

TANF OPERATING AGREEMENT

Between the

South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency (SPIPA) Intertribal TANF Program
And the Community Service Offices in Pierce, Kitsap, Mason and Thurston Counties.

June 2004

This summary constitutes a record of the operational agreements reached between SPIPA and the CSO's in Pierce, Kitsap, Mason and Thurston Counties, the Region 5 and Region 6 Community Services Division (CSD), for the implementation of the SPIPA Intertribal TANF Program (SITP).

For purposes of Tribal TANF, SPIPA is a consortium of three (3) tribes: the Skokomish Tribe, the Squaxin Island Tribe and Nisqually Tribe. Each of these tribes have submitted tribal resolutions supporting the SPIPA consortium and recognizing that the operation of the SPIPA Intertribal TANF Program is the responsibility of the SPIPA's governing board.

These agreements are not static, but rather represent a starting point for the parties involved. Further cooperative agreements or operational modifications are likely as needs change. As long as modifications are carried out with the knowledge and agreement of the parties involved, it is to be encouraged.

The purpose of this agreement is to further strengthen the government-to-government working relationship between all of the parties; and to assure that all of our mutual clients receive the best possible services at all times during the transition and the day-to-day operation of our TANF programs.

1. Identification of Tribal TANF Cases:

- A. Within the geographical area defined by SPIPA's Tribal Family Assistance Plan (TFAP), the SPIPA Intertribal TANF Program (SITP) will serve:
 1. All families including at least one adult or child who is an enrolled member of a federally recognized American Indian Tribe or Alaska Native residing on the Skokomish Reservation in Mason County, The Squaxin Island Reservation in Mason County and the Nisqually Reservation in Thurston County. This includes all AI/ ANs who reside on these reservations.
 2. All families with at least one adult or child who is an enrolled member of a federally recognized American Indian Tribe or an

Alaskan Native residing off a reservation within Pierce, Kitsap, Mason and Thurston Counties with the exceptions outlined below:

- a. In Pierce County, excluding members of the Puyallup Tribe, Muckleshoot Tribe and Suquamish Tribe. Also excluding all families who reside on the Puyallup reservation.
 - b. In Kitsap County, excluding all members of the Puyallup Tribe, Suquamish Tribe, and Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe and also excluding all families living on the Port Gamble S'Klallam reservation (the families eligible for the Port Gamble Tribal TANF Program).
 - c. In Mason County, excluding all members of the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation and Suquamish Tribe.
 - d. In Thurston County, excluding all members of the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, Puyallup Tribe, and Suquamish Tribe.
- B. The SPIPA Intertribal TANF Program (SITP) will offer assistance to applicants in obtaining misplaced documentation of enrollment. SPIPA may provide referrals to a tribe's enrollment officer for AI/AN who may be eligible to become enrolled.
- C. Enrolled Native American and Alaska families can only receive TANF from one TANF Program, state or tribal, at a time.
- D. All clients meeting the above definition who apply for TANF on or after September 1 or October 1, 2004 (based on the county in Section 2.C) must apply through the Tribe. All current state TANF recipients who meet the above definition will be transferred to the tribal program from September - December 2004 based on the county in Section 2.C.
- E. If there is a question regarding which state or Tribal TANF program should serve a family, the office that first sees the family will make a determination as to who will take their application for TANF and will immediately forward the application and relevant information to the appropriate office.
- F. It is our desire to avoid overlap with other Tribal TANF programs operating in the same geographic area. Accordingly, a process will be developed to handle situations in which a family residing in Kitsap County includes family members who are enrolled in the Port Gamble S'Klallam

Tribe and other family members who are also enrolled in other federally-recognized tribes or Alaska Natives.

- G. In order to prevent overlap with the other near reservation tribes, a process will be developed by SPIPA to handle situations in which a family includes both an eligible Native American or Alaska Native family member and one or more family members who are enrolled in the Puyallup, Muckleshoot, Suquamish or Chehalis Tribes and the family does not reside on the Skokomish, Squaxin Island or Nisqually Reservations.
- H. Region 5, Region 6 and the SPIPA Intertribal TANF Program will each designate a contact person to resolve questions about which program will serve a family. Initially, the contact persons for this purpose will be:

Region 5 Vicky Nelson, Financial Coordinator, regional representative

Region 6 gloria Marshall-Perez, Deputy RA, regional representative

SPIPA Carol Cordova, Education and Training Manager

Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribal TANF Program Marilyn Olson,
Director of Children
and Families

2. Case Transfers:

- A. The SPIPA Tribal TANF TFAP will commence operation on September 1, 2004.
- B. NEW APPLICATIONS: SPIPA Intertribal TANF program will begin accepting new applications for SPIPA Tribal TANF on September 1, 2004. All CSO's in the service area will begin referring new TANF applicants to SITP on this date. A new applicant means not currently receiving TANF.
- C. OPEN TANF CASES: All CSO's within the service area defined herein will transfer identified and appropriate Native American cases to SPIPA. The CSO's will begin transitioning cases to the SPIPA Intertribal TANF program in the following manner:

September 2004 New cases except Pierce County and Kitsap County
Mason County cases Transferred to SPIPA

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| October 2004 | New cases including Pierce County and Kitsap County
Thurston cases will be transferred to SPIPA |
| November 2004 | Kitsap and 110 cases from Pierce County will be transferred to SPIPA [SPIPA proposes Pierce South for this month] |
| December 2004 | The remainder of cases from Pierce County cases will be transferred to SPIPA [SPIPA proposes the remaining CSOs in Pierce County] |

- D. DSHS will close state TANF effective on the last day of the month a case is transferred.
- E. On the first day of the transfer month, the family will receive their State TANF grant. As early as possible in the transfer month, the CSO will:
 - 1. Close State TANF benefits;
 - 2. Open Family (F04) Medical Assistance for the family for six (6) months;
 - 3. Send the family a letter notifying them of the termination of State TANF benefits and direct the head of household to SPIPA to have their on-going eligibility determined;
 - 4. Prepare a hard copy packet of information, as listed in Section 3., below and;
 - 5. Deliver packet to SPIPA.
- F. The CSO shall continue to provide relevant services to eligible recipients until TANF case is transferred to the SPIPA pursuant to Section 2.C.

3. **Transfer of Information:**

- A. Information necessary to effect a smooth transfer from state to Tribal TANF will be copied by the CSO's and sent to SPIPA in hard copy 1 month in advance of the case being transferred. The information to be transferred includes:
 - 1. Demographic information (copy of the most recent application or Eligibility Review);
 - 2. Income and resources;
 - 3. Native American status (as declared by the household);
 - 4. Relationship of household members to the Native American member(s);
 - 5. Citizenship;

6. Place of residence (if different than mailing address);
7. Geographic Service Area;
8. Pregnancy / due date;
9. Identification and social security number;
10. Absent Parent information;
11. Number of months the family has already received state or Tribal TANF and the number of months the family resided on an Indian Reservation while receiving TANF, if known;
12. Status of 60 month extension (if applicable);
13. Current Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP);
14. E-JAS component history screen.

B. The CSO's will make any information available to SPIPA needed to facilitate a case transfer; however, the parties agree that the routine information to be transferred will be limited to Automated Client Eligibility (ACES) and Jobs Automated System (e-JAS) screens which contain the information listed above, three (3) months of documentation, and permanent record identification.

4. Ongoing Transfer of Cases:

- A. When a CSO in the designated service area receives a transfer in, they will screen for SPIPA eligibility.
- B. If the case appears to be eligible, the CSO's will then follow the procedures outlined in Section 2 and 3, for transfer of the case to the SITP.
- C. When a client presents at a SPIPA service area to request transfer to Tribal TANF, SPIPA will screen for SPIPA eligibility. If eligible, SPIPA will notify the appropriate CSO to request transfer.
- D. When a Tribal TANF family leaves SPIPA's Tribal TANF service area, SITP will notify the local CSO of transfer within 10 days. The local CSO will then transfer the records to the appropriate CSO in the new area or as requested by the other CSO, SPIPA or the client.

5. Ongoing Exchange of Information:

- A. The ongoing exchange of information will be covered through a data share agreement for the 3 years of SPIPA's plan. This exchange of data can be used in any situation where exchange of information is needed for either program to administer their TANF, Basic Food Plan, Medical Assistance, Child Care or General Assistance program(s), to ensure that all programs are able to issue timely and accurate benefits.

6. **Child Support:**

- A. The Division of Child Support (DCS) has an associated child support case(s) for each existing TANF case. Child support is currently being collected on some of these cases and will be forwarded to the SPIPA Intertribal TANF Program (SITP).
- B. The Division of Child Support (DCS) and SPIPA shall establish a process to electronically distribute to the SITP the child support collected on former state TANF cases that become Tribal TANF cases. It will include at a minimum the following criteria: 1) SPIPA will request that the custodial parent sign a form assigning his or her right to collect child support to the SITP, 2) SPIPA will forward the assignment form to DCS, and 3) SPIPA will set up an electronic funds transfer account and provide the account number to DCS. DCS will hold in suspense the collections during the initial transfer or cases to the SITP. The child support collected may be held in suspense up to four months. If the above conditions are not met beginning on the first day of the fifth month the child support collections will be forwarded to the custodial parent by DCS.
- C. If the SITP wants DCS to provide child support services for new tribal TANF cases, SITP will send a completed referral and assignment forms(s) to DCS.
- D. Before or during the transfer month, the CSO's will notify the DCS Field Office of cases being transferred to SPIPA. Notification will include the name and Social Security Number of the Custodial Parent.
- E. The Division of Child Support (DCS) will share available data on an on-going basis during the 3-year plan concerning the associated child support case information for the TANF cases being transferred by the CSO to SPIPA upon receipt of the child support assignment.

7. **Cases That Transfer with Open Basic Food Program (Food Stamps):**

- A. On-going Basic Food Program eligibility will be determined by the CSO's using the SPIPA grant standards and any other earned or unearned income that would affect Basic Food Program eligibility. The CSO will keep Basic Food Program open on transfer cases through the current certification period providing household remains eligible for assistance.

8. **Cases That Transfer With Open Child Care:**

- A. SITP cases will continue to receive TANF-related childcare through the call centers.

9. **TANF Related Basic Food Plan (Food Stamps)/Medical Assistance:**

- A. SPIPA Tribal TANF applicants approved through the SITP who want Basic Food Plan and/or medical assistance will have their application forwarded to the appropriate CSO. The application may be sent electronically, faxed, or mailed to the CSO. SITP will provide copies of available verification of income, identification and household composition and address. SITP will provide monthly verification of Tribal TANF grant amounts to the CSO with the clients' names, dates of birth, social security numbers, grant amounts and zip codes in order to calculate the Basic Food benefits.
- B. For Medical, the CSO will process the application for medical provided that the CSO has the names, addresses, social security numbers and date of birth information necessary.
- C. For Basic Food applicants, the CSO's will arrange for an interview either via telephone or face-to-face either at that time or will schedule a telephone interview and mail a letter to the client that includes date, time and telephone number the CSO will call. If the client has no telephone available, the client may request to access a phone through SITP. If additional items of verification are needed to complete the application, either the client or the SITP can provide them.
- D. If a potential SPIPA Tribal TANF applicant walks into a CSO, the CSO should process the Basic Food application. If the household is expedited, the CSO will provide Basic Food Plan according to expedited timelines. If the client is not expedited, an interview will be scheduled. In either situation, the CSO will then fax the application to the SITP.
- E. If an applicant needs retroactive medical assistance, SITP will determine if the adult applying would have been eligible for a TANF grant during the three retroactive months and advise the CSO's.

10. **EBT:**

- A. Pending or upon approval of assistance the applicant can contact any nearest CSO to obtain an EBT card for Basic Food benefits. If requested, the EBT card can be mailed to the client from Citibank.

11. **Child Care:**

- A. TANF related childcare is available through the call center to clients receiving Tribal TANF benefits. Applications and changes of circumstances can be handled over the telephone.

12. **Changes of Circumstances:**

- A. The client is responsible for reporting changes to both the CSO / call center and to SPIPA. However, the CSO's/call centers may request information about resources and income verification from the SPIPA Intertribal TANF Program to facilitate re-determination for Basic Food, Medical and Working Connection Child Care.
- B. When a SPIPA Tribal TANF recipient reports changes in income and/or circumstances to the SPIPA Intertribal TANF Program, SPIPA may forward this information to the CSO's/ call center within five (5) working days. CSO's/ call centers may do the same in the event income and/or a change of circumstances is reported to the CSO/ call center first.

13. **Overpayments:**

- A. If an office opens TANF when TANF assistance is already being received by another office, the second office that opened TANF in error will be responsible for establishing an overpayment and needs to coordinate with the other office to terminate duplicate benefits immediately.

14. **Terminations:**

- A. The SPIPA Intertribal TANF Program will notify within 10 days the CSO's of any termination of SPIPA Tribal TANF benefits and specify the reason for termination.
- B. When a Tribal TANF family leaves the SPIPA Tribal TANF service area, SITP will notify the local CSO within 10 days. The local CSO will then transfer the records to the appropriate CSO in the new area or as requested by the other CSO, SPIPA or client.
- C. Any person who is identified in this document who exits State TANF as a result of employment prior to transfer month of the case shall continue to receive supportive services from the appropriate CSO. Upon application and approval of SPIPA Tribal TANF, CSO support services shall end.

15. Communication and Referrals:

- A. The above, as listed in section 1, G., will also provide liaison and assistance between the offices for Basic Food Plan assistance, Medical Assistance, Child Care, General Assistance, to make sure emergencies are quickly resolved and in general to assure that high quality, professional communication takes place. FAX and e-mail will also be used, as available.

16. Technical Assistance and Training:

- A. The Region 5 and Region 6 Community Services Divisions are committed to providing technical assistance and training to Tribal TANF staff whenever possible and appropriate. This may include training on SSI facilitation, Child Care and other topics relevant to case management and TANF service delivery. SPIPA has also expressed their willingness to share training with CSO staff whenever possible and appropriate.

B. In Acknowledgement of the Intent of Both Parties:

1. The CSO's and SPIPA will, upon request, arrange an orientation to their offices and basic programs and services, to help each other provide better customer service;
2. The CSO's and Region 5 and Region 6 Community Services Division will invite SPIPA staff to any appropriate local or regional training;
3. SPIPA, CSO's and Region 5 and Region 6 Community Services Division will share and exchange written material and information about resources (journals, research papers, web sites, etc.) which appear relevant to TANF administration and/or service delivery; and
4. SPIPA, CSO and regional staff will, on a periodic basis as needed, meet with each other to clarify, refine, and further improve the operation of their programs and their government-to-government relationship.

17. Sanctions:

- A. The CSO's will not approve a TANF application from an identified SPIPA Tribal TANF recipient who is in sanction status with SPIPA. The SPIPA Intertribal TANF Program will notify the CSO's of clients in sanction.

18. **Data Sharing Agreement:**

- A. The CSO and SPIPA will sign a data share agreement to last for the 3 year period of SPIPA's Tribal TANF plan to share available data:
1. for the initial transfer of cases described in Sections 1 – 4,
 2. for the initial transfer of an application for TANF as described in Section 1, or
 3. for the ongoing exchange of information for cases as described in Section 5.
- B. All parties understand and agree that the sharing of any information about individual clients and case circumstances will be limited to that information needed for the proper administration of appropriate CSO, DCS and/or Tribal assistance programs. All parties will maintain signed nondisclosure statements for staff having access to the data on file, and make these available to one another, as requested.
- C. Data sharing will help prevent clients from receiving duplicate assistance as required by federal law.

19. **Mutual Cooperation, Trust and Support:**

It is the intent and commitment of the parties in this agreement to encourage and cultivate a professional relationship, which is positive, cooperative and mutually respectful, between our agencies and our staffs. We believe this spirit of cooperation, mutual respect and good will is critical to the success of the SPIPA Intertribal TANF Program and will result in the best service and outcomes for all of our mutual clients.

This agreement may be modified at any time by mutual agreement of the parties.

Dan Gleason 7-21-04
Dan Gleason, President, SPIPA Board Date

Amadeo T. Tiam 7-21-04
Amadeo Tiam, Executive Director of SPIPA Date

Deb Bingaman 7/27/04
Deb Bingaman, Assistance Secretary, ESA Date

Daniel M. Fyler 8-5-04
Regional Administrator, Region 5 CSD Date

Cynthia Muel 8/4/04
Regional Administrator, Region 6 CSD Date

Kim Rockett 8/9/04
DCS District Manager, DCS Date

Dr. David Johnson 8-10-04
DCS District Manager, DCS Date

May G. Seaborn 8/10/04
DCS District Manager, DCS Date