

11396 HOUSE COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Native Family Assistance Program

Report to the Alaska Legislature on the Pilot Projects



Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Public Assistance
January 2005

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Alaska Native Family Assistance Program Pilot Projects

Executive Summary

The federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) ended the individual entitlement to welfare cash benefits and established a cap on federal funding in the form of a fixed block grant. In exchange for this new method of funding, states were allowed more flexibility in the administration of their Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs.

PRWORA also gave American Indian and Alaska Native organizations authority, as well as access to federal funding, to operate TANF programs through their own tribal organizations. In response, 37 tribal TANF programs currently operate on behalf of 175 tribes and serve over 8,400 families nationwide. A 2001 report published by the National Congress of American Indians estimates that a third of all American Indian and Alaska Native TANF recipients received support through tribal TANF programs in 2001.



PRWORA also specifies which Native entities are eligible to operate tribal TANF programs in Alaska. These are limited to the Metlakatla Indian Community of the Annette Island Reserve and the twelve Alaska Native regional non-profit corporations.

The 21st Alaska Legislature passed Chapter 96, SLA 2000 that allows the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services to supplement four of the thirteen federally authorized tribal TANF providers in Alaska with "Native Family Assistance Program"

grants (NFAP). NFAP was authorized as a pilot program with a sunset date of June 30, 2005. The legislation also required the Department of Health and Social Services to deliver a report detailing the status of the tribal TANF pilot programs operating in Alaska, and making recommendations for the reauthorization and expansion of the NFAP program.

Three tribal TANF programs are currently operating in Alaska. The Tanana Chiefs Conference in the Doyon Region, the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes in the Sealaska Region of southeast Alaska, and the Association of Village Council Presidents in the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta Calista Region now serve a total of 970 families, nearly 20% of all families receiving TANF services in Alaska. Consistent with the TANF goal of family self-sufficiency, tribal TANF programs in Alaska strongly support moving tribal members from welfare to work. Since the first Alaska tribal TANF program began operation in 1999, the number of Alaska Native tribal TANF recipients has dropped by over 33 percent.

From the outset, the State of Alaska has supported the establishment and development of the tribal TANF programs. The NFAP program affirms the state's interest in promoting regional responsibility and local control for public assistance programs in Alaska. Families served by

tribal TANF programs have been successful in leaving welfare for employment and self-sufficiency. Moreover, interest in the development of Tribal TANF programs is increasing. Three additional tribal organizations have begun the process of formally planning their tribal TANF program.

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services makes the following recommendations in regard to the Native Family Assistance Program:

Reauthorize the Native Family Assistance Program.

Across the nation, federal welfare reform has been successful in moving families from welfare to work. The three tribal programs currently operating in Alaska have successfully administered TANF programs that reflect the unique needs and conditions in local communities while effectively moving tribal members towards self-sufficiency through employment. Tribes have a better grasp of social and economic conditions that inform their work and allow them to tailor services based on the unique needs of local communities. This local presence and familiarity with village and community life puts the tribes in the best position to administer their programs and to successfully promote self-sufficiency for their clients.

Both state and tribal officials agree that federal funds alone are insufficient for the successful operation of a tribal TANF program that is comparable to the state run program. Supplementing tribal TANF programs with Native Family Assistance grants will maximize federal block grant funds available to tribes, and will promote effective welfare-to-work service delivery models for rural Alaska. The Alaska Legislature should pass the Governor's proposed legislation that will make the NFAP program permanent.

Expand availability of Native Family Assistance grants to all tribal groups authorized in federal law to operate tribal TANF programs.

Three additional Native non-profits not currently authorized to receive Native Family Assistance Grants are actively planning tribal TANF programs as authorized in federal law. At least one additional non-profit has expressed interest revealing a strong trend toward development of tribal TANF programs in Alaska. Expansion of the availability of Native Family Assistance grants will ensure that all tribal organizations federally authorized to deliver tribal TANF programs will have the opportunity to access the necessary state resources and provide effective and innovative public assistance programs to their members.

Alaska Native Family Assistance Program Pilot Projects

Introduction

The 21st Alaska Legislature passed Chapter 96, SLA 2000 authorizing the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) to award and administer Alaska Native Family Assistance Program (NFAP) grants to Native non-profit organizations operating tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs. The law provides that these grants are available on a pilot basis to four Alaska Native tribal entities: Metlakatla Indian Community of the Annette Island Reserve, the Association of Village Council Presidents, the Tanana Chiefs Conference, and the Tlingit-Haida Central Council. The law also requires DHSS to report to the Governor and the Legislature on the status of these pilot programs, and to make recommendations regarding the continuation of the NFAP program and expansion of the program to make grants available to all Alaska Native non-profit organizations authorized to receive federal funds to operate tribal TANF programs in Alaska. Chapter 96, SLA 2000 will sunset on June 30, 2005.

This report will provide background on the authorization and funding of tribal TANF programs, present information on the status of tribal TANF programs operating in Alaska, and make recommendations as to the continuation and expansion of the NFAP grant program.

Background

The passage of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), commonly known as "welfare reform," changed the face of welfare in America. After years of growing caseloads, the new law ended the individual entitlement to welfare cash benefits and established a cap on federal funding in the form of a fixed block grant. In exchange for this new method of funding, states were allowed a great deal more flexibility in the administration of their programs. This devolution of authority to states was similarly extended to American Indian and Alaska Native organizations. For the first time in history, Native people were authorized by the federal government to run a major welfare program through their own tribal governments and organizations.

To be eligible to operate a tribal TANF program, a Native entity must complete a Tribal Family Assistance Plan and submit it for approval to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The plan must outline the tribe's approach to providing welfare-related services, specify which entity or entities will be providing the services, define the population and service area, provide that duplicative services will not be provided by a state or other tribe, identify employment opportunities in the area and how the tribe will enhance those opportunities for TANF recipients, and apply certain fiscal accounting and auditing procedures.

As of FY 2002, 36 tribal TANF plans were approved to operate on behalf of 175 tribes serving over 8,400 families nationwide. A 2001 report published by the National Congress of American Indians estimates that a third of all American Indian and Alaska Native TANF recipients

received support through tribal TANF programs in 2001. Figure 1 shows the growth in tribal TANF programs since their inception in 1997.

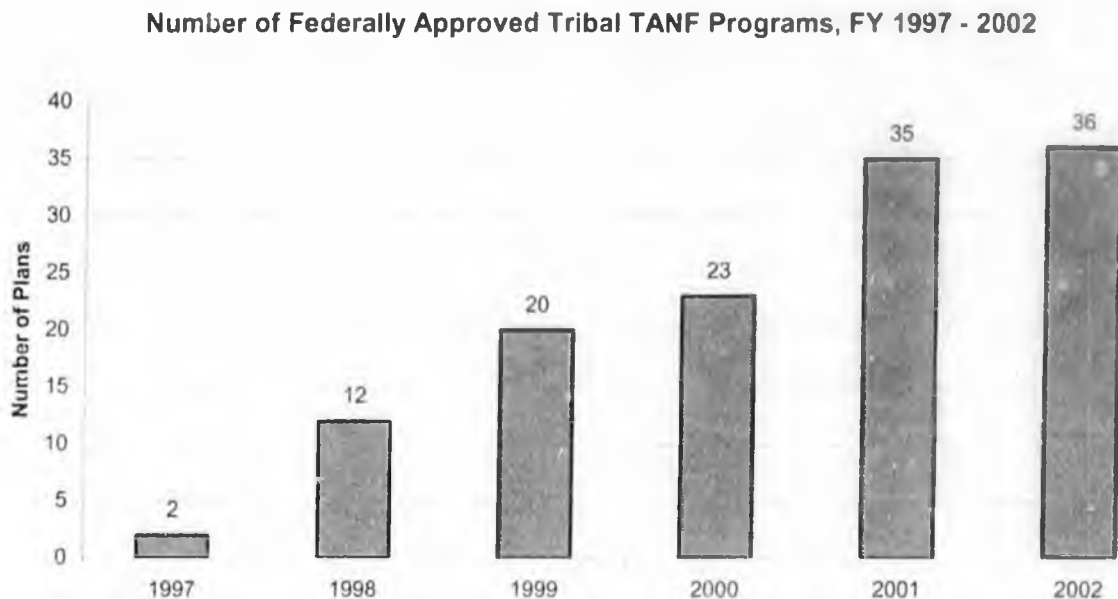


Figure 1

PRWORA also specifies which Native entities are eligible to operate Tribal TANF programs in Alaska. These are limited to the Metlakatla Indian Community of the Annette Island Reserve and the twelve Alaska Native regional non-profit corporations: Arctic Slope Native Association, Kawerak, Inc., Maniilaq Association, Association of Village Council Presidents, Inc., Tanana Chiefs Conference, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Bristol Bay Native Association, Aleutian and Pribilof Islands Association, Chugachmiut, Tlingit and Haida Central Council, Kodiak Area Native Association, and Copper River Native Association. The law also contains a special rule for Alaska requiring certain aspects of tribal programs to be comparable to the state's TANF program. The federal Department of Health and Human Services in consultation with the tribes and the State of Alaska established these "comparability criteria" to include certain program eligibility criteria, benefit levels, minor parent requirements, work participation and child support enforcement. Chapter 96, SLA 2000, which established the Native Family Assistance Program, mirrors federal law by authorizing the state to coordinate with these Native organizations in the development of their Native family assistance programs.

Alaska currently has three tribal TANF programs serving nearly 20% of all TANF families in Alaska. From the outset, the State of Alaska has supported the establishment and development of the tribal TANF programs. Just as the devolution of authority from the federal government to the state has allowed for the success of welfare reform in Alaska, so has the authority granted to Native organizations provided a better framework for meeting the unique circumstances facing Alaska Native families on welfare. Programs run locally by Native organizations are more culturally relevant, better attuned to local economic circumstances, and better coordinated with other social services provided by Native organizations. Tribal TANF programs provide for an

added measure of Native self-governance and self-determination and ultimately, are better equipped to achieve the purposes of PRWORA.

Funding Tribal TANF: Federal Block Grant & Alaska Native Family Assistance Program

The federal funding provisions regarding tribal TANF programs are contained in Section 412 of PRWORA. The law establishes that the federal Department of Health and Human Services fund tribes who have submitted an approved tribal family assistance plan with a portion of the state's TANF block grant. The share of the state's block grant that is transferred to a tribal TANF program is based on the amount of federal funds spent by the state in 1994 for Native families residing in the service area identified by the tribe in their tribal family assistance plan.

While PRWORA is silent on the issue of state funding for tribal TANF programs, both the state Department of Health and Social Services and the TANF-authorized tribes concur that in order for tribal organizations to successfully operate state-comparable programs, they require both federal and state financial support. This agreement, along with interest of three Alaska tribal entities in providing TANF programs, provided the impetus for passage of Chapter 96, SLA 2000 and the development of the Native Family Assistance Program (NFAP) in Alaska.

The principle that guides the level of state funding provided to tribal TANF programs through NFAP grants is that the amount should be fair and equitable when compared to the level of state funding for the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program. To achieve this end, the state considers the total amount of federal and state money that would otherwise be used to provide Temporary Assistance to Native families living in the designated service area in a given base year. Five funding categories are included: cash benefits, childcare assistance, work services (case management, supportive services, transportation, client training, etc.), eligibility determination services and administration. From this total, the federal block grant and the state's share of child support collected on behalf of the tribal TANF families are deducted. The difference is issued as a Native family assistance grant. The state grant has been considered a block grant so that the Native program operates under the same fixed funding parameters as the state's TANF program.

NFAP grants are negotiated yearly with tribal TANF providers and funds are transferred on a quarterly basis. NFAP grants are expended solely on cash benefit payments, except for administrative costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total grant amount.

There are currently three Tribal TANF programs receiving Native Family Assistance Grants: the Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), the Tlingit and Haida Central Council (T&H), and the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP).

Table 1 shows the amounts granted between FY 1999 and FY 2004.

Native Family Assistance Grants, FY 1999 - 2004

	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	Total
Tanana Chiefs	\$2,405,200	\$2,405,200	\$2,405,200	\$2,405,200	\$2,405,200	\$2,405,200	\$14,431,200
Tlingit & Haida			\$2,575,500	\$2,575,500	\$2,575,500	\$2,575,500	\$10,302,000
Assoc. of Village Council Presidents			\$3,740,400	\$3,740,400	\$3,740,400	\$3,740,400	\$24,733,200
TOTAL	\$2,405,200	\$2,405,200	\$8,721,100	\$8,721,100	\$8,721,100	\$8,721,100	\$39,694,800

Table 1

Native Family Assistance Program Grant Oversight

Tribal providers who receive NFAP grants enter into a contractual agreement with the State of Alaska to provide timely and accurate cash assistance, eligibility services, case management and other welfare-to-work services, supportive services, child care assistance and administrative support to all eligible families living within their service area. The contract requires tribal providers to report monthly to DPA describing the amount of grant funds expended for TANF program benefits. Contract provisions also include an agreement between tribal providers and the state to share information, work cooperatively and coordinate services to eligible families.

The NFAP contract requires that tribes establish an eligibility and data management computer system that will capture and provide information needed for an interface between the Division of Public Assistance Eligibility Information System (EIS), the Child Support Services Division (CSSD) and the tribal program. The tribal program must agree to cooperate with CSSD to establish paternity and to establish, modify, or enforce a child support order for a dependent child.

The NFAP contract allows DPA to monitor and evaluate the tribal TANF program to assure that grant money is being used to serve eligible families. Such oversight items may include:

- Accurate eligibility and benefit determinations;
- Penalties, sanctions, and disqualification;
- Benefits issuance;
- Maximum payment levels;
- Minor Parent living arrangement and school attendance requirements;
- Child support cooperation;
- Coordination with other public assistance programs such as Medicaid, Food Stamps, Adult Public Assistance, Chronic and Acute Medical Assistance, and General Relief Assistance;
- Adequate case file documentation;
- Adequate and timely notice of adverse actions;
- Tracking 60-month time limit and appropriate exemptions; and
- Fair Hearing and Appeal process.

Should the tribal TANF provider fail to comply with the terms of the NFAP grant, DPA has the authority to suspend the grant until the provider takes corrective action or successfully appeals the suspension. To date, no tribal provider has been found to be out of compliance with the terms of their NFAP grant.

Development of Tribal TANF Programs in Alaska

The decision to assume responsibility for a tribal TANF program is a significant and complex decision for tribal organizations. Operating TANF presents important opportunities, but can also pose risks that may result in harm to the most vulnerable tribal members. To mitigate these risks and to build consensus among members, tribal TANF providers in Alaska undertook a rigorous decision-making and planning process.



The first step in planning for tribal TANF involved consensus building among tribal members. Tribal providers conducted regional, local and village meetings and teleconferences to discuss state and federal welfare reform legislation and its implications for Tribal TANF programs. Region-wide surveys of tribal preferences in program design were conducted and draft concept papers based on consensus elements of the survey were developed and circulated for discussion.

The thirteen Alaska tribes federally authorized to operate TANF programs worked cooperatively with the State of Alaska to reach agreement on the outline for a draft Tribal Family Assistance Plan (TFAP). A group known as the "Single Point of Contact" state and tribal representatives, or SPOC group, met regularly with a Native rights attorney hired by the tribes to come to consensus on such issues as the definition of a tribal service area, who would be served by a tribal TANF program, and the of comparability of state and tribal TANF programs. The SPOC group developed a model TFAP that became the template for Tribal TANF plans in Alaska.

Each tribal provider developed a draft TFAP that was reviewed by villages and communities in the service area. Final drafts of the plans were reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors of each Tribal entity and submitted to the Federal Department of Health and Human Services. Federal staff reviewed each tribe's plan and provided feedback as part of the approval process.

The experiences of Alaska's tribal TANF providers indicate that developing a sound TFAP requires more than meeting statutory requirements and following DHHS rules. The tribes have to define their own objectives and rules, negotiate terms with the state, and assemble resources for planning and start-up. Tribes decide to operate their own TANF program primarily because they believe they provide a better service to their members and achieve better employment outcomes by coordinating with Native employment programs. The TFAP is an opportunity to articulate the mission and goals of the tribal TANF program and to design the program

accordingly, including defining expectations for participation, acceptable work activities and sanction policies.

All three tribal TANF providers worked with the state in developing their TFAPs, and also received federal guidance. State staff provided information and guidance about staffing levels, policy and procedures and information systems needed to operate their programs. The state provided training and technical assistance including the collocation of state staff at tribal program facilities to assist in ongoing training and support.

While the state provided valuable technical assistance to help tribes develop their TANF plans, PRWORA does not provide any start-up funds to support planning or information system development prior to the approval of a tribal plan by DHHS and the subsequent grant award. In-kind support such as useful information, data and insights were garnered from staff working in related federally funded programs such as Native Employment Works (NEW) and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). This lack of federal start-up, technical assistance and planning funds is a concern of states and has been noted as a deficiency in federal law that must be addressed.

Although the tribal providers in Alaska encountered challenges, they developed transition strategies and implemented tribal TANF operations that enabled start-up and continued service delivery. Important elements of these strategies included gradual transitions to tribal program operation, continuation of state involvement in program operations for an interim period, maintenance of good working relationships with the state TANF agency and adjustment of policies and procedures as needed.

Structure and Philosophy of Tribal TANF Programs in Alaska

Federal law provides tribes the flexibility to design and implement their TANF programs in a manner that addresses the unique needs and circumstances of their members. They can define such elements as the program service area, service population (e.g., all Native families in the service area or only enrolled members of the tribe), time limits, benefits and services, the definition of "family," eligibility criteria, and work activities. Tribes have the ability to establish, through negotiation with the federal Department of Health and Human Services, their own program work participation rate targets and required work hours. Tribes must provide the rationale for proposed work requirements, including how they are consistent with the purposes of TANF and with the economic conditions and resources available to the tribe.

The tribal TANF programs also recognize the role of traditional tribal activities in the lives of their members and have incorporated them into their program structure. They accept traditional activities such as subsistence fishing, hunting, and gathering as well as traditional crafts as legitimate work participation. Because many TANF participants have little experience with work in a cash economy, these traditional activities can be critical to the growth of a sense of responsibility and to the development of employment skills.

The location and accessibility of tribal TANF programs help overcome employment barriers in rural Alaska. Often state TANF offices and resources are not available to village residents living far off the road system. Tribal TANF programs have developed program offices in towns and

villages throughout rural Alaska bringing critical TANF services to families in their own communities. Tribal TANF programs have also been successful in coordinating the various human service programs they offer such as employment, workforce development, training and social services. This holistic approach results in efficient services that promote the health and self-sufficiency of the entire family.

Tribes administering TANF programs have the option to administer their programs utilizing Public Law 102-477, which authorizes the integration of various employment, training, and related services provided by tribal governments under a Bureau of Indian Affairs approved 477 plan. Currently, 11 of the 36 Tribal TANF programs are administered under this program including the three programs in Alaska. The tribes that utilize this option do so to integrate and consolidate their TANF programs with other related and complementary support programs. This allows tribes to simplify their budgeting, operating, and reporting systems, while maximizing their resources and service delivery capabilities. Financial reporting relating to the TANF program has been integrated to the maximum extent possible, while still meeting the minimum statutory requirement for ensuring proper expenditure of TANF funds. Performance reporting must of necessity be maintained separately in order to meet minimum statutory and regulatory reporting requirements.

Tribal TANF providers may also develop their own strategies for achieving the program goal of family self-sufficiency. The tribal TANF programs, like the state's Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP), have adopted a philosophy that emphasizes work as a means of independence from public assistance. Along with a cash benefit, each program offers services that promote rapid employment, self-sufficiency, and family stability. Tribes have adopted strategies designed to prepare TANF participants for employment including adult education, job skill training, and work experience, and to eliminate barriers to employment by addressing such problems as lack of quality and affordable childcare, domestic violence, health and mental health difficulties, and untreated alcohol or substance abuse.

Status of Tribal TANF Programs in Alaska

Currently, tribal TANF programs in Alaska are serving a total of 970 families. Approximately forty percent of families have one child and 30 percent have two children.

Consistent with the goal of self-sufficiency, tribal TANF programs strongly support moving tribal members from welfare to work with an average of 40 percent of adults engaged in work or work participation activities. Since the first Alaska tribal TANF program began operation in 1999, the number of Alaska Native tribal TANF recipients has dropped by over 33 percent.

While tribal TANF results are below the state caseload reduction of 52 percent, this is a positive result when considering the challenge of securing employment in rural areas served by the state's tribal TANF programs. Figure 2 compares caseload reduction in the Alaska Temporary Assistance program with that of the three tribal TANF programs.

Comparison of Temporary Assistance, TCC, T&H, and AVCP Native TANF Cases

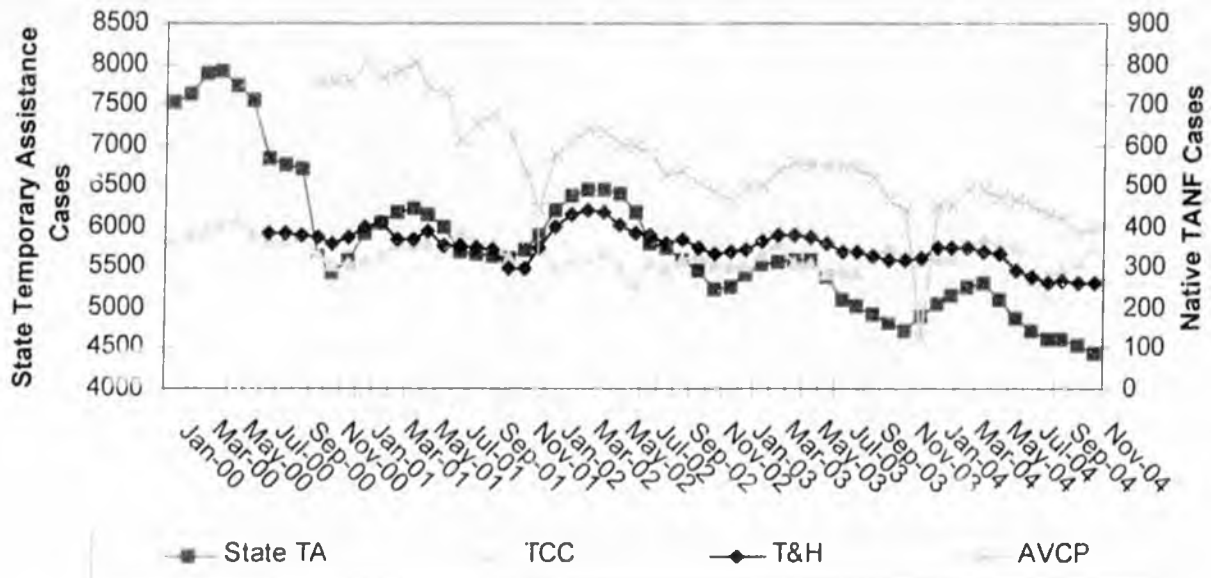


Figure 2

Tanana Chiefs "Athabaskan Self-Sufficiency Assistance Partnership Program" (ASAP)

The service area for the ASAP program includes Fairbanks and 42 villages in Doyon Region of interior Alaska. This program serves all families in which the head of the household is Alaska Native or American Indian. The program began operation in October 1998, and in FY 2004 served an average of 315 families per month.

The ASAP program 2003 funding includes \$5,312.1 in federal funding and \$2,405.2 in state funding through the NFAP grant program. During FY 2003 the ASAP program provided services to approximately 1,618 clients including 289 families receiving childcare assistance for 468 children. The program authorized approximately \$1.8 million in cash benefits to eligible recipients and over \$253,000 in direct client or supportive services.

The goal of the ASAP program is to strengthen individuals, their families and their communities by increasing their capacities to support each other through meaningful work and employment, and to develop local resources and jobs to decrease dependency on cash assistance programs. The program is based on four guiding principals: every family has basic needs, which must be met; every family has something to offer their community; it takes a lot of work to meet the needs of a family and a community; and in every community, everyone should support themselves and each other by the work that they do.

Services provided by the ASAP program include case management, on-the-job training, short term job training, counseling and skill building, help with child care expenses, referrals for paid employment, referrals for community work services, structured job search to teach specific job search skills, transitional services including child care assistance and post-employment services, GED or high school instruction, vocational training, and higher education. Additional services

offered to families include financial literacy training, mentorship from members of the local community and linkages to therapeutic treatment options.



An innovative feature of the ASAP program is a one-stop service center in each of the village council offices. This model of service coordination promotes a holistic focus on family needs and allows TCC to deliver a variety of services efficiently and effectively. Prior to the transition to the one-stop service centers, there was a zero percent overall work participation rate for village-based TANF recipients. Now, the ASAP program has met its work participation requirements, put families into work, offered

opportunities for training and matched parents with specialized resources.

The ASAP program has also promoted financial self-sufficiency with the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Program. The program helped 774 recipients apply for the EITC on their tax returns, with approximately \$570,000 realized in tax refunds. During the next fiscal year ASAP will offer EITC preparation seminars through a contract with Alaska Business Development Center and in conjunction with the University of Alaska. This program will assist working TANF recipients as well as those who have left ASAP to participate in the EITC program to augment their household income.

Community collaborations enhance services provided to recipients. In 2003 the ASAP program partnered with the State of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development to present the Fairbanks Job Fair. Eighty-six employers and over 2,400 individuals participated making this the largest job fair ever in Alaska. Through a partnership with the TCC Tribal College, staff at the ASAP program began the training to become Certified Career Development Facilitators (CDF). CDF's are qualified to work in Career Resource Centers, Welfare to Work programs, as well as a variety of workforce development settings.

Faith-based partnerships are also a feature of ASAP. Love In the Name of Christ (Love, INC) provides "Hope Seminars" focusing on a range of skills including cooking on a tight budget, time and credit management, marriage and family communication, and purchasing and caring for a car. Successful completion of the two-day seminar enables an individual to be eligible for the Love, INC vehicle donation program. Through a partnership with TCC Old Minto Recovery and St. Mathews Church, the ASAP program offers "Strengthening the Families." This eight-week course is designed to strengthen family communication, encourage prevention of substance abuse for the youth, and assist high-risk families with essential skills for rebuilding a healthy family life.

The ASAP program has been successful in reducing the program caseload and putting people to work. During FY 2003, 265 clients were placed in unsubsidized employment. Between FY 2002 and FY 2003, the TCC caseload dropped by 5 percent. Since the time TCC began their

TANF program, their caseload has dropped approximately 16 percent. Figure 3 shows the changes in caseload since the program began.

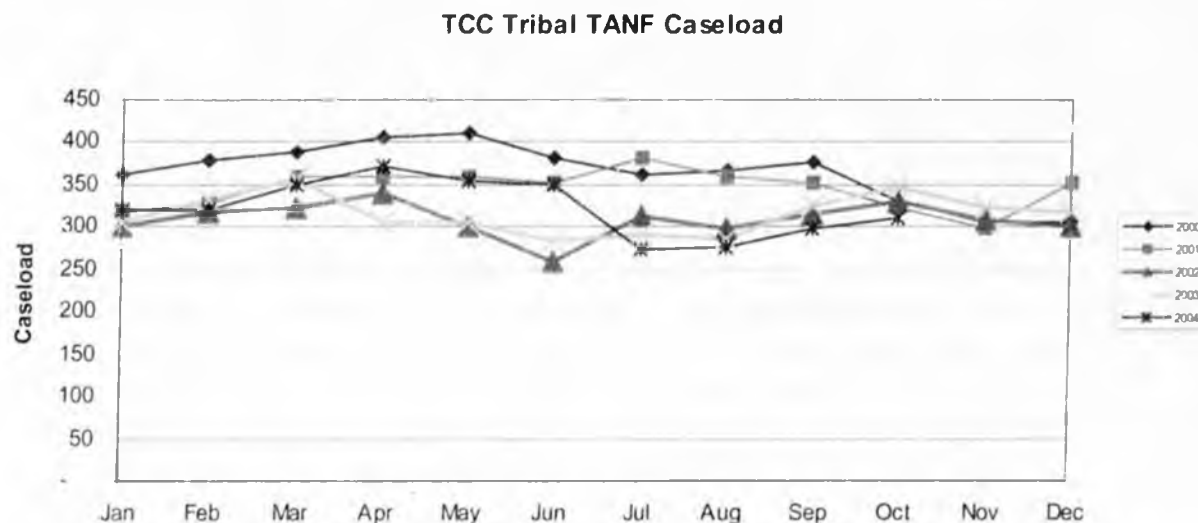


Figure 3

Central Council of Tlingit and Haida TANF Program

The T&H program serves Southeast Alaska, with eligibility restricted to households where at least one member is Alaska Native and enrolled or eligible for membership in a federally recognized tribe in the service area. These tribes include Angoon, Klukwan, Haines, Craig, Douglas, Hoonah, Hydaburg, Kake, Kasaan, Ketchikan, Klawock, Pelican, Petersburg, Saxman, Skagway, Tenakee, Wrangell, Sitka, Yakutat, and Juneau. The program began operation in July 2000. In FY 2003, the T&H program served an average of 315 families per month.

The 2003 T&H TANF program funding includes \$ 2,367,150 million in federal funding and \$2,575,500 in state funding through the Native Family Assistance Grant program. During FY 2003 the T&H TANF program provided services to approximately 350 clients including 208 families receiving childcare assistance for 624 children. The program authorized approximately \$2,642,315 million in cash benefits to eligible recipients and over \$801,000 in direct client or supportive services.

The overriding goal of the T&H tribal TANF program is to assist families to become self-sufficient. The program emphasizes work as a means to self-sufficiency with the expectation that both parents of children needing assistance must work to the extent of their ability. Program participants are encouraged to complete at least a high school education (or its equivalent), so that they can enjoy greater opportunities to obtain work that will produce sufficient income to support their families and contribute to their community. The program aims to discourage unwed pregnancies and works with all sectors of the community to discourage out-of-wedlock pregnancies, especially among teens, and encourages family stability by requiring teen parents to remain in their parents' or another responsible adult's home.

CORRECTION

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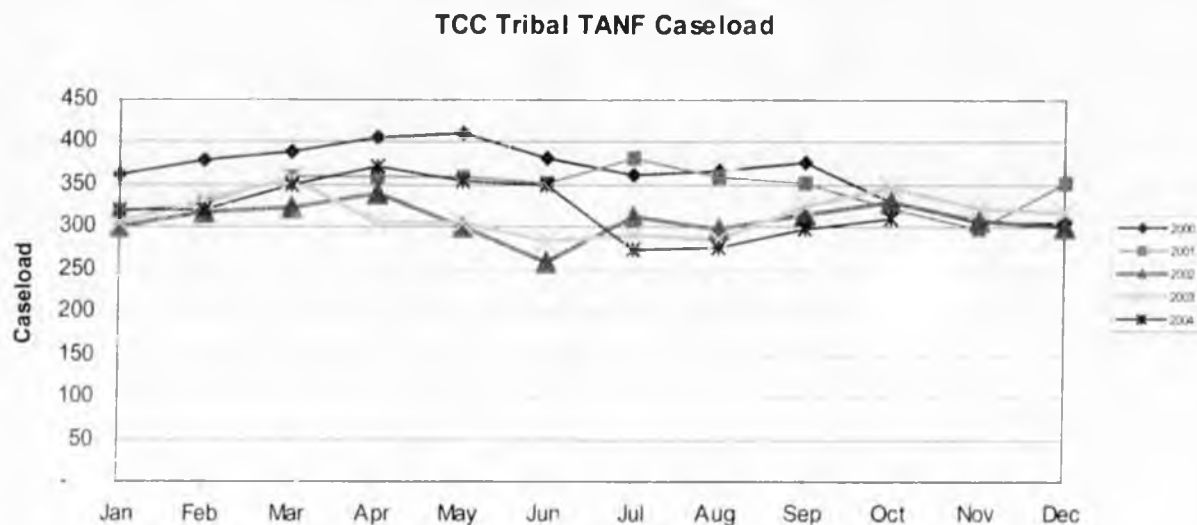


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Services provided by the T&H TANF program include case management, adult basic education, employment assessment, adult vocational training and higher education, work experience and on-the-job training, job search skills and post-employment services. A variety of supportive services are offered to families who are actively participating in seeking employment, in school or in training including childcare, transportation, work clothing, tools for work, food and shelter assistance and linkages to therapeutic treatment options.

Service coordination is a key feature of the T&H TANF program. In 1994, T&H was the first Native American agency to utilize PL 102-477 to integrate a variety of services under their Employment and Training Division. Internally, the T&H TANF program coordinates with its Division of Employment and Training to utilize the services of Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation, childcare, Adult Vocational Training, Tribal Employment Rights and the Youth Opportunity Program.

Additional internal coordination includes Central Council Tribal Family and Youth Services, Headstart, and Tribal enrollment services for medical and mental health services. State agency partners in the delivery of services to TANF recipients include the Division of Public Assistance, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Child Support Services, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Office of Children's Service. Community partnerships with the Southeast Regional Resource Center, Catholic Community Services, St. Vincent DePaul, and women's shelters such as Aiding Women and Rape Emergencies (AWARE) help to address the needs of families with barriers to work.

The T&H TANF program has been successful in reducing the program caseload and putting people to work. During FY 2003, 270 clients were placed in unsubsidized employment. Between FY 2002 and FY 2003, the T&H caseload dropped by 5 percent. Since the time T&H began their TANF program, their caseload has dropped approximately 7 percent. Figure 2 below shows the changes in caseload since the program began

T&H Tribal TANF Caseload

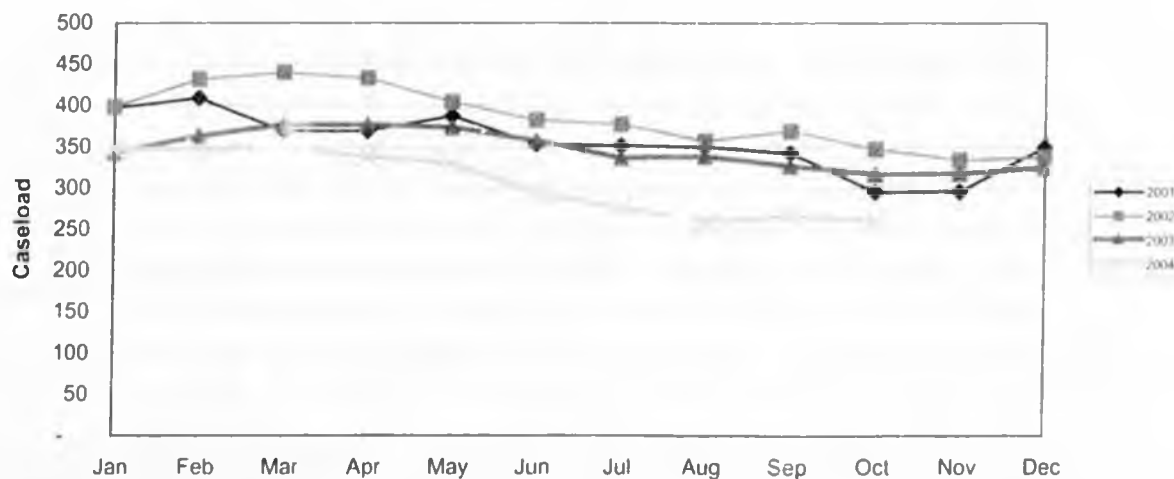


Figure 2

Association of Village Council Presidents TANF Program

The AVCP program serves Bethel and the 56 federally recognized tribes surrounding the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. In order to provide state public assistance in a uniform and cost effective manner, this program is designated as a "regional public assistance program," as it serves all Alaska Native families as well as non-Native families in the service area. This program began operation in October 2000. In FY 2003, the AVCP program served an average of 510 families per month.

The 2003 AVCP TANF program funding included \$5,420.8 in federal funding and \$3,740,400 in state funding through the Native Family Assistance Grant program. During FY 2003 the ASAP program provided services to approximately 550 clients including 18 families receiving childcare assistance for 36 children. The program authorized approximately \$3.4 million in cash benefits to eligible recipients.

The overriding goal of AVCP TANF is to assist families to become self-sufficient through employment. The program provides comprehensive services that meet the basic needs of families throughout the region while improving communities and strengthening individuals. Work and supportive services are offered internally or through referrals to community agencies.

The AVCP TANF program coordinates internally with other AVCP services and programs, in particular the Education, Employment, Training and Childcare Division (EET&CC). Services include adult vocational training, employment services, and Head Start. EET&CC services promote economic and social development of tribal members in order to reduce joblessness and to more fully develop the academic, occupational and literacy skills that make individuals more competitive in the workforce. State agency partners in the delivery of services to TANF recipients include the Division of Public Assistance, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and Child Support Services in the Department of Revenue.

The AVCP TANF program has been successful in reducing the program caseload and putting people to work. Between FY 2002 and FY 2003, the T&H caseload dropped by 10 percent. Since the time AVCP began their TANF program, their caseload has dropped approximately 40 percent. Figure 5 below shows the changes in caseload since the program began.

AVCP Tribal TANF Caseload

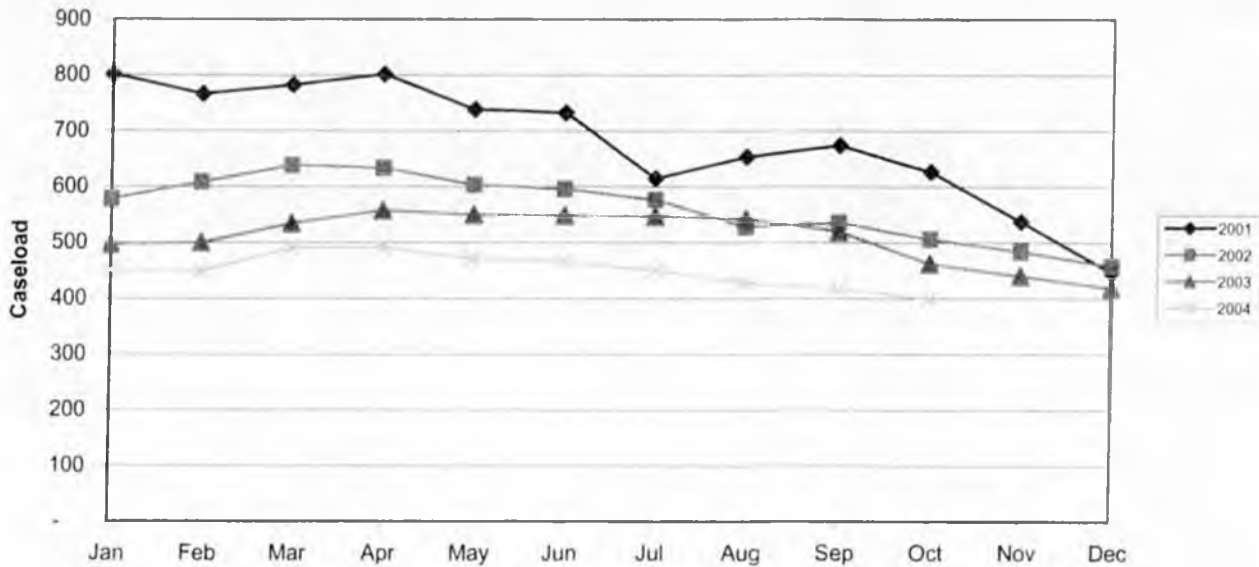


Figure 5

Obstacles and Lessons Learned

A common difficulty for tribes in Alaska was the development, operation and maintenance of computer information systems to support TANF operations. A TANF information system must support enrollment of program participants and help tribes track and report services provided and participant activities. Information systems are also crucial to the exchange of data with TANF partners such as the Alaska Child Support Services Division.

Unlike states, tribes did not receive funding to develop their own TANF information systems. In response, the state provided seed money to tribes to purchase a computer software product designed specifically for tribal TANF programs. The tribes are using this product with varying level of success and continue to struggle with the need to provide accurate data to state and federal agencies.

Because of the limitations of their own computer systems capacity, there is growing interest among tribal TANF providers in contracting with the state for use of the Eligibility Information System (EIS) used to administer programs in the Division of Public Assistance. Cook Inlet Tribal Council, scheduled to begin providing tribal TANF in July 2005, has made the decision to use EIS for at least two years while developing their own system. Two of the three groups currently providing tribal TANF have also expressed interest in converting to EIS. Using the EIS system may yield significant savings and efficiencies, particularly with respect to data transfers between agencies. The state will continue to support usage of EIS for tribal TANF programs in Alaska.

Trends in Tribal TANF

Interest in the development of Tribal TANF programs is on the increase. As of the current date, three additional groups have formally initiated planning for tribal TANF programs.

Cook Inlet Tribal Council. Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. (CITC) provides social, educational and employment services to Alaska Natives and Native Americans living in the Cook Inlet region. Established in 1983 by Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI) as a nonprofit social service agency, CITC administers over forty culturally appropriate programs designed to assist individuals and families to achieve self-sufficiency. Annually these programs serve an average of 13,000 Alaska Natives and Native Americans.

Over the last 20 years, Cook Inlet Tribal Council has grown from a staff of fifteen employees and total revenue of \$91,863 to a large and complex Native corporation, with over 245 employees and an annual operating budget in excess of \$31 million in the Year 2003. CITC's continuum of services runs through five departments: Substance Abuse Services, Youth Development Services, Educational Services Systems, Employment and Training Services, and Family Services.

CITC is preparing to add TANF to their comprehensive array of family services. With a planned start date of July 2005, the CITC Tribal TANF program will serve approximately 700 families in the Anchorage area.

Bristol Bay Native Association. The Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA) is an alliance of 30 Tribal Councils from villages in the Bristol Bay area of southwest Alaska. A non-profit service agency, BBNA provides educational, social and workforce development services to families and individuals as well as economic development opportunities for the region. BBNA is in the early planning phase of their TANF program with a scheduled start date of October 2005. The proposed program will serve approximately 125 families in the Bristol Bay region.

Maniilaq. Additionally, the Maniilaq Association has recently begun formal planning for a TANF program to serve Northwest Alaska. Maniilaq is the non-profit Native Consortium located in the hub village of Kotzebue, providing tribal, health and social services to native and non-native residents of the Northwest Arctic Borough and Pt. Hope. The proposed program will serve approximately 145 families.

Recommendations

Reauthorize the Native Family Assistance Program.

Across the nation, federal welfare reform has been successful in moving families from welfare to work. One of the main reasons for this success has been the fact that the federal welfare reform law afforded the states the flexibility to design and run their own unique TANF programs. In the same light, the federal law allows Alaska Native tribes to run their own programs designed by their members, locally controlled, and culturally relevant. Tribes have a better grasp of social and economic conditions that inform their work and allow them to tailor services based on the

unique needs of local communities. This local presence and familiarity with village and community life puts the tribes in the best position to administer their programs and to successfully promote self-sufficiency for their clients.

The Native Family Assistance Grant program affirms the state's interest in promoting regional responsibility and local control for public assistance programs in Alaska. The three tribal programs currently operating have successfully administered TANF programs that reflect the unique needs and conditions in local communities and have been proven effective in moving tribal members towards self-sufficiency through employment. The single regional public assistance program operating in the Yukon-Kuskokwim area of Alaska that serves both Native and non-Native families in the region has been shown to be administratively efficient and cost effective. Reauthorization of the Native Family Assistance program will ensure that tribal groups currently delivering TANF services will continue to provide comparable and culturally relevant services in their own villages and communities, and may also improve the delivery of the Temporary Assistance program in rural areas.

Both state and tribal officials agree that federal funds alone are insufficient for the successful operation of a tribal TANF program that is comparable to the state run program. Supplementing tribal TANF programs with Native Family Assistance grants will maximize federal block grant funds available to tribes, and will promote effective welfare-to-work service delivery models for rural Alaska. The Alaska Legislature should pass the Governor's proposed legislation that will make the NFAP program permanent.

Expand availability of Native Family Assistance grants to all tribal groups authorized in federal law to operate tribal TANF programs.

Two additional Native non-profits not currently authorized to receive Native Family Assistance Grants are actively planning tribal TANF programs as they are authorized to do in federal law. At least one additional non-profit has expressed interest revealing a strong trend toward development of tribal TANF programs in Alaska. Expansion of the availability of Native Family Assistance grants will ensure that all tribal organizations federally authorized to deliver tribal TANF programs will have the opportunity to access the necessary state resources and provide effective and innovative public assistance programs to their members.

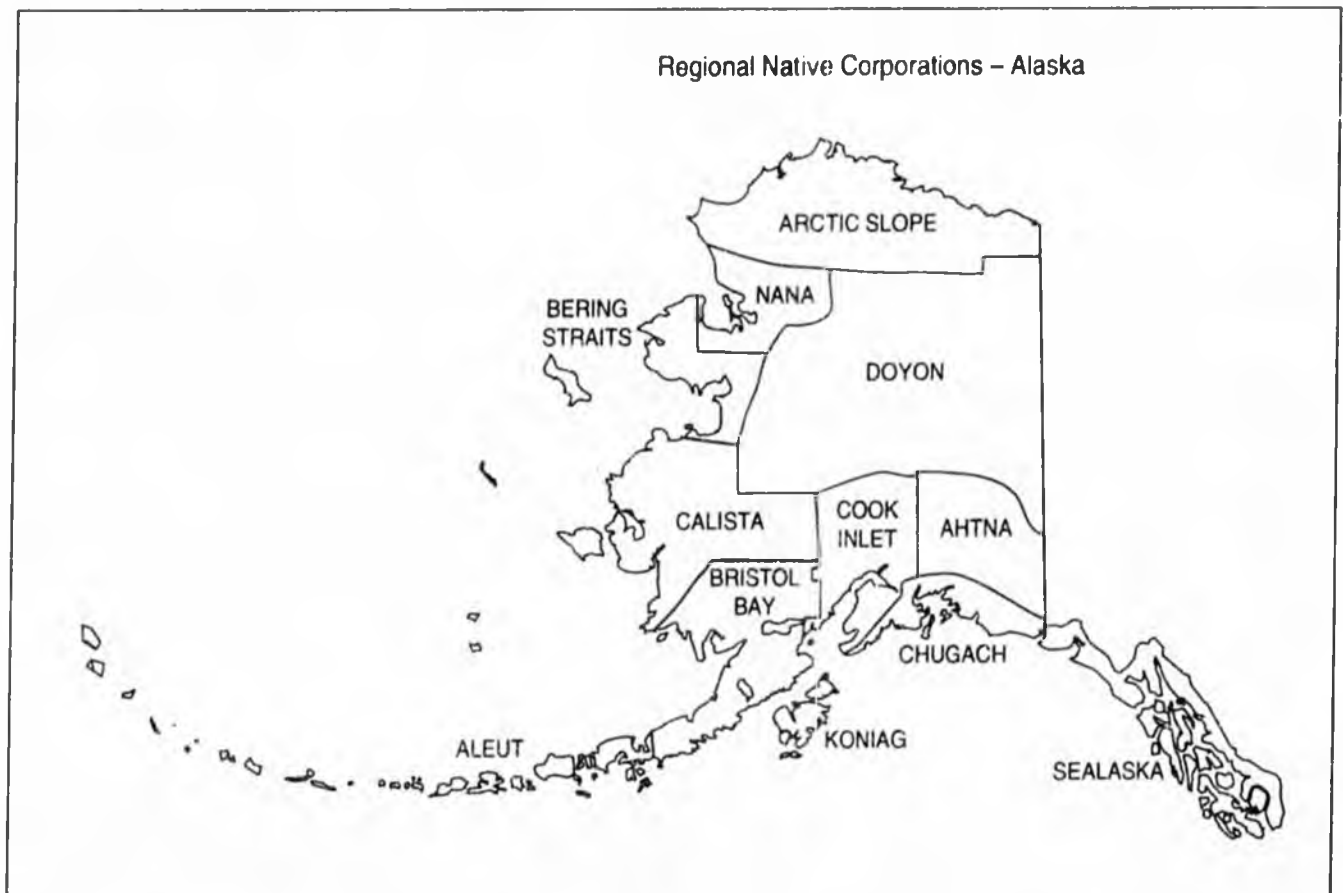
Appendix A

**Table and Map: Regional Native Corporations and their
Non-Profit Organizations**

Regional Native Corporations and their Non-Profit Organizations

Alaska Native Regional Corporations	Regional Non-Profit Organization
Arctic Slope Regional Corporation	Arctic Slope Native Association
Bering Straits Native Corporation	Kawerak, Inc.
Nana	Maniilaq Association
Calista Corporation	Association of Village Council Presidents, Inc
Doyon, Limited	Tanana Chiefs Conference
Cook Inlet Region, Inc.	Cook Inlet Tribal Council
Bristol Bay Native Corporation	Bristol Bay Native Association
Aleut Corporation	Aleutian and Pribilof Islands Association
Chugach Alaska Corporation	Chugachmiut
Sealaska Corporation	Tlingit and Haida Central Council
Koniag, Inc.	Kodiak Area Native Association
Ahtna, Inc.	Copper River Native Association
Metlakatla Indian Community of the Annette Island Reserve *	

* The only Indian Reservation in Alaska



Appendix B

**Selected Sections from PL 104-193, the Personal Responsibility and Work
Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)**

Section 412. Direct Funding and Administration by Indian Tribes
Section 419. Definitions

SEC. 412. DIRECT FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION BY INDIAN TRIBES.

(a) GRANTS FOR INDIAN TRIBES-

(1) TRIBAL FAMILY ASSISTANCE GRANT-

(A) IN GENERAL- For each of fiscal years 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002, the Secretary shall pay to each Indian tribe that has an approved tribal family assistance plan a tribal family assistance grant for the fiscal year in an amount equal to the amount determined under subparagraph (B), and shall reduce the grant payable under section 403(a)(1) to any State in which lies the service area or areas of the Indian tribe by that portion of the amount so determined that is attributable to expenditures by the State.

(B) AMOUNT DETERMINED-

(i) IN GENERAL- The amount determined under this subparagraph is an amount equal to the total amount of the Federal payments to a State or States under section 403 (as in effect during such fiscal year) for fiscal year 1994 attributable to expenditures (other than child care expenditures) by the State or States under parts A and F (as so in effect) for fiscal year 1994 for Indian families residing in the service area or areas identified by the Indian tribe pursuant to subsection (b)(1)(C) of this section.

(ii) USE OF STATE SUBMITTED DATA-

(I) IN GENERAL- The Secretary shall use State submitted data to make each determination under clause (i).

(II) DISAGREEMENT WITH DETERMINATION- If an Indian tribe or tribal organization disagrees with State submitted data described under subclause (I), the Indian tribe or tribal organization may submit to the Secretary such additional information as may be relevant to making the determination under clause (i) and the Secretary may consider such information before making such determination.

(2) GRANTS FOR INDIAN TRIBES THAT RECEIVED JOBS FUNDS-

(A) IN GENERAL- The Secretary shall pay to each eligible Indian tribe for each of fiscal years 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002 a grant in an amount equal to the amount received by the Indian tribe in fiscal year 1994 under section 482(i) (as in effect during fiscal year 1994).

(B) ELIGIBLE INDIAN TRIBE- For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term 'eligible Indian tribe' means an Indian tribe or Alaska Native organization that conducted a job opportunities and basic skills training program in fiscal year 1995 under section 482(i) (as in effect during fiscal year 1995).

(C) USE OF GRANT- Each Indian tribe to which a grant is made under this paragraph shall use the grant for the purpose of operating a program to make work activities available to members of the Indian tribe.

(D) APPROPRIATION- Out of any money in the Treasury of the United States not otherwise appropriated, there are appropriated \$7,638,474 for

each fiscal year specified in subparagraph (A) for grants under subparagraph (A).

(b) 3-YEAR TRIBAL FAMILY ASSISTANCE PLAN-

(1) IN GENERAL- Any Indian tribe that desires to receive a tribal family assistance grant shall submit to the Secretary a 3-year tribal family assistance plan that--

(A) outlines the Indian tribe's approach to providing welfare-related services for the 3-year period, consistent with this section;

(B) specifies whether the welfare-related services provided under the plan will be provided by the Indian tribe or through agreements, contracts, or compacts with intertribal consortia, States, or other entities;

(C) identifies the population and service area or areas to be served by such plan;

(D) provides that a family receiving assistance under the plan may not receive duplicative assistance from other State or tribal programs funded under this part;

(E) identifies the employment opportunities in or near the service area or areas of the Indian tribe and the manner in which the Indian tribe will cooperate and participate in enhancing such opportunities for recipients of assistance under the plan consistent with any applicable State standards; and

(F) applies the fiscal accountability provisions of section 5(f)(1) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450c(f)(1)), relating to the submission of a single-agency audit report required by chapter 75 of title 31, United States Code.

(2) APPROVAL- The Secretary shall approve each tribal family assistance plan submitted in accordance with paragraph (1).

(3) CONSORTIUM OF TRIBES- Nothing in this section shall preclude the development and submission of a single tribal family assistance plan by the participating Indian tribes of an intertribal consortium.

(c) MINIMUM WORK PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS AND TIME LIMITS- The Secretary, with the participation of Indian tribes, shall establish for each Indian tribe receiving a grant under this section minimum work participation requirements, appropriate time limits for receipt of welfare-related services under the grant, and penalties against individuals--

(1) consistent with the purposes of this section;

(2) consistent with the economic conditions and resources available to each tribe; and

(3) similar to comparable provisions in section 407(e).

(d) EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE- Nothing in this section shall preclude an Indian tribe from seeking emergency assistance from any Federal loan program or emergency fund.

(e) ACCOUNTABILITY- Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the ability of the Secretary to maintain program funding accountability consistent with--

(1) generally accepted accounting principles; and

(2) the requirements of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450 et seq.).

(f) PENALTIES-

(1) Subsections (a)(1), (a)(6), and (b) of section 409, shall apply to an Indian tribe with an approved tribal assistance plan in the same manner as such subsections apply to a State.

(2) Section 409(a)(3) shall apply to an Indian tribe with an approved tribal assistance plan by substituting 'meet minimum work participation requirements established under section 412(c)' for 'comply with section 407(a)'.

(g) DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING- Section 411 shall apply to an Indian tribe with an approved tribal family assistance plan.

(h) SPECIAL RULE FOR INDIAN TRIBES IN ALASKA-

(1) **IN GENERAL-** Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, and except as provided in paragraph (2), an Indian tribe in the State of Alaska that receives a tribal family assistance grant under this section shall use the grant to operate a program in accordance with requirements comparable to the requirements applicable to the program of the State of Alaska funded under this part. Comparability of programs shall be established on the basis of program criteria developed by the Secretary in consultation with the State of Alaska and such Indian tribes.

(2) **WAIVER-** An Indian tribe described in paragraph (1) may apply to the appropriate State authority to receive a waiver of the requirement of paragraph (1).

SEC. 419. DEFINITIONS.

As used in this part:

(1) ADULT- The term 'adult' means an individual who is not a minor child.

(2) MINOR CHILD- The term 'minor child' means an individual who--

(A) has not attained 18 years of age; or

(B) has not attained 19 years of age and is a full-time student in a secondary school (or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training).

(3) FISCAL YEAR- The term 'fiscal year' means any 12-month period ending on September 30 of a calendar year.

(4) INDIAN, INDIAN TRIBE, AND TRIBAL ORGANIZATION-

(A) IN GENERAL- Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the terms 'Indian', 'Indian tribe', and 'tribal organization' have the meaning given such terms by section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b).

(B) SPECIAL RULE FOR INDIAN TRIBES IN ALASKA- The term 'Indian tribe' means, with respect to the State of Alaska, only the Metlakatla Indian Community of the Annette Islands Reserve and the following Alaska Native regional nonprofit corporations:

(i) Arctic Slope Native Association.

(ii) Kawerak, Inc.

(iii) Maniilaq Association.

(iv) Association of Village Council Presidents.

(v) Tanana Chiefs Conference.

(vi) Cook Inlet Tribal Council.

(vii) Bristol Bay Native Association.

(viii) Aleutian and Pribilof Island Association.

(ix) Chugachmuit.

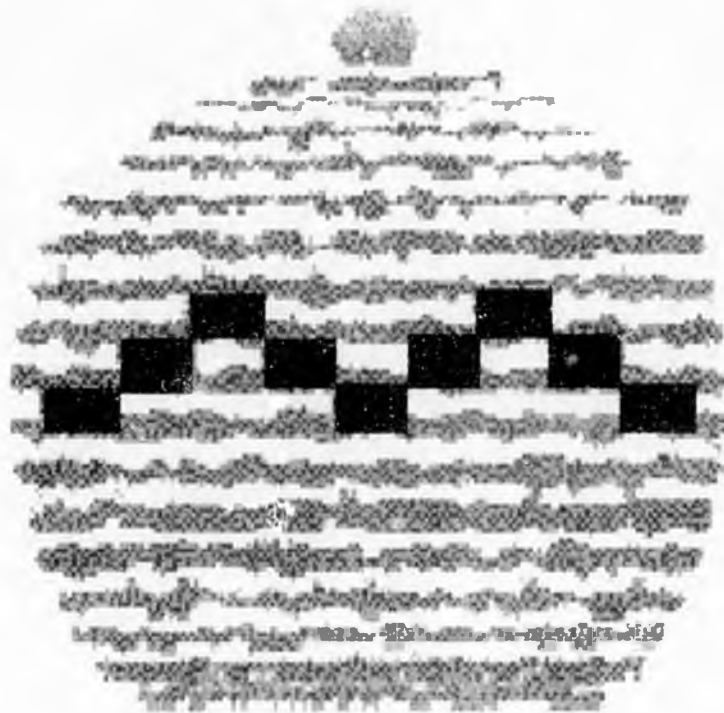
(x) Tlingit Haida Central Council.

(xi) Kodiak Area Native Association.

(xii) Copper River Native Association.

(5) STATE- Except as otherwise specifically provided, the term 'State' means the 50 States of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa.

COOK INLET TRIBAL COUNCIL, INC
TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES PLAN



COOK INLET TRIBAL COUNCIL, INC. TANF PLAN

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Authority

1.1.1.

Statutory

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) authorizes Indian tribes, including 13 Alaska Regional Native non-profit organizations, to administer a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and to receive direct federal funding for such program. 42 U.S.C. § 612.

1.1.2

Approval by governing body

Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. (CITCI) Board of Directors authorized the President to submit this Tribal Family Assistance Plan (TFAP) and to carry out its TANF program under the terms of this plan. CITCI Resolution 03-04 (June 18, 2003).

1.2. Comparability with state program

CITCI assures that this TFAP is comparable to the requirements applicable to the State of Alaska's Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP), as required by 42 U.S.C. § 612(h)(1), and is consistent with the goals and principles contained in the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP) of the State of Alaska.

1.3. Plan preparation

CITCI has visited other TANF programs within the state and has conducted a feasibility study of the program using various assumptions relative to changes (both higher and lower than the 1994 amounts used in calculating TANF funding) in the number of individuals to be served. A formal presentation of the plan scenarios was made to the full Board of Directors. The directive to the President to further pursue Tribal TANF from the Board was unanimous.

1.4. Agreements, contracts or compacts

Welfare related services will be provided directly by CITCI on behalf of Alaska Natives and American Indians living in the Municipality of Anchorage. CITCI will phase in the offer of service to all villages within the CIRI region after year two and three of operating Tribal TANF within the Municipality of Anchorage.

2. GOALS, PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES

2.1. Goal

The overriding goal of this tribal TANF plan is to assist primary individuals in families to become self-sufficient.

2.2. Principles and strategies

The following principles and strategies will guide CITCI toward achieving this goal.

2.2.1.

Emphasize work

Custodial and non-custodial parents of children needing assistance under this Plan must work to the extent of their ability. CITCI is committed to making efforts to create opportunities for paid and unpaid employment.

2.2.2

Promote self-sufficiency

CITCI will encourage all participants to move toward personal, family and community self-sufficiency.

2.2.3.

Promote education

CITCI encourages all participants to complete at least a high school education (or its equivalent), so that participants can enjoy greater opportunities to obtain work that will produce sufficient income to support their families and contribute to their community.

2.2.4

Discourage unwed pregnancies

CITCI will work with all sectors of the community to discourage out-of-wedlock pregnancies, especially among teens.

2.2.5

Promote family stability

CITCI will encourage family stability by requiring teen parents to remain in their parents' or another responsible adult's home. In addition, CITCI will encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

2.2.6

Promote responsibility

CITCI will encourage responsibility by requiring cooperation with efforts to ensure both parents provide support for their children.

2.2.7.

Discourage dependency

CITCI will assist each family to develop a plan to reduce dependency on Tribal TANF assistance and to assure that each family contributes to the community for any assistance it does receive.

2.2.8.

Minimize bureaucracy

CITCI will work closely with the State of Alaska and other social service agencies to minimize the bureaucracy that families needing assistance often encounter and must overcome to obtain help and support.

2.2.9.

Maintain a safety net

CITCI will work to maintain a safety net in which families in need of assistance may continue to receive benefits whether employment opportunities are available or not. Through exercising the existing exemption for up to 20% of the monthly CITCI Tribal TANF caseload, making certain eligible families have continued access to Food Stamp and Medicaid programs, and by utilizing funding available through Tribal 477 support programs (when eligible), CITCI will maintain a safety net in which a parent may continue to provide care for their own children in their own home.

3. TERM

3.1. Initial term

The term of this Plan shall be from July 1, 2005, through June 30, 2008.

3.2. Retrocession

CITCI may not terminate its responsibility for the operation of the TANF program under this Plan during the term, except:

3.2.3.

Notice

Upon no less than 120 day notice to the Department of Health and Human Services and the State of Alaska; or

3.2.2.

Agreement

On a date agreed upon between CITCI and the State of Alaska.

3.3. Compliance

CITCI will comply with all applicable TANF regulations and related laws as specified in 45 CFR 286.30 related to retrocession.

4. SERVICE POPULATION AND AREA

4.1. Population

CITCI will serve all Alaska Native and American Indian families within the Municipality of Anchorage service area who meet the TANF eligibility criteria. CITCI will phase in an offer of service to all eligible Alaska Native and American Indian families residing in the 8 CIRI Region villages after years two and three of Tribal TANF operation.

4.1.1.

Verification of enrollment status

CITCI will make the initial determination of whether the head of the assistance unit is a qualified and eligible applicant as defined in Section 4.1 at the time of application for benefits. Verification of enrollment will be met by the following criteria:

4.1.1.1. Documentation

Applicants must provide adequate documentation that the head of the assistance unit is a qualified and eligible applicant as defined in Section 4.1 at the time of application for benefits.

TRIBAL Documentation to include but not limited to:

1. Letter or card from the Bureau of Indian Affairs showing enrollment number, or
2. Tribal Enrollment Card (from Federally Recognized Tribe or Village), or
3. Birth Certificate showing Alaska Native or American Indian heritage, or

4. Letter on Tribal stationary showing Alaska Native or American Indian, giving the enrollment number or indicating that the applicant is an enrolled member or a descendant of an enrolled member of the tribe or village, or
5. Notarized statement from tribal officials stating their tribal affiliation and attesting to the fact that they know the applicant's family. (used primarily in cases where non-Native children are adopted by a Native family), or
6. Baptismal Certificate indicating applicant is Alaska Native or American Indian, or
7. Health Services Statement indicating eligibility as Alaska Native or American Indian to receive IHS services.

4.2. Service Area

CITCI will serve eligible Alaska Natives and American Indians living in the Municipality of Anchorage service area. CITCI will phase in the offer of service to all villages in the CIRI region after years two and three of operating Tribal TANF within the Municipality of Anchorage.

4.3. Head of the Assistance Unit Defined

4.3.1.

Two Parent Households

The head of a two-parent household is defined as that person who makes application for benefits for the assistance unit. To be eligible for benefits the person making application for benefits must fit the criteria established in section 4.1. – 4.1.1.1.

4.3.2.

One Parent household

The head of a one-parent household is defined as that person who makes application for benefits for the assistance unit. To be eligible for benefits the person making application for benefits must fit the criteria established in 4.1. – 4.1.1.1.

4.3.3.

Child Only Household

A child only household is defined as one in which neither parent, or caretaker relative, is eligible to make application for benefits. To be eligible for benefits, the child on behalf of whom application for benefits is being made must fit the criteria established in 4.1. – 4.1.1.1.

5. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY IN SERVICE AREA

5.1. Native population increase

The Municipality of Anchorage service area has a population of 260,283, of which 10% are Alaska Native and/or American Indian [26,995] (2000 Census). Anchorage is the largest city in Alaska and also has the largest population of Alaska Natives and American Indians in the State, at 23% of the total Native population of the state. The area encompasses 1,698 square miles and is the center of commerce for the state as well as a hub for services for rural Alaska. Anchorage's average unemployment rate is 6.8% for the general population, but 18.3% for Alaskan Natives or American Indians (June 2003 AK DOL).

5.2. Geographic Description

The Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI) is one of the thirteen regional profit corporations established by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (43 USC 1601 et seq.) (ANCSA). According to a hierarchy established under the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act (PL 93 638), a regional corporation is vested with Tribal Authority in the absence of a recognized IRA or traditional Council of ANCSA Village Corporation. Cook Inlet Region, Inc. is recognized as the appropriate Tribal Authority, governing body, for the CITCI (non-profit) service area which includes the Municipality of Anchorage.

The Cook Inlet Region is 38,000 square mile and includes Alaska's largest city, Anchorage. The Cook Inlet Region is experiencing a tremendous Native American population growth. The 1990 census didn't provide the option of indicating more than one race and data indicates an increase of 17,391, nearly double the 1990 population.

The mileage from Anchorage to the northern-most point is 140 miles; to the southern-most point is 255 miles. The only way to the village of Tyonek on the western boundary is by bush plane from Anchorage and to get to the village of Seldovia in the south, a drive for 4.5 hours followed by a 20 minute flight over Kachemak Bay.

5.3. Economic Description of CIRI region

CIRI Region comprises 8 villages: Chickaloon, Eklutna, Knik and Fairview, Ninilchick, Tyonek, Seldovia, Salamatof, Kenaitze Indian Tribe. Because the region is large and diverse, the best description may come from examples:

Chickaloon Village: Ahtna and Denai'ina Athabascan Indians have occupied this area for centuries. Today 1,559 descendants live here. It is located 92 minutes northeast from Anchorage on the Alaska road system. The non-Native portion of the community is approximately 15,359. The unemployment rate at the time of the 2000 census was 24.18%, although 48.67% of all adults (Native and non-Native) were considered not in the labor force at the time.

Eklutna Village: The total population is 394; fifty two (52) residents are descendants of the Dena'ina-Athabascan. The village lies 25 miles north of Anchorage on the Alaska road system. The majority of non-Native residents are employed in Anchorage and their income averages \$31,679.00. For the Native residents, however, their income averages \$19,494.00. The unemployment rate at the time of the 2000 census was 5.83%, although 30.20% of all adults were not considered in the labor force at the time.

Knik Village and Fairview: Knik is located 37 miles northwest of Anchorage. 2,614 Alaska Natives live in this village. The area includes a non-Native community of 29,355, part of the Matanuska-Susitna Valley, the fastest growing region of the State of Alaska. The unemployment rate in 2000 was 13.54%, although 44.38% of all adults were not in the labor force at that time.

5.4. Reason for population growth

Alaska Natives are in-migrating from the villages to the Anchorage Mat-Su region in record numbers. Within the past thirty years the Native population doubled (Census 2000). We are witnessing a Native population explosion, with Natives moving from village Alaska to urban Alaska to find jobs and improve the quality of their lives, as well as gain access to the Alaska Native Medical Center health services not available in rural areas.

The overall growth of Native American populations is largely attributed to natural increase. The high birth rate is reflected in the percentage of households with children. For Native American households in Alaska, 56.1% contained children while only 45.0% of the total number of households in the state contained children.

High competition for jobs

Alaska Native/Native Americans have a serious competitive disadvantage in competing with non-Natives for the better paying jobs or any jobs at all. It has become harder to find permanent full-time and/or seasonal employment even in industries traditionally filled by Alaska Native and American Indians. A recent report from the 2000 Census shows the unemployment rate for American Indians and Alaska Natives in the Municipality of Anchorage at 18.3%, whereas the unemployment rate for someone of Anglo descent is 6.3%.

5.6. Becoming competitive

Knowledge of available resources and services, along with appropriate assessment and counseling services, are critical components to the success of our clients. Access to life skills training, substance abuse treatment, employment opportunities and counseling services will provide clients encouragement, motivation, and skills to continue to pursue and achieve their goals.

5.7. Employment possibilities

Although unemployment rose a point higher in 2002 (Fried, 2003), the Anchorage area forecast indicates that Anchorage can still expect to have growth for the next two years. The oil industry is not expected to change much, but construction continues to see growth due to major projects such as schools, airports, highways, and the Alaska Psychiatric Institute building. Transportation should remain level, balanced by a decrease in passenger-related services with an increase in international air cargo. Little growth is anticipated for the retail market as well as for the visitor industry. Health care and education services are likely to provide the largest employment gains.

In the outlying rural areas, subsistence, tourism, and commercial fishing are the mainstays. If invited to serve this broader area, CITCI will work toward expanding opportunities in the communities where possible, using community service activities which may lead to expanded employment by developing skills and empowering our people to see new possibilities. We will coordinate our endeavors with the State and with local social service organizations in the villages.

5.8. Full-time permanent employment

Year-round employment opportunities in the Municipality of Anchorage service area are available for those with the job skills relative to the job market. People migrating into the area from the lower 48 states and other parts of Alaska take up the majority of the permanent full-time employment positions. Work opportunities that exist in the region are largely government related or tied to service or health industries. These include:

**5.8.1.
Alaska State and Municipality of Anchorage**

government offices

**5.8.2.
Federal government offices serving the region**

**5.8.3.
Tribal for profit and non-profit offices**

**5.8.4.
Non-profit social and community services**

**5.8.5.
Private employers:**

- Automotive sales and services
- Banking services
- Construction
- Health services
- Housekeeping and janitorial services
- Information/ telecommunications services
- Leisure and hospitality services
- Plumbing, heating, and home maintenance services
- Restaurants and food services
- Retail and wholesale trade services
- Seafood industry
- Social Services
- Transportation services
- Utilities

5.9. Commitment to develop resources

CITCI will work with employers in the above sectors to determine employment opportunities for TANF recipients and assist in economic development and job creation activities. This effort will be coordinated with the State of Alaska as well as the major regional and sub-regional social services organizations.

6. NON-FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

6.1. Family must include dependent child

To be eligible for assistance under the CITCI TANF Plan, a family must include a caretaker relative and one or more dependent children or a woman in the last trimester of her pregnancy.

**6.1.1.
Dependent child defined**

A "dependent child" is a child under 18 years of age; or a person under 19 years of age if the person is a full-time student in a secondary school or equivalent vocational/technical training, whether the training can be completed by age 19 or not. A dependent child is not a Temporary Assistance applicant themselves.

**6.1.2.
Caretaker relative**

A "caretaker relative" is a person who provides the care and control of the dependent child and who is:

6.1.2.1. Parent

A biological or adoptive parent or stepparent to the dependent child; thus it is possible to have a parent who may also be a dependent child.

6.1.2.2. Relative

A biological or adoptive relative to the child within the fifth degree of consanguinity;

6.1.2.3. Married Relative

A person who is or was married to a biological or adoptive relative to the child within the fifth degree of consanguinity if the person is maintaining a caretaking role with the dependent child.

6.1.2.4. Tribal Law

A relative to the child based on tribal custom or law; or

6.1.2.5. Step-Relatives

A stepsister, stepbrother, step-parent, or step-grandparent including those after the marriage was terminated by divorce or death.

6.2. Special requirements for minor parents

6.2.1.

Living arrangements

A minor parent (defined as under the age of 18, unmarried, and not emancipated) must live with a parent, legal guardian, an adult relative, or approved adult caretaker. In addition, a minor parent may also live in an approved adult supervised living arrangement if living with the minor parent's own parent, legal guardian or another adult relative is not appropriate (i.e. Job Corps, boarding school dormitories or agency supervised independent living facilities).

6.2.2.

Education

A minor parent must be a full-time student until he or she completes high school or its equivalent, unless the minor parent has a condition that causes him or her to lack the requisite capacity.

6.3. Cooperation with Child Support Enforcement

CITCI TANF participants must cooperate with CITCI and the State of Alaska Child Support Services Division (CSSD) to establish paternity and to establish, modify, or enforce a child support order for a dependent child. CITCI TANF will interface with CSSD to capture and allocate child support payments. Up to \$50.00 of the monthly child support collections will pass through to the participant and not count against the monthly benefit amount they receive. An applicant may not begin to receive benefits until he or she has assigned all child support collection rights to CSSD while on CITC Tribal TANF.

6.4. Residency

All CITCI TANF benefit recipients must be residents of the CITCI Tribal TANF service area. A "resident of the service area" means an individual physically present in the service area and living in the service area voluntarily with the intention of making a home in the service area. A child present in the service area will be considered a resident of the service area if the child is living in the service area with a caretaker relative who is also a resident under this section. An applicant or recipient who is absent from the service area for a period

longer than two months but does not intend to change residency and plans on a return, may be approved in advance by CITCI if the absence is for the following purposes:

- 1) Obtaining essential medical care not available in the service area; or
- 2) Participation in an activity, treatment, training, or educational activity approved by CITCI.

CITCI will not serve those participants that temporarily enter the Anchorage service area for training, education, or temporary plan completion while maintaining their original residency with no plan to remain in the Anchorage service area upon completion of the activity.

6.5. Non-duplication of benefits

CITCI Tribal TANF benefits recipients may not receive duplicative assistance from other State or Tribal programs funded under Part A of Title I of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, P.L. 104-193, 42 U.S. § 601 et. seq.

7. FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

7.1. Resources

7.1.1.

Limits

A family or child will not be eligible for CITCI Tribal TANF if they have non-exempt resources in excess of \$2,000, or \$3,000 if the assistance unit has someone 60 years of age or older. Certain types of real and personal property are exempt. Exempt resources are not counted against the resource limit. Non-exempt, or countable, resources are those which must have their value totaled and matched against the \$2,000 limit to determine if eligibility exists on the factor of resources. The \$2,000 resource limit can be reached by any combination of the following types of resources:

7.1.1.1. Cash

Cash on hand or deposit;

7.1.1.2. Motor vehicles

The equity value of countable motor vehicles, boats, and snow machines;

7.1.1.3. Insurance, stocks, bonds

Countable non-cash personal property such as the cash or loan value of insurance policies, value of stocks and bonds, etc.;

7.1.1.4. Real property

Countable real property other than the home the family lives in and the land the home sits on; and

7.1.1.5. Luxury items

"Luxury" items, personal or household not essential to day to day life.

7.1.2.

Availability of a resource

7.1.2.1 Defined

For purposes of determining CITCI Tribal TANF eligibility, a resource must be actually available to meet the needs of the child. Under this requirement the resource must be in cash or readily convertible to cash.

7.1.2.2. Parent vs. caretaker

If a child for whom application is made lives with his natural or adoptive parent, all the resources and income available to the parent are considered to be equally available to the child. However, if the child is living with any other caretaker relative, resources belonging to that caretaker relative are not considered available to the child.

7.1.2.3. Spousal availability

For CITCI Tribal TANF purposes, all the resources of a husband or wife are automatically considered available to the other spouse.

7.1.2.4. Counting resources

For an applicant, resources are measured as of the date of the interview. For a recipient resources are counted in the first day of the month for which eligibility is being determined.

7.1.3

Countable resources and standard exemptions

7.1.3.1. Real property

All real property which is not the home (for sale or un-saleable, jointly owned with an absent or non-agreeing co-owner, or otherwise exempt), will be counted against the resource limitation. The amount to be considered will be the owner's equity, which is defined as fair market value less legal encumbrances.

7.1.3.2. Luxury items

The equity value of "luxury items", household goods, and personal affects not essential to day-to-day life, are countable resources.

7.1.3.2.1. Religious articles

Religious articles such as religious jewelry, prompt books or Bibles, crucifixes, or Russian Orthodox iconography are exempt.

7.1.3.2.2. Decorative objects of art

Decorative objects of art such as paintings, statuary, blankets, masks, carvings, etc. are only exempt if they were made by a person whose relationship to the CITCI Tribal TANF recipient would qualify as a caretaker relative, or the item(s) has an important cultural significance to a recipient's clan, village, ethnic, or racial community such that the recipient is in effect standing as caretaker or agent of the community and is not free to dispose of the item without suffering personal or social consequences for violating established written or unwritten laws or rules.

7.1.3.3. Stocks, bonds, and securities

All bonds (United States Government savings bonds or treasury notes, municipal or government bonds, or corporate bonds), all stocks (common or preferred shares of business organizations) and securities which are not otherwise exempt will be counted against the resource limit.

7.1.3.4. Joint Bank Accounts

If the holders of a joint bank account (checking, savings, or "share" accounts) are legally married and living together, the balance on the account becomes equally and totally available to each person. This is true if the joint account requires any one signature to withdraw (an "or" account) or both signatures (an "and" account).

If the holders of a joint account are legally married but not living together:

1. An "and" account balance will not be considered an available resource if the absent spouse can't be located, or can be located but refuses to sign joint withdrawals;
2. An "or" account balance is considered totally available regardless of the absent spouse's location or intention.

If the holders of a joint account are not legally married and:

1. The other signer on an "and" account can't be located, or refuses to sign joint withdrawals, the balance will be considered an unavailable resource; or
2. The account is an "or" account, the balance will be considered an available Temporary Assistance resource without regard to the location or intent of the other signer, except in situations listed below.

Bank accounts on which an applicant has signature authority but that the applicant does not own, in whole or in part, are totally unavailable and exempt. Prudent judgment should be used in determining ownership, considering the source of the funds, the stated intent of the parties named on the account, and the actual use, if any, to which the funds have been put.

When the case worker discovers that a recipient has a joint account containing resources considered available under this chapter which are sufficient to place the unit over the Temporary Assistance resource limit, the recipient must be given a written notice allowing 30 days after discovery to remove their name from the account and prove to the agency they have done so. If he or she complies within the 30 days, the unit remains eligible and no overpayment has occurred.

Deposits made into a joint account may also be considered as available income in the month the deposit is made.

7.1.3.5. Trust funds.

7.1.3.5.1. When available

If the person who established the trust is also the sole beneficiary of the trust and is not legally incapacitated, s/he can terminate the trust at any time even if the purpose for which it is established is not fulfilled. Trusts set up in this fashion will be considered available resources. They will also be considered countable resources, if the applicant is not legally incapacitated and is the legally responsible natural or adoptive parent of the children for whom CITCI Tribal TANF assistance is being sought.

All other trust situations not noted above must be individually examined to determine if they are available and if they are exempt or countable. Examination is done by viewing the trust documents and contacting the persons who establish the trust or who serve as trustees.

7.1.3.5.2. Funds held in trust

Funds held in trust by the state or a tribe for children in the legal custody of a tribe or the state are not available to meet the needs of the child for whom they are held, or to any family with whom the child lives. The interest, which accrues on the balance held in trust, is similarly unavailable. Such funds become available, and are subject to treatment as countable resources, only when they are actually released to the child or to the child's parent or legal guardian.

7.1.3.6. Permanent Fund Dividends

Permanent Fund Dividends and Food Stamp PFD Hold Harmless Payments: monies retained from receipt of Permanent Fund Dividends (PFDs), or Food Stamp PFD Hold Harmless (FS HH) payments issued to replace Food Stamp benefits, are disregarded as a resource.

7.1.3.7. Motor vehicles.

The equity value of a motor vehicle counts in the CITCI Tribal TANF resource determination, unless it can be **exempt** for one of the reasons below.

7.1.3.7.1. Necessary and in-use

A motor vehicle is exempt and excluded as a resource if it is necessary, and used:

7.1.3.7.1.1. Meeting Basic Needs

For family transportation to meet the family's basic needs, such as getting food and medical care or other essentials, or going to and from work, school, or training;

7.1.3.7.1.2. Home

As the family's home;

7.1.3.7.1.3. Self-Employment

To produce self-employment income and it is doing so;

7.1.3.7.1.4. Disability

To transport a disabled family member, whether or not they are part of the assistance unit; or

7.1.3.7.1.5. Work

To participate in an approved work activity.

7.1.4.

Exempt resources

7.1.4.1. The Home in which the family resides

The home in which the applicant or recipient resides and the land upon which it is situated are both exempt regardless of their value.

7.1.4.2. Burial plots

One burial plot for each assistance unit member is an exempt resource, regardless of location, salability, or equity value.

7.1.4.3. Funeral agreements

The equity value of funeral agreements is excluded up to \$1,500 per assistance unit member.

7.1.4.4. Personal effects and household goods

Basic items (personal effects and household goods) essential for day-to-day living are exempt.

7.1.4.5. Items used in employment

7.1.4.5.1. Tools

Tools and light or farm machinery are exempt as personal property. Tools required by a school as a condition of enrollment and tools required by an employer as a condition of employment are exempt as personal property.

7.1.4.5.2. Stock and inventory

Stock and inventory essential to the production of self-employment income are exempt. Stock and inventory includes all items necessary to produce gross self-employment income; including fishnets, traps, motor vehicles (including fishing boats), and Limited Entry Fishing Permits.

7.1.4.5.3. Stock and inventory for sale.

If the stock and inventory is actually for sale as part of a legitimate business it can be considered as an exempt resource in any month in which, for reasons beyond the control of the recipient, there is no gross self-employment income.

7.1.4.6. TANF corrective payments

Any CITCI Tribal TANF corrective payment is considered an exempt resource in the month received.

7.1.4.7. Other exemptions

Monies retained from the following sources are also exempt as resources:

- Receipt of bona fide loans;
- Restitution payments;
- Disaster relief funds; and
- Earnings from participation in the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program (SYETP) operated under the Workforce Investment Act.

7.1.5.

Special resource provisions

7.1.5.1. Lump sum payments

Non-recurring lump sum payments are exempt as income. Generally, lump-sum payments are monies owed to the family from the past. Lump sum payments include such things as income tax refunds, retroactive payments from Social Security or other agencies, and insurance settlements. Lump-sum payments are counted as a resource in the month of receipt.

7.1.5.2. Employment related funds

IRA and KEOGH accounts are not exempt.

7.1.5.3. APA-SSI-AFDC households

Resources of APA/SSI recipients are disregarded. All resources of any person who is actually receiving Adult Public Assistance (APA), and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits will be disregarded in determining the CITCI Tribal TANF eligibility of the other family members.

7.1.5.4. Land, stock, and payments made to Native Americans

7.1.5.4.1. ANCSA distribution

Land or stock distributions made by ANCSA corporations are disregarded as resources. \$2,000 per individual retained in a calendar year of cash payments made by ANCSA corporations (village or regional) is also excluded from consideration as a resource providing it remains identifiable. Interest or other earnings from the investment or deposit of excluded ANCSA funds are not exempt.

7.1.5.4.2. Native restricted land

"Native Restricted Deeds" will be considered as exempt.

7.1.5.4.3. Per-capita payments

Funds held in trust by the Secretary of the Interior for an Indian tribe and distributed on a per capita basis to members of that tribe are excluded as resources.

7.1.6.

Resources to promote long term self-sufficiency and reduce dependency

Money paid into Individual Development Accounts and all related interest shall be exempt from the resource limit if kept in a safeguarded account, which is available only for those items clearly spelled out in the IDA contract, such as post-secondary education, first home purchase, business capitalization,

Land and stock distributions made by ANCSA corporations are disregarded as resources. The first \$2000 per individual per calendar year of cash payments made by ANCSA corporations (village or regional) is also excluded from consideration as a resource.

Any EITC payment made to an applicant or recipient of Temporary Assistance is disregarded as income.

Alaska Permanent Fund Dividends or Food Stamp PFS Hold Harmless payments issued to replace Food Stamps are exempt income.

7.2. Types of income

7.2.1.

Earned income

7.2.1.1. Defined

Earned Income for participants and applicants means: income earned in cash or in kind in the form of wages, salary or commissions in exchange for the performance of services by the employee. Earned income includes payments made at one time for services performed over a long period. The term earned income means the total or gross amount of payment, excluding the amounts of work incentive deductions for the personal or non-personal expenses of earning the income.

7.2.1.2. Earned income for Self-employed people

The amount earned by the obtaining, producing, or purchasing of goods or services after all the allowable, non-personal costs (business expenses) of earnings are subtracted.

7.2.2.

Unearned income and standard exemptions

7.2.2.1. In-Kind Income and Vendor Payments

Any cash contribution made directly to, or on behalf of, any member of a CITCI Tribal economic unit is considered as income.

7.2.2.2. Certain child support income

Once an application is authorized for payment, any child support received in that month is considered unearned income. Child support is considered unearned income from the 1st day of the month the application is received. The amount received is considered income, less a disregard of \$50.00 which will be passed through to the recipient by CITCI Tribal TANF payment system.

Child support payments received by the recipient while their case is open are considered unearned income unless turned back to CSSD. Retaining child support payments in excess of \$50.00 after Tribal TANF is approved is considered non-cooperation. A financial penalty is imposed and a protective payee must be selected to receive the Tribal TANF grant.

7.2.2.3. Educational assistance

7.2.2.3.1. Department of Education and Bureau of Indian Affairs grants and awards

The total amount of any grant, scholarship, or award made to an undergraduate student for educational purposes under any program administered, funded, or insured under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 or under a Bureau of Indian Affairs student assistance program is not counted as income in determining eligibility or grant amount for CITCI Tribal TANF applicants or recipients.

7.2.2.3.2. Other educational grants and awards

Any grant, scholarship, or other award that is not made, funded, or insured from a program administered under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 or under a Bureau of Indian Affairs student assistance program will not be counted as income to any applicant or recipient if it is made or used under conditions which preclude its use for current living costs.

7.2.2.4. Charitable Contributions

Cash donations based on need, up to \$300, per quarter, from private non-profit (as determined by the IRS) charitable organizations are exempt. For this provision, quarters are January - March, April - June, July - September, and October - December. Cash donations over \$300 per quarter are not excluded. For example, an individual receives \$200 in May and \$200 in June. The \$200 May payment and \$100 of the June payment are exempt; \$100 is countable income in June.

The \$300 exemption is available to each member of the assistance unit and to any person who is not included in the assistance unit but whose income is defined as available to the assistance unit.

The case worker must document the family's receipt of income that is exempted under this section.

7.2.2.5. Payments to Native Americans

7.2.2.5.1. Per-capita payments

All funds held in trust by the Secretary of the Interior for an Indian tribe and distributed on a per capita basis to members of that tribe are excluded as income.

7.2.2.5.2. ANCSA distribution

The first \$2,000 per year of cash distributions made by Native corporations to Alaska Native shareholders under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) is excluded as income. This \$2,000 exclusion applied to each individual and to each single calendar year. Cash distributions paid in excess of \$2,000 per calendar year to an individual shareholder by a regional or village Native corporation count as income to the individual shareholder in the month of receipt.

7.2.3.

Exempt income

7.2.3.1. Property payments

Payments received under the Uniform and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970 will not be counted in determining initial and continuing eligibility and payment amounts.

7.2.3.2. Loans

All bona fide loans, including educational, personal, and commercial loans, are disregarded as income.

7.2.3.3. Work-study earned income

Any income an applicant or recipient earns from employment in a work-study program will not be counted as income for CITCI Tribal TANF purposes.

7.2.3.4. Vocational rehabilitation payments

Payments made by the:

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), or
- Alaska Department of Labor (DOL) and Workforce Development, (WIA) ;or
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

for vocational rehabilitation, are considered complimentary program benefits and disregarded as income.

7.2.3.5. Foster care and boarding home payments

Any foster care or adult foster care payment made by a tribe or any division of the Department of Health and Social Services to a CITCI Tribal TANF caretaker relative in order to care for a foster child or foster adult who is not receiving CITCI Tribal TANF benefits will not be counted as income in determining eligibility or payment

amounts. A child cannot be included in a CITCI Tribal TANF assistance unit and be receiving Title IV-E Foster Care or state-funded foster care benefits for the same period.

7.2.3.6. Earned Income Tax Credit

Any Earned Income Tax Credit payment made to an applicant or recipient of CITCI Tribal TANF is disregarded as income.

7.2.3.7. Energy assistance payments

All payments made to or on behalf of a CITCI Tribal TANF applicant or recipient by state or Tribal Energy Assistance Programs are totally disregarded as income, including annual direct cash payments to CITCI Tribal TANF recipients. Energy assistance monthly payments made by the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation to its tenants are disregarded as income.

7.2.3.8. TANF Payments

Any TANF retroactive corrective payment is disregarded as income in the month it is received. Regular on-going payments are not counted as CITCI Tribal TANF income.

7.2.3.9. TANF Supportive Service Payments

Payments made for supportive services under the CITCI Tribal TANF program are exempt regardless of whether they are paid to a vendor or directly to the participant. This includes payments made for childcare, transportation, work-related expenses, and any other CITCI Tribal TANF-related supportive services.

7.2.3.10. Major disaster and emergency assistance

Any Federal major disaster and emergency assistance or any comparable disaster assistance provided by states, local governments or disaster assistance organizations are disregarded as income.

7.2.3.11. Summer Youth Employment and Training Program

Any income earned from participation in the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program operated with funding from the U.S. Department of Labor.

7.3. Benefit determination

Eligibility for TANF assistance and services is as established in the Tribe's approved TANF plan. Only needy families, as defined in the TANF plan, may receive: a) any form of Federally-funded assistance (as defined in 45 CFR 286.10); (b) any benefits or services pursuant to TANF purposes 1 or 2, regardless of the purpose served; and (c) any benefits or services funded with State-provided matching funds (MOE). "Needy" means financially deprived, according to income and resource (if applicable) criteria established in the TANF plan by the Tribe to receive the particular "assistance", benefit or service.

The tribe may use segregated Federal tribal funds (not State MOE funds) to provide services (and related activities) that do not constitute "assistance" (as defined in 45 CFR 286.10) to individuals and family members who are not financially deprived but who need the kind of services that meet TANF purposes 3 or 4. Objective criteria will be established for participation in these programs.

7.3.1.

State standard

CITCI has determined that it is in the best interest of the program to minimize differences between the income limits applicable to the recipients of the State of Alaska's Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP) and recipients of the CITCI Tribal TANF program. Therefore, the CITCI program has adopted the two-tier income limit test used by the State of Alaska, which is reflected in the remainder of this section. The gross countable earned and/or unearned income of self-employed and employed individuals may not exceed the state's 185% eligibility standard indicated in this plan and the countable gross income adjusted by applicable deductions, may not exceed the state's need standards. **NOTE:** The state's income eligibility and need standard's are adjusted annually by the same percentage as the annual January COLA increase in federal, SSI payments.) The income eligibility and need standards as they apply to the CITCI Tribal TANF program through December 31, 2003 are indicated in this section and will be adjusted at the state's rate as such changes occur. Likewise any substantive changes in the state's standard itself will be incorporated into the CITCI Tribal TANF program plan. The amount available to a household is the difference between the income standard and need standard with work incentive deductions (earned income, child and incapacitated parent care), the shelter allowance, and the ratable reduction applied according to the conditions of the household up to the maximum benefits indicated in Section 9.1.

7.3.2.

185% Eligibility test

All applicants and recipients have their eligibility determined "prospectively". Once the incomes of each member of the economic unit are identified, exempt incomes are disregarded, and the gross monthly earned incomes of self-employed and employed individuals are computed; the monthly income of each person in the unit is totaled and compared to the 185% eligibility standard listed in Section 6.3.3. If the assistance unit has countable income equal to or less than the 185% eligibility standard for the unit, they "pass".

7.3.3.

TANF 185% eligibility standards

7.3.3.1. Adult included 185 % eligibility standards

The 2003 program year 185% eligibility standards are used when the assistance unit includes one parent or caretaker relative or two parents who are both able to perform gainful activity, and any number of dependent children as follows:

Assistance Unit Size		
One Caretaker Relative (includes single parent)	Two-Parent Family	185% Standard
2	3	\$2018
3	4	2269
4	5	2521
5	6	2773
6	7	3024
7	3	3276
8	9	3527
9	10	3778
10	11	4029

Each additional child	\$251
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7.3.3.2. Incapacitated adult-included 185% eligibility Standards

The following 185% eligibility standards are used when the assistance unit includes two parents and one parent is physically or mentally unable to perform gainful activity, and any number of dependent children.

Assistance Unit Size	185% Standard
3	\$2269
4	2521
5	2773
6	3024
7	3276
8	3527
9	3778
10	4029
Each Additional Child	\$251

7.3.3.3. Child-Only 185% eligibility standards

The following 185% eligibility standards are used when no caretaker relative is included in the assistance unit.

Assistance Unit Size	185% Standard
1	\$1108
2	1359
3	1611
4	1862
5	2114
6	2366
7	2617
8	2869
9	3119
10	3370
Each Additional Child	\$251

7.3.3.4. Pregnant woman 185% eligibility standards

When a pregnant woman is the only person included in the assistance unit, the 185% standard is \$1,263, and the Need Standard is \$683. In applying the income eligibility test (but not the payment calculation) for a third trimester pregnant woman case, include in the family size the number of individuals who would be required to be included in the assistance unit if the unborn child(ren) were born.

7.3.4.

Income eligibility determination

Once the assistance unit's countable gross income from the 185% test determination has been adjusted by allowing an applicable work incentive (earned income & unearned income child care deductions, and child support payments), the total amount is compared to the appropriate need standard listed below, for the assistance unit. If the assistance unit has countable income equal to or less than the need standard for the assistance unit, they "pass".

7.3.5.**TANF need standards****7.3.5.1. Basic adult-included need standards**

The following need standards are used when the assistance unit includes one caretaker relative or two parents who are both able to perform gainful activity, and any number of dependent children.

Assistance Unit Size		
One Caretaker Relative (includes single parent family)	Two-Parent Family	Need Standard
2	3	\$1091
3	4	1227
4	5	1363
5	6	1499
6	7	1635
7	8	1771
8	9	1907
9	10	2043
10	11	2179
Each Additional Child		\$136

7.3.5.2. Incapacitated adult-included need standards

The following eligibility standards are used when the assistance unit includes two parents and one parent is physically or mentally unable to perform gainful activity, and any number of dependent children.

Assistance Unit Size	Need Standard
3	\$1227
4	1363
5	1499
6	1635
7	1771
8	1907
9	2043
10	2179
Each Additional Child	\$136

7.3.5.3. Child-only need standards

The following eligibility standards are used when no caretaker relative is included in the assistance unit.

Assistance Unit Size	Need Standard
1	\$599
2	735
3	871
4	1007
5	1143
6	1279
7	1415

8	1551
9	1687
10	1823
Each Additional Child	\$ 136

7.3.5.4. Pregnant woman need standards

When a pregnant woman is the only person included in the assistance unit, the need standard is \$683.

7.3.6.

Work incentive deductions

Work incentive deductions (i.e., earned income and childcare deductions) may be allowed against earned income in computing the benefit payment amount. The only circumstance in which they are not allowed is when an individual, without good cause, refuses or terminates employment, reduces earnings, or fails to report earnings timely. The following terms apply:

7.3.6.1. Earned income deductions

First 12 Months of gross earnings	\$150 and 33% of the earned income
Second 12 months:	\$150 and 25% of the earned income
Third 12 months:	\$150 and 20% of the earned income
Fourth 12 months:	\$150 and 15% of the earned income
Fifth 12 months:	\$150 and 10% of the earned income
After 60 months:	\$150

The income deduction applies only to earnings received by recipients while they are participating in the CITCI Tribal TANF program.

7.3.6.2. Child and incapacitated parent care deductions

Child or incapacitated parent care costs, which are actually paid by the assistance unit, are allowed as a deduction within certain limits. An "incapacitated" parent is one who has been determined to be physically or mentally unable to perform gainful activity.

7.3.6.2.1. Monthly maximums

The actual cost of care, up to the following maximums, may be deducted for each child or dependent at a rate of \$200 per month for each child under age 2 and \$175 per month for each child age 2 or older or incapacitated parent. The lower standard (\$175) is applied beginning with the benefit month following a child's second birthday.

7.3.7.

Shelter allowance

30% of the Need Standard is designated for the assistance unit to pay for shelter expenses. Shelter costs are the monthly mortgage, rent, home heating and utility expenses incurred by the CITCI Tribal TANF family for the family's home. Other allowable shelter costs include property taxes, renters or homeowners' insurance and

security deposits. The assistance unit is allowed all or part of the shelter allowance to the extent that they actually incur such costs.

The shelter allowance calculation does not apply to:

- Child only cases, or,
- the 185% or Income Eligibility Tests.

7.3.8.

Ratable reduction

A ratable reduction is a percentage reduction in a benefit amount to less than 100% of need. The State of Alaska, 2003 TANF payments are 77.10% of need; this is a ratable reduction of 22.90%. Once a CITCI Tribal TANF family's amount of need is determined, the payment amount will be calculated by multiplying the amount of need by the percentage of need payable. The CITCI Tribal TANF program will use the same ratable reduction utilized by the State of Alaska, Division of Public Assistance.

8. DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

8.1. Initial determination of eligibility

8.1.1.

Application

An applicant for assistance under CITCI Tribal TANF must apply for benefits by providing the information required in the application form developed by CITCI and attest to the correctness of the information. An original signature or witnessed mark by the applicant must appear on the completed application.

8.1.2.

Eligible signatures

An application for Tribal TANF benefits must be signed by the caretaker relative(s) (as defined under Section 6.1.2.) of the dependent child who is the basis of the application for benefits. Persons authorized by state or Tribal law to act for the caretaker relative if the dependent child resides with both parents may also sign the application. If one caretaker is absent due to subsistence or other planned absence, that caretaker may provide a notarized signature via fax or mail.

8.1.3.

Date of Application

Applications are date-stamped upon receipt. This date will be deemed the date of initial request for benefits. The CITCI TANF program will follow the Tribal Council's policy of a completed application before client service delivery is determined.

8.1.4.

Household

To the extent possible, CITCI will include in one TANF payment all related individuals who are eligible for TANF benefits and who reside together. The parent or parents of a dependent child who is temporarily living away from the household shall not be included in the household. As long as the child and caretaker relative are both in the home one day of the calendar month, eligibility in this factor exists.

8.1.5.

Social Security Number

A Social Security Number must be provided for the following individuals:

- The applicant;
- Other persons included in the CITCI Tribal TANF unit;

- Caretaker relatives in the household;
- Dependent children.

8.1.6.

Interview

CITCI will rely on a case management approach to the administration of its program. This will begin during the application period with the initial interview. If a face to face interview is not feasible, it may be conducted telephonically with the applicant(s) and any other household members as appropriate. The interview will be used to give the applicant an opportunity to:

- Provide any missing information required in the application;
- To assist the applicant to consider options to the receipt of CITCI TANF benefits;
- To initiate the self-sufficiency planning process; and
- To determine temporary monthly cash benefit and/or support services.

8.1.7.

Disposition of application

8.1.7.1. Finding

CITCI will make a determination of eligibility within 30 days for every complete application for assistance that it receives unless the applicant withdraws the application, dies, or cannot be located.

8.1.7.2. Notice

CITCI shall give written notice to each applicant about the disposition of the application, including;

8.1.7.2.1. If Approved

The amount of benefits to be paid, when payment begins, and any conditions on receipt; or

8.1.7.2.2. If Denied

The specific reason for the denial and an explanation of the applicant's right to request a hearing to reconsider the denial.

8.2. Reporting by participants

CITCI TANF participants must report to CITCI any change in household circumstances that might affect their program eligibility or benefits. This report must be made within a ten-day period after the participant knows of the change. Reports that a child is expected to be absent from the home for more than a full calendar month, must be made within five days.

8.3. Change Reports

8.3.1.

Acting on changes

Re-determinations of eligibility may occur upon any report of change under Section 7.2 (Types of income), and any change in household composition. Recipients must cooperate in the re-determination process by providing the information requested, and cooperating in interviews per request of the eligibility worker.

8.4. Review period length

Reviews are usually scheduled every 6 or 12 months, although special circumstances may warrant a different review period.

Most families will be reviewed every 6 months. This review period may be set longer or shorter to coincide with anticipated changes in the family's situation, such as the beginning or end of seasonal employment or changes in a parent's incapacity status.

Cases with few anticipated changes may be assigned longer review periods. For example, Child-Only cases in which the child has no resources or income would normally be assigned the maximum review period of 12 months. A longer review period might also be assigned to cases in which the adult is actively engaged in a longer-term Family Self-Sufficiency Plan, such as vocational training or working with Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation.

9. BENEFITS

9.1. Maximum benefits

The amounts of assistance for basic living expenses may not exceed the following:

9.1.1.

One child and a non-needy caretaker

For a dependent child living with a non-needy relative caretaker, \$452 per month, plus \$102 for each additional child;

9.1.2.

One child and a needy caretaker

For a dependent child living with at least one needy parent or relative caretaker, \$821 per month, plus \$102 for each additional child and \$102 for a second needy parent if the second parent is physically or mentally unable to perform gainful activity as defined by department regulation; or

9.1.3.

Pregnant woman

For a family consisting solely of an eligible pregnant woman, \$514 per month.

9.1.4

50% Seasonal Benefit Reduction

For the benefit months of July, August, and September only, The TANF payment will be reduced by 50% for two parent families in which both parents are able to perform gainful activities.

10. DIVERSION PAYMENT

10.1. Defined

CITCI offers a diversion payment program to TANF applicants as an alternative to recurring reliance on Tribal TANF benefits for families with a job-ready member. Families that qualify for the diversion program may choose a lump sum payment in lieu of ongoing assistance. Diversion payments will provide short-term financial assistance to meet critical needs in order to secure or retain employment.

10.2. Based on need

The payment amount is based upon actual, immediate needs and may not exceed three months worth of TANF assistance benefits.

10.3. Reapplying for benefits

A diversion payment will count as income if the family reappplies for Tribal TANF benefits within 3 months of application received date.

10.4. Limitation

A family may receive a diversion grant only once in a twelve-month period. However the grant may be paid in more than one installment. TANF recipients are not eligible for the TANF Diversion Program. Diversion payments are limited to four in the lifetime of the assistance unit.

11. SUPPORT SERVICES

11.1. Use of existing services

Support services may be made available to CITCI TANF participants, directly or through their service providers or employers, to enable them to engage in assigned TANF work activities and/or to accept and maintain employment. Support services include those available for eligible tribal members through CITCI's current approved P.L. 102-477 consolidation plan for education, employment and training related services, which also includes transitional services, child care and welfare to work. These services are to be provided to maximize the TANF recipient's integration into the job market.

11.1.1.

Work-related support services

- On-the job training
- Short-term job-training
- Counseling and skill building
- Job search assistance
- Job referral
- Job placement
- Referrals to community work service
- Transitional services including childcare assistance and post-employment services
- GED instruction
- Vocational Training
- Higher Education
- Transportation by gas allowance and/or bus pass;
- Work and training related clothing;
- Work related tools, dues, or initiation fees;
- Training related materials and supplies;
- Meals during participation;
- Help with childcare expenses;
- Housing referrals and assistance
- Medical services not covered by Medicaid;
- Other items and/or services considered essential for participation.

11.1.2.

Transitional support services

CITCI program participants may be eligible for support services payments for up to six months after they become employed and lose eligibility for the TANF cash grant due to excess income (i.e., income that exceeds the CITCI TRIBAL TANF eligibility standards).

11.2. Cooperation with other programs

Other support services such as substance abuse and other related job retention services will be made available through close collaboration and coordination with agencies such as the Southcentral Foundation and other social service agencies available in the service area.

11.3. Separate contract for non-Native clients

If the State of Alaska is authorized to enter into a contract with CITCI for those eligible residents currently not served by this plan; CITCI will apply to the State of Alaska for a grant to provide supportive services and other education, employment and training related services, including state child care services, to those eligible residents added to this plan.

12. SIXTY MONTH TIME LIMIT

12.1. Limit

CITCI will follow the Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 when implementing the 60 month time limit. CITCI will count all previous months of TANF block grant funds provided by any State or tribe, except as exempted in the following section (12.2).

12.2. Mandatory exemptions

In determining the number of months for which an adult has received assistance under a state or tribal program, CITCI shall disregard any month during which the adult lived in Indian Country or an Alaska Native village if the most reliable data available with respect to the month (or period including the month) indicate that at least 50 percent of the adults living in Indian Country or in the village were not employed. ("Indian Country" shall have the meaning given in Section 1151 of Title 18, United States Code.)

12.3. Hardship exemptions

12.3.1.

Generally

After 60 months of participation, a family, not exempt under Section 12.2, may continue to receive benefits if CITCI determines the family qualifies for a hardship or domestic violence exception. Hardship exemptions will be limited to 20% of the current caseload. Hardship exemption will include:

12.3.1.1. Disability

Adults with a physical or mental inability to perform gainful activity;

12.3.1.2. Disabled child

Caretaker relatives who are caring for a child who is experiencing a disability;

12.3.1.3. Victims of domestic violence

Victims of on-going or recent domestic violence, if the physical, mental or emotional well-being of the victim would be endangered by a strict application of the limit.

12.3.1.4. Other hardships

It is determined by staff and, if possible, with the input of other agencies who work with the family, the loss of Temporary Assistance would result in a threat to the health or safety of the family due to circumstances beyond their control that are preventing the adult caretakers from reaching self sufficiency.

13. WORK REQUIREMENTS

13.1. Self sufficiency plan and assessment

Every family with a needy adult caretaker receiving a Tribal TANF benefit will complete a Tribal TANF Self Sufficiency Plan in cooperation with their case manager, tailored to the family's situation. The plan outlines the steps the family will take to increase their independence, identifies specific milestones to indicate progress, and indicates the services CITCI will provide to assist the family toward meeting their goals of independence from TANF. CITCI will work with the family to assess skills, work experience, educational needs, and barriers to achieving independence and employability of each adult caretaker and parent who is age 18 or who is not attending secondary school and is without a high school diploma or GED.

13.2. All families participation rates

CITCI TANF will implement work and self-sufficiency programs that promote job creation, provide recipients with job preparation, and provide job support services designed to help recipients gain and retain paid employment or perform community services when paid employment is unavailable. CITCI believes that the following participation rates represent realistic and appropriate standards; in light of such factors as high rate of education training deficiencies, prevalence of mental health, substance abuse issues, and a substantial long term unemployment rate among its TANF participant population. Child-only cases (those with non-needy adult caretakers) are exempt from the participation rate calculation and from the work requirements.

Federal Fiscal Year	All Families
2005	30%
2006	35%
2007	35%

13.3. Individual participant requirements

CITCI believes that the following average participation hours per week standards reflect what can reasonably be expected from TANF participation population. It is assumed that a significant number of Tribal TANF participants may be unable to exercise the discipline needed to participate in a full week of activities.

All Families	Hours per week
2005	30
2006	30
2007	30

13.4. Acceptable work activities

The Tribal TANF program requires parents or caretaker relatives to participate in acceptable work activities. Non-needy adult caretakers are exempt from participation (child-only cases). Acceptable work activities include:

- Unsubsidized employment
- Basic education
- Job search assessment
- Job readiness activities
- Job skills training
- On-the-job training
- Internships
- Vocational education training (36 month maximum)
- Job sampling or work experience
- Approved community work service job skills directly related to employment
- Education in subjects in which there is a reasonable chance of obtaining employment
- Sheltered/supported work
- Work experience
- Subsidized public or private sector employment
- Providing child care service for individuals participating in community service work
- Community service activities
- Traditional subsistence activities (i.e. hunting, fishing, gathering, etc.)
- Traditional work activities (i.e. weaving, beading, carving, etc.)
- Cultural activities
- Self-employment
- Providing childcare to TANF participants
- Substance abuse treatment
- Life skills training
- Other activities developed by the Tribal TANF to meet general participant needs or the needs of an individual Tribal TANF participant (to include time spent applying for SSI).

13.5. Exemptions

13.5.1.

Justification

A CITCI TANF participant who is subject to work participation requirements may be exempt from work activities because of certain work situations or because participation would cause unreasonable hardship. Even though exempt, they are still required to complete a Family Self Sufficiency Plan. The following situations may exempt a participant from work activities:

- They are needed in the home to care for a disabled relative who has been determined to require 24 hour care, per a medically certified provider, while alternative suitable care is being sought;
- A caretaker of a child under 6 and affordable, appropriate, child care is not available;
- They are determined by medical provider to be physically or mentally unable to perform gainful activity for a period of more than 30 days.
- A caretaker of a child no more than 1 year of age;
- A parent or caretaker, who is experiencing domestic violence where engagement in work activities could endanger a family member, interferes with the family's ability to escape the violence or its escalation, or interfere with any legal proceedings.
- They are experiencing circumstances beyond the family's control that prevents the caretaker from participating in work activities or becoming self sufficient and the loss of temporary cash assistance would threaten the health or safety of the family.

13.5.1.1. Duration of exemption due to domestic violence

The exemption from participation in work activities for domestic violence will be for a length of time up to six months, individualized to meet the parent's or caretaker's safety and legal needs. Each case will be reviewed at the end of six months and may be extended if continuing circumstances warrant an extension. Individualized responses and service strategies will be developed with the parent or caretaker and other social service organizations, including the state, consistent with the needs of the parent or caretaker.

13.5.1.2. Personal Safety.

Adult participants who are experiencing domestic violence will be given resources for support and safety. A victim of domestic violence will be encouraged to receive individual or group support counseling and develop a safety plan. Perpetrators of domestic violence who are included in the household receiving cash assistance will be encouraged to temporarily find alternative housing and to abide by any and all conditions of a restraining order issued by the court. They will be given resources and referrals to appropriate services which may aid them in learning appropriate and safe behavioral options.

13.5. 2.

Conditions

Individuals who are exempt from work activities may be referred to other programs or agencies for services such as vocational rehabilitation, counseling, substance abuse treatment, or other services. These activities will be monitored as a part of the Family Self Sufficiency Plan which is required to be developed even if the caretaker is currently exempt from work activities.

13.5.3.

"Good cause" for non-cooperation

Participants who fail to participate in all the assigned CITCI Tribal TANF activities (including work activities) of their self-sufficiency plan or who fail to accept and/or maintain employment will be subject to sanctions indicated in Section 15, except when they are able to demonstrate "good cause" for such a failure.

13.5.3.1. What constitutes "good cause"

For the purposes of determining "good cause" relating to:

1. The refusal of or voluntary separation from suitable employment;
2. Failure to comply with a condition of the self-sufficiency plan; and
3. Failure to participate in work activities under Section 13.4.

The following circumstances may constitute "good cause":

- The recipient is a single parent of a child under age six years and childcare is either inappropriate or unavailable;
- Participation would interfere with the recipient's attempt, or the attempt by a member of the recipient's immediate family, to escape domestic violence or its escalation;
- The recipient is over the age of 59 and has limited strength and stamina;
- A sudden and temporary situation beyond the control of the family, affecting physical or mental health of a member or ability to comply, including family illness or death or tragedies of nature;
- The recipient is involved in a mandatory plan implementation for complying with OCS (when it is time sensitive);
- The recipient must appear in court or serve on a jury;
- The recipient is in detention, incarcerated or under house arrest;
- Necessary transportation breaks down or otherwise becomes unavailable, and the recipient lacks a reasonable alternative;
- Weather conditions prohibit travel;
- The recipient accepts a job with gross wages and employee benefits equal to or greater than those at the job left;
- The recipient is separated from paid employment for a reason outside the recipient's control and not due to the recipients action or inaction;
- The job is unavailable because of a labor dispute or is otherwise involved in a labor dispute;
- The work is more hazardous to the recipient than to the average worker employed in a similar job;

- There is a coordinated plan between the recipient and case manager to enter approved training, or change place of employment that will lead to a higher wage and/or long term self sufficiency;
- The wages do not meet the Alaska minimum wage requirement;
- The recipient cares for the recipient's child less than 17 weeks of age.
- The recipient has been subjected to discrimination, contrary to state law.

14. PENALTIES

14.1. General principles

Penalties are intended to induce cooperation with Tribal TANF program requirements on the part of the participants who without the penalty or the threat of penalty, would fail to do so. The penalty process is progressive and unless the individual complies, the amount of reduction in a family's cash assistance may increase over time. However, the opportunity to mitigate the impact upon direct support and benefits to the needy children of affected families is built into this progressive sanction process.

14.2. Applying Penalties

CITCI applies sanctions and penalties regarding TANF benefits for the following requirements:

14.2.1.

Family Self Sufficiency Plan

When the participant chooses not to develop, sign and comply with the Family Self-Sufficiency Plan.

14.2.2.

Work Activities

When a participant is able but chooses not to take part in work activities or other self sufficiency activities on the plan.

14.2.3.

Child Support Enforcement Non-Coop

When the participant does not cooperate with Child Support Services Division and has no Good Cause.

14.2.4.

Dependent not attending school

When the assistance unit contains a school age dependent child not attending school or other equivalent training program, a penalty is applied to the family until the minor is back into compliance with school/training attendance, unless good cause has been determined by CITCI.

14.2.5.

Minor parent not attending school

When a minor parent without high school diploma or GED is not attending school or equivalent training and has no Good Cause.

14.2.6.

Intentional Fraud

When an individual incurs an intentional fraud penalty, the penalties mirror the former AFDC program and result in a six-month disqualification of the offender for the first offense, twelve months for the second and permanent disqualification for any subsequent offense.

14.3. FSSP, Work, and Child Support penalties

The amount of the penalty for non-cooperation with CSSD, failure to develop and comply with an FSSP, or failure to participate in work or self-sufficiency activities, is 40% of the maximum payment for the family size. If the non-cooperation continues for more than four months, the family's cash assistance may be reduced by 75 % of the maximum payment for the family size. If the parent or caretaker does not cooperate for eight months, the family may be penalized the full amount of their cash assistance. The case is closed and the family must reapply to receive further benefits. However, the progression from the 40% to the 75% reduction or from the 75% to the full family sanction is not automatic. The following actions must be taken before a family's assistance can be reduced by 75% or their case closed:

- Complete a home visit. If a home visit cannot be completed, document the attempts to make the visit.
- Consider any information obtained from a home visit, other information about the family, and the availability of services in the community that might fit the family's needs.
- Document that the health, safety and well-being of the children in the family will not be significantly jeopardized by imposition of the 75% or 100% reduction in assistance. If a home visit is not or cannot be attempted, the family's assistance cannot be reduced further.

14.3.1.

Purpose of the home visit

The purpose of a home visit before imposing a 75% or full reduction in assistance is to ensure that everything possible has been done to re-engage the family in efforts toward self-sufficiency and to determine the effect of the reduction on the children.

Home visits are intended to achieve the following objectives:

- To observe firsthand the family's situation;
- To encourage the recipient to comply with the activity for which they were penalized;
- To determine if the recipient is refusing to comply, unable to comply, or needs additional supports or services; and,
- To gather information to assess the impact of further reductions in benefits if the recipient is able but chooses not to comply. To accomplish these objectives, it is essential that every effort is made to establish a mutually respectful relationship between the worker and the family.

14.3.2.

Health, safety, and well-being

The determination that the health, safety and well-being of the children will not be significantly jeopardized by reductions in assistance beyond 40% means that further loss of assistance will not result in conditions that threaten the children's health or safety. If there is any indication that the children's health or safety could be threatened, the family's cash assistance will not be reduced beyond 40%.

Conditions that threaten health or safety include those when the family:

- Does not have sufficient income or resources to provide for housing, food, transportation, or other essential needs; or,
- Does not have access to an alternative means of support, such as from a relative, live-in partner, or community resource, to meet those essential needs; or,
- The children will be unable to stay in the home if benefits are further reduced or ended; or
- Is working with a division within the Department of Health and Social Services, or with another social service agency, for the safe return of a child temporarily removed from the home, or to prevent removal of a child from the home, and that effort would be disrupted if benefits ended, resulting in the child being at risk of placement into emergency shelter or foster care.

14.4. **Determination to further reduce assistance**

The final step before reducing a family's assistance by 75% or imposing a full family sanction (100%) and closing the case, is to decide if the reduction will result in conditions that threaten the health or safety of the children in the family. This may be done in a staffing meeting that includes other staff or agencies that have worked with the family. The decision will consider all available information about the family obtained from the home visit, other contacts with the family, collateral contacts, the eligibility worker, the case management and eligibility records, and contacts with other staff or agencies. The decision must be documented in the case record, and record the elements used in making the decision:

- The family's understanding of the reasons for the penalty;
- Whether they will take action to comply with the activity for which the penalty was imposed and if not, any reasons they gave;
- Problems or challenges that need to be addressed so that the recipient can comply if they are willing, or if the recipient is now exempt from completing the required activity;
- Revisions to the family self-sufficiency plan and what additional supports and services are to be provided;
- A description of the family's basic living expenses for housing, utilities, food, clothing or transportation, and any child support obligations that must be met for a child not in the home;
- A description of the extent to which the family's available income, resources and supports will cover these expenses;
- A description of community services that are available to meet the family's basic needs; and

- An assessment of whether further reduction in the assistance amount will result in conditions that threaten the children's health or safety by depriving them of essential basic needs.

14.5. Conduct justifying termination of benefits

Families are ineligible for Tribal TANF benefits when:

14.5.1.

Convictions/Misrepresentation

An individual is convicted in state or federal court of fraudulent actions that misrepresented their place of residency in order to receive TANF, Food Stamps, Medicaid, or SSI benefits simultaneously in two states.

14.5.2.

Felony Possession conviction

The family includes an adult convicted after August 22, 1996, in state or federal court, of felony possession, use, or distribution of a controlled substance. The adult is ineligible for TANF-funded benefits. In the case of a single adult, or where both adults of a two-parent family are convicted, CITCI will consider benefits with a penalty imposed per 14.2.3, or an ongoing sanction.

14.5.3.

Fraud

The family includes an adult who fraudulently misrepresented their residence in order to receive TANF-funded benefits in more than one state. The family is ineligible for 10 years beginning at the date of conviction.

14.5.4.

Fugitives

The family includes individuals fleeing prosecution or imposition of sentence for a felony offense. Fugitives under an Alaska Class A misdemeanor are ineligible.

14.4.5.

Refusing or leaving employment

A caretaker refuses or voluntarily separates from suitable employment without good cause. The family is ineligible for TANF benefits for one month for the first offense, six months for the second offense, and 12 months for any subsequent offenses.

14.4.3

Minor Parent

The family caretaker is an unmarried minor parent not living with a parent or in another CITCI approved adult supervised setting.

14.4.4.

Transferring resources

The family includes an adult who intentionally transfers a resource to become eligible. The family may lose eligibility for up to 12 months, depending on the value of the transferred resource.

14.5. Additional Sanctions under the CITCI Tribal TANF Program.

14.5.1.

Fiscal Responsibility.

Temporary cash assistance is to be used for providing the basic needs to the family. All CITCI Tribal TANF participants will be assisted by program staff in developing a household budget to cover their family's anticipated food, clothing, and shelter-related costs for the month. Upon the assessment of the program staff, CITCI has the option to retain portions of the monthly assistance benefit and encumber it in vouchers up to 100%. This action would be taken as a result of demonstrated gross negligence by the participant in the use of their benefit or because of a recipient's non-compliance with specific conditions of the CITCI Tribal TANF program as described in this plan.

14.5.2.

Parental Responsibility.

Minor parent recipients will be required to participate in locally available parenting skills groups, family planning and other available counseling appropriate to their individual situations. Adult parent recipients will be required to participate in similar groups and counseling. Failure to comply with any of these requirements without good cause, as indicated in Section 13.5.3.1., will result in a penalty:

14.5.3.

Parent-teacher conferences

As special conditions, all parents will be required to attend all parent teacher conferences regarding their school-age children. In addition, parents will be required to schedule and see that their children attend yearly health check-ups and screening at their local health clinic. Failure to comply with these special conditions without good cause as indicated in Section 13.5.3.1 will result in a penalty on the monthly assistance amount for the month following the infraction as established in consultation between the applicant and the CITCI Tribal TANF caseworker.

14.5.4.

Personal Responsibility

All adult and minor parent participants screened for alcohol and substance abuse and determined by program staff to be at high risk will be required to complete a drug and alcohol evaluation within 30 days from the date they file an application for assistance or from the date of request by the case manager of record. CITCI Tribal TANF participants will be required to follow the recommendation(s) resulting from their evaluation within 3 months. Failure to meet these requirements will result in an appropriate reduction of their monthly benefits, established in consultation between the applicant and the CITCI Tribal TANF caseworker. CITCI reserves the option of holding these funds in a program account to be returned to the household as a reward incentive if they comply with the recommendation(s) of their evaluation within six months. Failure of a participant to comply with the recommendations of their evaluation after six months will result in the forfeiture of funds withheld and 100% of the restored monthly benefit being encumbered in vouchers for the household's food, clothing, and shelter costs.

15. Penalty (Sanction) Policy

15.1. Initial Non-compliance penalty

The initial penalty for non-compliance will reduce the family's maximum cash assistance amount 40% for months one through four.

15.2. Continued Non-Compliance

If the family continues in non-compliance with the FSSP, the family's maximum cash assistance may be reduced by 75%, for months five through eight. This reduction in cash assistance can only take place after a home visit and full assessment of the family situation to make certain there will be no threat to the health or safety of the children if the cash assistance is reduced by more than 40%.

15.3. Full Family Sanction

If, after month eight, non-compliance continues, the sanction could move to a full family sanction of 100%, after consulting with supervisors and attempting to resolve the situation with the family. Again, this decision cannot be made until a home visit has been conducted and the assessment is fully documented.

16. RIGHTS AND DUE PROCESS

CITCI Tribal TANF will provide written notice of each action taken on any application or ongoing case. These notices must be timely if they will adversely affect the family's eligibility or grant amount. If a participant disagrees with the action and files a Fair Hearing request, CITCI will follow the Client Grievance Policy (Policy # 3.100) to resolve the grievance. *See attachment. This policy will be implemented within 10 days of receiving of the Fair Hearing request.

17. CONFIDENTIALITY

17.1. Recipient participation information

The Tribal TANF program will comply with and enforce policies and procedures of CITCI regarding CITCI recipients.

17.2. Information exchange

In accordance with agreements that may be entered into with the State of Alaska, or other states or tribes administering TANF programs, the Tribal TANF may exchange otherwise confidential information under such agreements to prevent receipt of duplicative benefits, to obtain verification of information provided by the applicant or recipient, or to assist them to obtain additional benefits.

17.3. Providing information to law enforcement

CITCI will follow their Policy #1.030 based on 42 CFR Part II and HIPAA regulations for requests from law enforcement officers involved in carrying out any investigation or information gathering connected with Tribal TANF participants.

18. FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY ASSISTANCE

For each fiscal year during which the Tribal TANF receives or expends funds pursuant to a block grant under Section 412 of Title I – Block Grants for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the fiscal accountability provisions of Section 5(f)(1) of the Indian Self-determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. §§ 450c(f)(1)), relating to the submission of a single agency audit report required by chapter 75 of Title 31, United States Code, applies.

19. DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING

The Tribal TANF will comply with Section 411 (Data Collection and Reporting of Title I - Block Grants for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) of Public law 104-193.



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Testimony on Native Family Assistance Program
By: Sharon Olsen, Director of Employment & Training
Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

Central Council, through its Employment and Training Division is currently administering a Tribal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TTANF), and has been since July 2000.

Introduction

CCTHITA serves the health, education, employment, human and public service needs of more than 25,901 enrolled members mostly residing in Southeast Alaska. Currently there are 4,968 children, under the age of 18, enrolled in the Tribe and an undetermined amount of children that are either eligible for enrollment or descendants.

Tlingit and Haida's TANF program has averaged over 360 cases per month over the last several months. Less than 18% of the households served are intact 2 parent households. Our TANF program estimates an additional 300+ potential clients due child support who have received benefits in the past and those who were also TANF eligible but chose not to apply.

In many of the rural communities the unemployment rate is as high as 80%. Resources within these communities are limited, and to relocate a client for purposes of training or employment are costly.

Our program emphasizes work as a means to self-sufficiency with the expectation that both parents of children needing assistance work to the extent of their ability. We have more than doubled the number of participants required in our Tribal TANF Plan performance measures. Program participants are encouraged to complete at least a high school education (or its equivalent), so that they can enjoy greater opportunities to obtain work that will produce sufficient income to support their families and contribute to their community. In 2004, our TANF program sponsored an employment seminar "Healthy Choices" in Juneau. Clients were orientated

to programs that offer life skills, career exposure and job search. We plan to expand these types of seminars in other communities this year. Clients reported the seminars to be helpful and worthwhile.

Strengthening families is a major goal for 2005 and we have two new programs that will offer a variety of services to families. One of the new programs is our "Fatherhood Initiative" which is to support families by strengthening male involvement through family activities, visitations and support groups. We plan to offer activities and training to families in pre-parenting education, self-esteem, how to reconnect fathers with their children, mentorships and conferences to further promote and support families.

Our Tribal Child Support Unit is the other new program which will be in a planning phase for two years to eventually operate our own Tribal Child Support Unit to serve Southeast Alaska. Currently we work directly with the State Child Support Agency and report any absent parent for each application submitted. Our proposed Child Support program will allow us to be creative while improving child support collections and distributions. We will also concentrate on parent/child relationships and emphasize healthy marriages.

Tlingit and Haida's Employment & Training Division was the first tribe in the nation to be approved to operate an integrated program under PL 102-477. This allows us to consolidate our USHHS, USDOL and DOI/BIA employment, training and related funds into one budget, one reporting system and one plan. Our 477 plan include these services; child care assistance, training, employment preparation and placement, support services (work clothes, transportation, etc.), youth services, general assistance to non-TANF clients, job development and many other related services that help clients find and keep meaningful employment. Recently the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) rated the PL 102-477 tribal programs the highest of all Indian programs in the Department of the Interior. Other independent studies conducted by Washington University and studies for the Department of Health and Human Services have also concluded that tribes participating in "477" are more successful while doing welfare reform than if they had not participated in the program. In Alaska, all regions, except Maniilaq, are operating under PL 102-477.

CCTHITA Employment and Training Division received the highest award in May 2003 from the US Department of Labor during the National Indian and Native American Employment and Training Conference held in Anchorage, Alaska. Tlingit and Haida was praised by Jim Deluca, Chief of Division of Indian and Native American Programs by saying "If there is one organization that we can depend on for getting their reports in on time and we don't have questions on because of their organization and thoroughness – it is Tlingit and Haida." See attached news release.

Other support programs within T&H Employment and Training include the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) program which further enhances our ability to support TANF families. A recent study on welfare reform (U.S. Department of Education, Technical Assistance Circular, RSA-TAC-05-01) indicates that fully one-third of individuals receiving employment-related services from other programs, such as TANF, have specific learning disabilities (SLD) or other cognitive disabilities (U.S. General Accounting Office, "Welfare Reform – More Coordinated Federal Effort Could Help States and Localities Move TANF Recipients With Impairments Toward Employment" October, 2001)

As the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation program partners more extensively with the TANF program, the number of individuals with such disabilities served by the TVR program is expected to increase. Because the SLD and other cognitive disabilities are often "invisible" disabilities with manifestations that are subtle or appear as other types of problems, such as lack of motivation or emotional disorders, assessment of an individual's functional capacities can be a difficult task. There may be a greater adverse impact on achieving and maintaining employment than those associated with poor academic performance. Alaska Native Students rank second highest in the State of Alaska with students with disabilities; these students who cannot pass their exit exam at the High School will also be our TANF/TVR clients of tomorrow. Without an education or a GED their "invisible" disabilities play a large role in how they see themselves, "not able to work". We are quite worried about the exit exam for our Native students; historically we have been over-represented in the "Special Education" programs in our communities with few teachers or special education tutors to help address the issue of helping our children with disabilities. The drop out rate of Alaska Native children in Juneau is already at a very high level; we see this only increasing for our children this year.

Addressing and supporting our Tribal members with disabilities, including our youth, is demonstrated by strong partnerships within Employment & Training is evident by the increased numbers we serve. With increased permanent funding for the TANF program within Employment & Training will increase our base in which to help our people become self-sufficient.

Our Vocational Training and Resource Center (VTRC) offers Life Skills, Office Skills, Basic Computer training, Financial Planning and other training designed for Tribal TANF clients. The VTRC also offers a wide range of vocational training courses, and a growing number of the courses are now being offered in the communities.

Recommendations

1. We encourage the Alaska Legislature to pass the Governor's proposed legislation that will make the Native Family Assistance Program permanent.
2. We support the expansion of the availability of Native Family Assistance grants will ensure that all tribal organizations federally authorized to deliver tribal TANF programs will have the opportunity to access the necessary state resources and provide effective and innovative public assistance programs to their members.

Thank you for your consideration and support of Tribal TANF programs in Alaska. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Sharon Olsen at 907-463-7132 or Dean George, TANF Coordinator at 907-463-7313.

Attachments:

1. Graphs on Tlingit and Haida's TANF Caseloads
2. USDOL "Chief's Award" to Tlingit and Haida



Central Council Tlingit and Haida

PRESS RELEASE

August 14, 2003

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING RECEIVES HIGHEST AWARD FROM U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Congratulations to the Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska's Employment and Training Division; they received the highest award in May 2003 from the U.S. Department of Labor during the National Indian and Native American Employment and Training Conference held in Anchorage, Alaska.

Jim Deluca, Chief of the Division of Indian and Native American Programs (DINAP), praised Tlingit and Haida by saying, "If there is one organization that we can depend on for getting their reports in on time and we don't have questions on because of their organization and thoroughness - it is Tlingit and Haida."



James Deluca & Sharon Olsen

Tlingit and Haida's Employment and Training Division was also recognized for their work on the PL 102-477 Tribal Workgroup and statewide coordination through Alaska Native Coalition on Employment and Training (ANCET).

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