

## BENEFITS OF APPOINTING TRIBAL LIAISONS AND SPECIALIZING TRIBAL CASELOADS

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Twenty Division of Child Support (DCS) Tribal Liaisons manage over 15,606 DCS tribal cases involving 29 Federally recognized tribes in Washington State. The benefits of a specialized caseload allow DCS staff to develop relationships with their local tribes and serve as the local contact for tribes and tribal members.

DCS Tribal Liaisons receive additional state/tribal relations training including: [Government-to-Government training](#) offered by the Washington State Governor's Office of Indian Affairs and the on-line [Working Effectively with Tribal Governments training](#). Tribal Liaisons are familiar with local tribal processes and agreements, are the local resource on DCS Tribal policies, and they serve as the point of contact with local tribes.



**DCS Statewide Tribal Liaison Team**

DCS tribal cases include:

- Non-custodial parents (NCPs) who are members of one of the twenty-nine Federally-recognized Tribes in Washington State.
- NCPs employed by a tribe.
- Individuals who receive services from a Federally-funded Tribal TANF or Child Support program in Washington State.
- Individuals included under a Cooperative Agreement.

Working government-to-government often requires close communication with a tribe before taking certain child support actions. Having specialized caseloads with Tribal Liaisons who have received specialized training facilitates the communication and collaboration with tribal partners needed to achieve the best results for tribal families. Tribal Liaisons also provide outreach services to interested tribes which further builds relationships with our tribal partners and allows Tribal Liaisons to meet face-to-face with tribal families.

*The foundation for specializing tribal caseloads began 25 years ago:*

- In 1989, Washington state Governor Booth Gardner and the Tribal Chairs of federally-recognized tribes in Washington State negotiated and signed a [Centennial Accord](#). This document formalized the government-to-government relationship for all parties to recognize and respect the sovereignty of the other. Each subsequent Governor has reaffirmed this commitment by Proclamation, and in 2013, this commitment was made into state law ([RCW 43.376](#)).
- The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) [Administrative Policy 7.01](#), American Indian Policy, outlines DSHS' commitment to planning and service delivery to tribes and tribal communities. The Policy requires that DSHS Administrations assign Tribal Liaisons and partner with tribes to develop yearly plans that address communication, consultation, budgets, policies, and operational procedures to ensure programs and services are culturally relevant.
- Based on recommendations made by tribes in the early 1990's, DCS assigned tribal cases to DCS Tribal Liaisons so that they could serve as the local contacts for tribes and tribal members. The specialization of tribal cases also benefited DCS as designated Tribal Liaisons could exclusively focus on tribal cases and work government-to-government with local tribes.
- In 1997 tribal-specific legislation ([RCW 26.25](#)) was enacted into law. This legislation recognizes the sovereign relationship between the state and tribes, supports tribes operating child support programs, and encourages state/tribal cooperative agreements.

So, why does DCS appoint Tribal Liaisons and specialize tribal caseloads? **Because doing so strengthens state/tribal relationships and partnerships, and allows families to receive greatly improved and culturally-relevant child support services.**

Visit the [DCS Tribal Relations Website](#) for more information about DCS State/Tribal Relations and our [Partnerships with Tribes](#) over the past 25+ years.