently, though, tribes have become interested in directly contracting with the Federal government for program administration. During 2003, additional Oregon tribes chose to directly contract with the Federal government to provide LIEAP assistance. Department staff provided extensive assistance during the second half of 2003 to help staff at the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, and the Klamath Tribes to comply with Federal application requirements. In the future, representatives from all of Oregon tribes will be invited to the Department's LIEAP partner trainings, and additional assistance will be extended as other tribes express interest in direct contracting this program and others,

As in previous years, OHCS technology staff provided technical advice on use of the OPUS computer data-base system for the Klamath tribe's LIEAP program. Partnering programs may not use OHCS's computer information systems directly, but tribal staff still benefit from technical assistance on department information systems issues and have been included in several trainings. As additional tribes assume responsibility for directly contracting with the Federal government to administer LIEAP during the 2003 year, the department offered access to the OPUS system and partner trainings to staff of other tribes. Some may not wish to use the system, however, because the database system designed in Oracle may be more robust than needed for small tribal LIEAP programs. Also, the OPUS system necessitates storage of client information on Department servers. Department staff has learned in conversations with tribal staff that some tribes may not wish private client information to be housed outside tribal systems. Still, staff from the OHCS Information Systems Section have helped tribal representatives currently operating LIEAP programs, and have provided advise and counsel on several occasions in discussions with tribes establishing new direct contracts with the Federal government to administer LIEAP.

Tribal housing representatives are also invited to and regularly attend trainings on the Consolidated Funding Cycle, periodic meetings on Oregon's individual development account initiative, and other meetings related to department programs and initiatives.

Program Assistance

Almost all programs administered by OHCS are available to all Oregonians, including those who live in tribal communities and Native Americans who live on non-tribal lands in Oregon. Some major programs are described below.

Low-Income Weatherization Assistance

Funds from the U.S. Department of Energy Weatherization Assistance Grant are used in conjunction with other funds from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, utility companies, the Bonneville Power Administration and Low-Income Energy Assistance Block Grant funds to perform cost effective weatherization measures on houses occupied by low-

income families. Weatherization services include energy saving modifications of heating systems; anti-infiltration measures; water heater traps; insulation for attics, ducts, floors, walls; and/or storm windows to eligible low-income families, for both owners and renters. Through weatherization, fuel consumption is reduced, resulting in lower heating bills. The Department directly contracts for weatherization services with the Klamath Tribe and maintains a 3% set-aside for Native Americans through its other service partners across the state.

Low-Income Energy Assistance

The Department utilizes Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) funds that are federally funded through the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. This program provides energy assistance payments to vendors (i.e., utilities and heating oil companies) to assure that low-income households have the help they need to assist in paying their winter energy bills and to prevent utility shut-off. The funds also provide energy education, energy conservation activities and conduct outreach activities designed to assure that eligible households are made aware of the assistance available. The Klamath Tribes and the Cow Creek Band have administered LIEAP programs for several years. During 2003, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs also applied to the Federal government for direct funding from HHS to administer LIEAP. The Department contributed substantial program, management and tribal liaison staff time assisting and advising tribal staff pursuing the direct contracts through the Summer and Fall. OHCS staff has also committed to invite tribal staff to all trainings offered to its partners as a learning opportunity for tribal staff, even though the department will have no contractual relationship with the tribes on this program. Before the 2005 LIEAP season, the department also intends to facilitate a meeting of representatives from the department, tribal staff, and other partner organizations to further discuss how to best facilitate tribal administration of the LIEAP program next year so that the tribal programs maximize their potential service to tribal members.

Emergency Food Distribution

The Department is responsible for administering several emergency food distribution programs. The Emergency Food Assistance Program distributes U.S. Department of Agriculture commodities to low-income households through emergency food boxes, and provides over 3 million meals each fiscal year. The Community Food and Nutrition Program (CFNP) has provided funding for a Legislative Hunger Relief Task Force, assisting in developing statewide programs targeted at ending hunger in Oregon and raising public awareness of the issue, and developed strategies to establish a statewide food purchasing cooperative. Other food distribution programs include the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), which distributes food, rather than food vouchers, and focuses on the specific nutritional needs of targeted populations. The program serves approximately 800 clients. The Department also administers these programs to low-income Native Americans living on or near reservations.

The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) provides commodity foods to low-income households living on Indian reservations and to American Indian households residing in approved areas near reservations. Many households participate in the FDPIR as an

alternative to the Food Stamp Program because they do not have easy access to the food stamp offices or authorized food stores. Each month, participating households receive a food package to help them maintain a nutritionally balanced diet. Participants may select from over 70 products including frozen meats (bison included), canned fruits and vegetables, soups, spaghetti sauce, macaroni, cheese, pastas, cereals, rice, egg mix and nonfat dry or evaporated milk, flour, cornmeal, crackers, beans and dehydrated potatoes. OHCS administers the FDPIR program for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation and is working to expand the program to the Coos Bay area within the next two years. FDPIR is available to all tribes; four Oregon tribes administer their own FDPIR program.

Emergency Housing

Through the State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP), the Department funds service providers that assist homeless Oregonians and encourages homeless shelter providers to convert a portion of their shelter units to transitional housing. These activities are financed through an emergency assistance grant and includes case management, job training, and other essential support services targeted at breaking the cycle of homelessness.

The Emergency Shelter Grant Program (ESG) provides grants for emergency shelter services and shelter related activities. While tribal affiliation is not reported, department records show that 705 persons accessing ESG funded shelter identified themselves as Native Americans . This number does not include those accessing ESG in Clackamas and Multnomah counties, as these counties administer their own programs separate from the Department managed program.

The Emergency Housing Account (EHA) targets those populations most at risk for homelessness. Designated lead agencies receive funding for emergency shelter and services, transitional housing services, supportive housing services to enable persons to continue living in their own homes, and programs that provide emergency payment of mortgage payments, rents, or utilities. EHA homeless funds are also used in conjunction with Adult and Family Services and TANF funds creating the Housing Stabilization Program. Funds from EHA are matched to provide stabilization assistance and homeless prevention programs.

Small Community Incentive Fund (SCIF)

Due to state budget constraints, the department administered Small Community Incentive Fund is being phased out. This program provided small loans (and occasionally grants) of usually less than \$50,000 as part of the state's community problem solving work of the Community Solutions Teams under the previous administration. The department's RADs and program staff assisted the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla to obtain a \$20,000 loan through the SCIF program for development of the Mission Market commercial facility. This facility provided an on-site tribally owned and operated convenience store catering specifically to the cultural and dietary needs of tribal members. Completed during 2003, Mission Market came in under budget and the tribe decided it did not need to utilize the offered SCIF loan. The East Bench project, another CTUIR project has encountered challenges during the year and may not proceed.

The Eastern-Oregon RAD and other department staff have continued to work with the Burns-Paiute tribe to seek a grant for a cultural center through this program. The Silversmith Project

had stalled during 2003, but is expected to move forward during the coming year. It involves the creation of a new community and heritage resource center for the tribe. Renovation and expansion of an existing building to provide the tribe with its first ever suitable place for tribal gatherings, celebrations, and performances.

The Department also facilitated a \$100,000 grant to the Klamath Tribes for development of a cultural park between their administration building and other tribal buildings in Chiloquin in 2001. This facility was completed in 2003.

As mentioned, the SCIF program is being phased out due to state budget constraints, as the Legislature and Governor Kulongoski refocus efforts towards economic revitalization across the Oregon.

Oregon Housing Opportunities in Partnership (OHOP)

During 2002, OHCS sought and received a grant called the *Oregon Housing Opportunities in Partnership (OHOP) program* to assist persons suffering with HIV/AIDS. This Federal grant from HUD will operate through June 2005. A few clients have identified themselves as Native American, however none have reported being affiliated with any of the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon. During 2003, department staff met with Umatilla Tribal Housing Authority staff about this program. Currently, three tribal members are receiving services from this department program after being referred by the Yellow Hawk tribal clinic. Two of the three were homeless at the time they began receiving services.

Oregon Individual Development (IDA) Initiative

During 2003, tribal representatives continued to be very helpful in developing Oregon's Individual Development Account (IDA) initiative to assure access to this asset-building strategy for tribal members. Representatives from the Umatilla, Warm Springs, and Grand Ronde tribes attended several work sessions and meetings through the year, sharing their good ideas and support to help make the initiative work for tribes. During 2002, department staff also assisted and provided letters of support for the Umatilla and Warm Springs representatives to obtain grants from the First Nations Institute to start tribal IDA programs. In November 2003, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation became one of six organizations across Oregon that were approved to serve as fiduciary organization in the state's IDA initiative for the 2004 program year. The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs also joined the initiative as a partnering organization with the Central Oregon fiduciary organization, Central Oregon Community Action Agency Network (COCAAN) in Redmond.

Home Ownership Program

Administering the departments' home ownership programs for dwellings on sovereign lands is challenging. The department has continued to work with tribes and financial partners to overcome the barriers to home ownership lending on tribal lands. Department records indicate only 3 Oregon families assisted with the department's homeownership program during 2003 identified themselves as Native American. Total loan value for these three families was about \$350,000.

Department staff also attended a HUD 184 Loan Program Training and is researching the possibility of OHCS modifying its bond indenture to purchase loans on tribal lands. Staff also tracks the Federal Home Loan Bank's Sovereign Lending Task Force, attending when possible.

Cooperation with Partners to Assist Tribes

OHCS continues to be an active participant in government-to-government relations through partnering organizations. The Department's policy strategist serves as the OHCS government-to-government representative. He regularly attends and supports the quarterly Health/Social Supports Cluster meetings (facilitated by the Department of Human Services) and Economic Development Cluster meetings (facilitated by the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department). These meetings offer state agency and tribal representatives opportunities to build relationships and address common interests on a regular basis. The department's strategist also assisted with the required biennial review of the cluster process in Fall 2003.

In an effort to further inform tribal leaders about OHCS, Director Bob Repine and several staff members presented an overview of the department and programs to members of the Legislative Commission on Indian Services in the Fall. Handouts elaborated on the general overview. This was the first such presentation by the Department's director to Commission members, a task we hope to repeat in the future. Commission members asked many questions and appeared interested in advancing partnerships with the Department.

Department administrators also participated in the annual Government-to-Government Summit held at Oregon State University in Corvallis this year. This major gathering of tribal and state agency officials celebrates the unique relationship enjoyed by tribes and state government in Oregon and affords an excellent opportunity for leaders to network and cultivate relations.

Training on Government-to-Government Relations

The Department pursued several opportunities for staff to enhance their knowledge of Native American cultures and the unique issues related to developing safe and affordable housing and critical supportive services for tribal members. Several management and human resource staff attended the training provided by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) at the Employment Department. Other staff were able to participate in the training sponsored by the Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) during 2003. In the past two years, more than 10% of the department's staff has completed such training.

Partnerships with Community-based Organizations

OHCS is a small agency that accomplishes its large mission by partnering with an extensive network of community-based organizations including tribal organizations, community action agencies, community development corporations, housing authorities, and non-government organizations. These partners are encouraged by the department to serve tribal needs and to include tribal members in the composition of their boards and committees. In many programs administered by these partners, a specific set-aside for Native Americans guides program implementation, usually in the form of a percentage of funding targeted to this population.

The department continuously seeks ways to encourage better relationships between tribal and other partner organizations.

Government-to-Government Policy Statement

A department policy statement covering department-tribal relations was not finished in 2003; OHCS will recommit to complete this task during 2004.

Problem Solving

The department strives to serve as a problem-solver in all its partner relationships, including its relationships with the tribes. During 2003, staff worked with the Umatilla and Burns-Paiute tribes to develop desired community facilities. Staff responsible for the state's Individual Development Account (IDA) initiative involved several tribal representatives in remedying an administrative rule that inadvertently restricted tribal-member participation in the IDA program. Department staff provided many hours of assistance to tribes applying for new contracts with the Federal government to administer the Low Income Energy Assistance (LIEAP) program, providing several solutions to challenges faced by the tribes. In 2004, the department will continue and expand its role in this area, to assure that the best possible government-to-government relations are realized.

OHCS Government-to-Government Relations Goals for 2003

OHCS continued to provide services and programs to all Oregonians including those who are members of recognized tribal nations and other Native Americans. Specifically related to government-to-government relations, the department pursued the following strategies during 2003 with outcomes identified in parentheses:

- An administrator level staff person will continue to be assigned to serve as OHCS government-to-government representative. (*DONE*)
- The OHCS representative will continue to attend and support Economic/Community Development Cluster and Health/Social Services Cluster meetings, and the annual state-tribal summit. (*DONE - missed only one meeting when representative was involved elsewhere in a presentation on another matter.*)
- A department representative will attend a Northwest Tribal Housing Authority Association meeting as out-of-state travel permits. (*Out-of-state travel was severely curtailed by state budget restrictions during 2003; not accomplished.*)
- Department staff will maintain relationship with Oregon tribal housing entity representatives. (*Many changes in tribal staff during the past two years. More work needed here during 2004 to re-establish relationships.*)
- The department will continue to provide information about the department and its programs and services to each tribal housing entity across the state. The department will also strive to establish communication with tribal social service administrators during the coming year. (*Substantially accomplished; enhance in 2004*)
- The department will arrange for training on government-to-government relations and encourage department staff to participate. (*DONE - to date, more than 10% of the department staff has now attended one or more trainings.*)

- The department will draft an agency policy for government-to-government relations for review and adoption by department administration. (*Incomplete; more work to be done in 2004.*)
- The department will submit its annual government-to-government report. (*2002 report DONE in January 2003. With submittal of this document, completed for 2003.*)

OHCS Government-to-Government Relations Goals for 2004

OHCS will continue to provide services and programs to all Oregonians including those who are members of recognized tribal nations and other Native Americans during the coming year. Additionally, the department will pursue the following specific government-to-government strategies during 2004:

- An administrator level staff person will continue to be assigned to serve as OHCS government-to-government representative.
- The OHCS government-to-government representative will continue to attend and support Economic/Community Development Cluster and Health/Social Services Cluster meetings, as well as the annual state-tribal summit.
- A department representative will again attempt to attend a Northwest Tribal Housing Authority Association meeting as out-of-state travel restrictions are eased or meetings are scheduled within Oregon.
- Department staff will enhance relationships with Oregon tribal housing entity representatives. The department will continue to provide information about the department and its programs and services to tribal housing entities across the state. The department will also strive to establish communication with tribal social service administrators during the coming year.
- The department will organize and facilitate a conversation with tribal representatives on how the department can best help tribes to administer the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) and other programs that tribes now taking responsibility for providing.
- The department will arrange for additional training opportunities on government-to-government relations and encourage department staff to participate.
- The department will finish drafting an agency policy for government-to-government relations for review and adoption by department administration.
- The department will submit its annual 2004 Government-to-Government Summary Report to the Legislative Commission on Indian Services in January 2005.