

**February 12, 2009, Letter (CA/ESA joint letter) re TANF Changes to:**

The Honorable David Burnett, Chair  
Chehalis Business Council  
PO Box 536  
Oakville, WA 98568

The Honorable Cynthia Iyall, Chair  
Nisqually Indian Tribe  
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The Honorable Joseph Mullen, Chair  
Snoqualmie Tribe of Indians  
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The Honorable Jeanne Jerred, Chair  
Colville Business Council  
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The Honorable Narcisco Cunanan, Chair  
Nooksack Indian Tribal Council  
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The Honorable Greg Abrahamson, Chair  
Spokane Tribal Business Council  
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The Honorable William Iyall, Chair  
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The Honorable Ronald Charles, Chair  
Port Gamble Business Committee  
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The Honorable Dave Lopeman, Chair  
Squaxin Island Tribal Council  
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The Honorable Walter Ward, Chair  
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The Honorable Herman Dillon, Sr., Chair  
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The Honorable Shawn Yanity, Chair  
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The Honorable W. Ron Allen, Chair  
Jamestown S'Klallam Indian Tribe  
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The Honorable Carol Hatch, Chair  
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The Honorable Leonard Forsman, Chair  
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The Honorable Glen Nenema, Chair  
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The Honorable Fawn Sharp, President  
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The Honorable Brian Cladoosby, Chair  
Swinomish Indian Senate  
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The Honorable Frances Charles, Chair  
Lower Elwha Tribal Council  
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The Honorable Tom Wooten, Chair  
Samish Tribe of Indians  
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The Honorable Melvin Sheldon, Jr., Chair  
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The Honorable Henry Cagey, Chair  
Lummi Business Council  
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The Honorable Cynthia M. Harris, Chair  
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Darrington, WA 98241

The Honorable Marilyn Scott, Chair  
Upper Skagit Tribal Council  
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Sedro Woolley, WA 98284

The Honorable Michael Lawrence, Chair  
Makah Tribal Council  
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The Honorable Charlene Nelson, Chair  
Shoalwater Bay Tribal Council  
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Tokeland, WA 98590

The Honorable Ralph Sampson, Chair  
Yakama Tribal Council  
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The Honorable Charlotte Williams, Chair  
Muckleshoot Tribal Council  
39015 172nd Avenue SE  
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The Honorable Joe Pavel, Chair  
Skokomish Tribal Council  
N 80 Tribal Center Road  
Shelton, WA 98584



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES**  
**P.O. Box 45070, Olympia, Washington 98504-5070**

February 12, 2009

***To Tribal Chairs:***

On August 1, 2008, the Economic Services Administration (ESA), in coordination with Children's Administration (CA) made changes in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits to promote family reunification and support temporary relative placements. These changes were described in a letter to you from ESA on June 19, 2008.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you of these changes and suggest how they might impact the tribes.

**What are the changes?**

- Extends the time a parent on TANF can continue to receive cash and medical benefits from 90 to 180 days, when a child is temporarily absent from the home, and is expected to return to the parent's home within 180 days.
- Provides TANF benefits for up to 180 days to both the parent and a relative, or other adult caregiver. This benefit can occur when a TANF child has been temporarily placed by CA in the care of the relative or other adult caregiver and CA expects the child to return home within 180 days.

**Can temporary absences ever exceed the 180 day limit?**

If the child is still expected to return to the parent but it may take longer than 180 days, then ESA/Community Services Office (CSO) staff can request an Exception to Rule (ETR) in order to keep the TANF benefits to the parent open.

**Reason for the changes**

These changes are intended to strengthen families and the well-being of children. Coordinating services for families across administrations will help support families who are striving to reunify with their children.

**Are tribes impacted by the changes?**

CA social workers, ESA/CSO workers, birth parents, and the relative caregivers who have children in their care are all impacted. Although no cases involving tribal families have come to our attention since August 1, we anticipate the possibility.

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**How might tribes be impacted by the changes?**

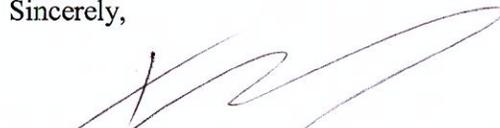
Depending on whether a particular tribe has a TANF program and whether the tribe asserts concurrent or exclusive jurisdiction in a particular ICW case, the new policies may impact tribes in different ways. Although Tribal TANF tribes will be restricted by the prohibition on “duplicative assistance” in Section 412 (b)(1)(D) of P.L 104-193, no Indian children will be negatively impacted by these new policies and some will certainly benefit.

**Who do I contact if I have questions?**

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Sincerely,



Troy Hutson, Assistant Secretary  
Economic Services Administration



Randy Hart, Interim Assistant Secretary  
Children’s Administration

- cc: IPAC Delegates  
Tribal TANF Social Services Directors  
Colleen Cawston, Director, IPSS, Public Affairs  
Doug North, IPSS  
Sarah Sotomish, Chief, State Tribal Relations Office, ESA  
Bernice Morehead, Director, Policy & Practice Improvement, CA  
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