



**Supporting the rights and  
needs of Oregon's tribal  
youth**

**The mission of the  
Oregon Youth Authority  
is to protect the public  
and reduce crime by  
holding youth  
accountable and  
providing opportunities  
for reformation  
in safe environments.**

# Oregon Youth Authority

## Government-to-Government Report on Tribal Relations

**2019**

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Legislative Commission on Indian Services

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## Oregon's Nine Federally Recognized Tribes

The annual government to government report on Tribal relations is an opportunity to provide a forum to discuss the ways that the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) interacted with the nine tribes during 2019 to improve outcomes for American Indian/Alaska Native youth involved in the Juvenile Justice System.

The nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon are the:

- Klamath Tribes
- Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians
- Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon
- Burns Paiute Tribe
- Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians of Oregon
- Coquille Tribe of Oregon
- Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon



## Highlights from 2019

OYA has done profoundly good work with our Tribal partners in 2019 including but not limited to:

- Providing culturally relevant and sustaining services to tribal youth and their families;
- Holding pow wows at the following close custody facilities: Tillamook Youth Correctional Facility (Tillamook), Oak Creek Youth Correctional Facility (Albany-Female), Rogue Valley Youth Correctional Facility (Grants Pass) and MacLaren Youth Correctional Facility (Woodburn);
- Holding four Native American Advisory Committee (NAAC) meetings at Grand Ronde, Burns, Klamath Falls and Portland (NARA);
- Contracting new cultural service providers to further our scope in the provision of culturally relevant services to youth in close-custody facilities;
- Continued contracting with the Southern Oregon Indian Center and Nick Hall to provide Native American services for youth in close custody facilities;

- Continued working with volunteers to provide services for Native youth in OYA facilities;
- Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde organized a cultural visit to MacLaren in March. It is an annual event bringing ceremony and mentoring to the youth;
- OYA participated in the governor’s Task Force on Tribal Cultural Items. A draft report was submitted on November 14, 2019.
- Native American Heritage Month mini celebrations held at, Tillamook, Oak Creek, Eastern and Maclaren.

## **Oregon Youth Authority**

### **Serving Oregon’s most at-risk youth**

OYA’s mission is to protect the public and reduce crime by holding youth offenders accountable and providing opportunities for reformation in safe environments.

OYA does this by exercising legal and physical custody of offenders adjudicated to OYA by juvenile courts, and physical custody of young offenders sentenced by adult courts. The agency serves the state’s most delinquent youth ages 12 through 24 who commit crimes before their 18th birthday.

OYA currently manages approximately 1,201 youth. Approximately 717 youth are in communities on probation or parole. The remainder – approximately 484 youth – live in secure close-custody facilities.

Research shows that the most effective way to encourage youth to lead crime-free lives is by providing the appropriate combination of culturally specific treatment and education. To that end, OYA engages tribal governments in five significant ways:

- Individually, through government-to-government relationships, as established in a memorandum of understanding with each tribe;
- Collectively, through the OYA Native American Advisory Committee;
- Collaboratively, through implementing and coordinating culturally relevant treatment services for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) youth in OYA custody;
- Through participation in Public Safety Cluster meetings; and
- By providing direct services and support to tribal youth in OYA custody.

### **Leadership additions**

OYA Director, Joe O’Leary – Joe became the director of OYA in February 2018, after serving as acting director since September 2017, and as its deputy director before that. His professional experience ranges from working as a public defender to advising two governors on public safety and legal issues. During his tenure, Joe has deepened OYA’s commitment to developmental and therapeutic approaches for youth in the agency’s care; launched an agency initiative focusing on

diversity, equity, and inclusion; presided over the construction of new, developmentally appropriate housing and a state-of-the-art high school inside two secure facilities; and fostered the agency's successful effort to reduce its use of secure isolation for youth in custody. Under his leadership, OYA continues to be cited as a national model in helping youth mature into productive, crime-free members of their communities.

OYA Deputy Director Nakeia Daniels – previously policy advisor to Governor Kate Brown in Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Veterans Services, Nakeia Daniels has been Deputy Director of the Oregon Youth Authority since October 2018. With a career focused on equity and its impact on all aspects of business, and education, Nakeia's focus on American Indian/Alaska Native youth, staff, contractors, and volunteers will help lead the agency to more innovative services for our youth.

OYA Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations (OIIR) Director Keeble Giscombe- previously worked as a Principle Executive Manager that provided oversight for three prisons within the Oregon Department of Corrections system. His criminal justice professional experience started in 2001 when he began as a Probation Officer for the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. In addition, he has over thirteen years of experience providing mental health services. His work ranged from a mobile crisis counselor to clinical supervisor. Lastly, he has over fifteen years of experience working with Equality, Disparity, Diversity, and Inclusion in various settings.

### **American Indian/Alaska Native youth in OYA**

Approximately 5.0 percent of youth in OYA's custody are documented as American Indian/Alaska Native.

OYA has legal and/or physical custody of approximately 1,201 youth, of whom approximately 177 self-identify as being enrolled in an American Indian/Alaska Native tribe or of tribal descent. Of those, 144 are juvenile commitments and 33 are adult commitments sentenced under Measure 11 or waived to adult court.

Relative to Oregon's population of 10-17-year olds, American Indian/Alaska Native youth are over-represented in the juvenile justice system and in OYA. The 2018 Relative Rate Index, a comparison of youth of various ethnicities/races to their white peers, reports that American Indians are 2.32 times more likely to be referred to Juvenile Court. American Indian/Alaska Natives make up approximately 2 percent of Oregonians, however 5.0 percent of youth committed to OYA.



Pow wow at Rogue Valley YCF September 2019

### **Youth Reformation System**

The Youth Reformation System (YRS) research helps OYA staff and our community partners better serve youth and the community by determining:

- Population forecast - accurate estimates of space/bed needs and resources;
- Placement and treatment - most effective placement and treatment options for each youth, in combination with staff expertise and experience;
- Program evaluation - ongoing feedback and review of program performance to meet the changing needs of youth; and
- Community context - environments and services within the community to support youth transitioning out of OYA.

The positive human development (PHD) culture helps support youth, staff and our agency as we work together to:

- Enhance safety and security,
- Provide caring and supportive relationships,
- Establish high expectations and accountability,
- Provide meaningful participation, and
- Establish community connections.

Under PHD, all three elements - youth, staff and OYA as an agency - are equally important in achieving these goals.

### **Positive Human Development**

OYA adopted the Positive Human Development (PHD) model in 2014. The tenets of PHD are that: Therapeutic approaches are more effective at reducing recidivism. Realizing youth have less capacity for self-regulation and that must be taken into consideration. Understanding historical trauma and its effects, but that the effects can be reversed with the right treatment and



relationships with stable adults. Culturally responsive services are a major part of this for AI/AN youth.

During 2017 and 2018, staff continued to train in PHD. PHD phase 2 was introduced in 2019. OYA managers trained staff on best practices for working with youth and each other. OYA understands that PHD is a practice that one must work at and that work is never done.

### **OYA's Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations (OIIR)**

The Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations (OIIR) provides leadership, advocacy, and guiding principles to assist the Oregon Youth Authority in its ongoing efforts to become a culturally responsive organization and address the complex issues of a culturally and ethnically diverse agency.

The OIIR recognizes diversity that exists both within OYA's youth population and within the employees of the organization. Staff of the office provide leadership and services to both youth and staff. Evidence-based best practices are incorporated into the treatment delivery in both facilities and community settings.

It is OYA and OIIR's belief that youth from all demographic groups receive equitable access to services while in our care and custody. OYA was the first – and for many years, the only – juvenile justice agency in the nation to have an office that represents the needs of diverse youth.

There have been a few staff changes to the OIIR team. Besides new director, Keeble Giscombe, we also have a new Tattoo Removal Program Coordinator, Javier Perfecto-Meza, a new State-wide Hispanic Services Coordinator, Griselda Solano Salinas. Hispanic Services Coordinator, Rolando Ramirez, Multicultural Services Coordinator, Roderick Edwards, and Youth Services Coordinators, Johnny Demus, Troy Williams and Augie Munoz continue to provide excellent services to OYA youth in closed facilities and in the community. Some OYA native youth identify with more than one group, such as; Native and Latino, Hispanic, Black/African American and LGBTQ+. OIIR staff work with all youth in providing culturally responsive services.

### **Tribal Liaison**

Leslie Riggs is OYA's new Tribal Liaison. He started in September 2019. Leslie is a member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. He worked for the Grand Ronde Tribe for 13 years. His last position was as the Education Division Manager. During this time, he was also the facilitator for the Education Cluster Group Government to Government meetings.

Leslie earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Oregon in English Literature and Ethnic Studies.

### **Native American Services Coordinator**

Derwin Decker is OYA's Native American Services Coordinator. He is of Modoc descent and is a member of the Klamath Tribes. Derwin provides culturally relevant and sustaining services to

youth in closed custody facilities such as; sweat lodge, drumming and talking circles, smudging, and White Bison, a Native American specific sobriety program.



Pow Wow at MacLaren YCF July 2019

## **OYA's Tribal Relations**

### **Communications liaisons**

Government to government relations are an essential part of providing culturally relevant services to OYA youth.

OYA is represented by a Tribal Liaison who maintains contact with the key tribal contacts listed below. Ongoing communications about youth in OYA's care is paramount in order to enhance community safety and reduce recidivism. The Tribal Liaison keeps key tribal contacts abreast of when tribal members from their community are taken into custody and when tribal youth are ready to transition back into the community. Items of mutual concern must be communicated between the key tribal contacts and the tribal liaison.

### **Key tribal contacts**

- Raymond Tsumpti, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
- Brenda Meade, Coquille Indian Tribe
- Cheryle Kennedy, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- Gary Burke, Confederated Tribes of Umatilla
- Eric Hawley, Burns Paiute Tribe
- Doc Slyter, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw
- Dan Courtenay, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians
- Delores Pigsley, Confederated Tribes of Siletz
- Don Gentry, Klamath Tribes

- Jackie Mercer, NARA

### **Memoranda of Understanding**

OYA has Memorandum of Understanding with seven of the nine tribes. However, the majority, if not all, of them are due for an update. The two tribes with which OYA does not have an MOU has not created an impediment to OYA working closely with them. Nevertheless, the Tribal Liaison will reach out in early 2020 to discuss updating the 7 extant agreements and creating new ones for the two, if the tribes so wish.

The seven tribes with which OYA has an MOU

- Burns Paiute Tribe
- Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw
- Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation
- Coquille Tribes of Oregon
- Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians
- Klamath Tribes

The two tribes with which OYA does not have MOUs

- Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

### **Public Safety Cluster**

The Tribal Liaison serves as a member of the Public Safety Cluster. Meetings are held to discuss public safety issues that pertain to Oregon and tribal communities. Matters of concern are shared along with ideas and best practices to design strategies and solutions to keep Oregonians safe.

OYA staff attended a Tribal Public Safety Cluster meeting December 2, 2019 in Pendleton, OR. The meeting was chaired by Serena Stoudemire-Wesley, Director of the Youth Development Council. She declared at the meeting that she is still seeking a tribal co-chair. Other matters discussed at the meeting were; exposure of human communities to wildfire in the pacific northwest, PL 280 and its impact on matters of tribal jurisdiction and HB 2625 and its efforts regarding missing and murdered Native American women.

### **Native American Advisory Committee (NAAC)**

The Native American Advisory Committee (NAAC) includes representatives from all nine tribes of Oregon, Urban Indian agencies, such as, Native American Rehabilitation Administration (NARA) and the Native American Youth Association (NAYA) as well as tribal community representatives from across Oregon.

NAAC's primary functions include:

- Establish and maintain community links between OYA and the Native American community;
- Consult on policies and programs and the cultural relevance and sustainability regarding AI/AN youth in OYA's care;
- Assist in recruiting volunteers and contractors to provide cultural services to youth in custody;
- Partner in aftercare and transitioning of OYA youth back into tribal and urban communities;
- Assist in establishing resources for out of home/foster care placements;

Topics of meetings have included:

- Perceived gaps in services and how to remedy them by partnering with OYA;
- Maintaining a tribal connection with youth while in OYA custody;
- Continuing support and resources for AI/AN youth;
- Policies and procedures for maintaining communication between OYA and tribes;
- Contracting with more Native American cultural service providers.

Four NAAC meetings were held in 2019. The last one was held on December 5, 2019 in Portland, OR and was hosted by NARA.

OYA partners with the Oregon Health Authority's (OHA) Addictions and Mental Health Services to hold NAAC meetings in conjunction with the Nine Tribes Quarterly Prevention meetings. Many of the issues discussed at the OHA meeting are relevant to the services provided by OYA. There are a lot of intersecting matters dealt with by both agencies.

### **Statewide Advisory Committee**

The statewide advisory committee includes juvenile justice partners and stakeholders to provide input and information on issues and events affecting juvenile justice, as well as to advise OYA on its policies and practices.

### **Ongoing support**

OYA director Joe O'Leary and Tribal Liaison Leslie Riggs attended the annual Tribal Summit in Pendleton, Oregon on December 3, 2019. Among the topics discussed were Tribal gaming, the Tribal cultural items task force report updates, education and economic development in Indian country, water in the coming decade and significant issues affecting tribal communities in Oregon.

### **OYA and individual tribes**

OYA continues to work with Oregon's nine tribes on collaborating to provide support and services to AI/AN youth. OYA staff worked with representatives from Klamath tribes to set up regular communication with Klamath Tribal community youth and those in custody. Grand Ronde brought a cultural activity to MacLaren. It is an annual event that consists of a talking

circle, Round Dance drumming and singing and mentoring by Charlie Tailfeathers. A meeting was held with a Burns Paiute alcohol and drug specialist and a cultural specialist to bring those services to youth in Eastern YCF. The Tribal Liaison and Native American Services Coordinator diligently work with the tribes on a regular basis ensuring that the agreements made are kept. At present, not all nine tribes have youth in custody with OYA. The Cow Creek, Coquille and the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw do not have youth in OYA custody. However, communication is made when native youth are transitioning back to tribal communities.



Native American Heritage Month mini celebration at Oak Creek YCF

## **A Shared Commitment**

### **Collaborating on facility programs**

OYA has 8 close-custody facilities throughout Oregon. It takes OYA staff, contractors, and volunteers working together to meet the objective of incorporating and maintaining services for Native American youth in these facilities.

OYA's close-custody facilities are:

- MacLaren Youth Correctional Facility (Woodburn)
- Oak Creek Youth Correctional Facility (Albany) (female facility)
- Tillamook Youth Correctional Facility (Tillamook)
- Eastern Oregon Youth Correctional Facility (Burns)
- Rogue Valley Youth Correctional Facility (Grants Pass)

OYA's transitional camp/facilities are:

- Camp Tillamook Youth Transition Facility (Tillamook)
- Camp Florence Youth Transition Facility (Florence)
- Riverbend Youth Transition Facility (La Grande)

Each facility offers a range of events from sweat lodge ceremonies to pow wows and other opportunities to honor and celebrate Native American cultures. Support for these events is provided through a network of tribal staff, contractors and volunteers.



MacLaren pow wow 2019



Rogue Valley pow wow 2019

### **Reconnecting and maintaining youth with cultural traditions**

The cultural knowledge and experience of OYA youth varies. Some are fully aware of their heritage, enrolled in a tribe and have a continuing relationship with their people. This is not the case for all AI/AN youth in OYA. Therefore, it is in OYA staff's best interest to assist youth in the introduction or maintenance of their cultural connection. OYA staff support AI/AN youth by providing culturally relevant and sustaining services. Connection to one's culture provides a foundation on which one's identity is built and can provide an enormous sense of pride. Being included and belonging are important aspects of youth development. It can have a tremendous effect on a youth's self-worth.

### **Coordinating treatment services**

Juvenile probation and parole officers (JPPOs) are responsible for direct supervision of youth in the community and for case management for youth in closed facilities. Multidisciplinary Team Meetings (MDTs) are coordinated by JPPOs to include relevant staff including tribal representatives, family and OYA tribal staff to develop and monitor treatment plans, as well as discuss transition plans. The tribal liaison and tribal services coordinator work with JPPOs in keeping tribal representatives aware of the status of AI/AN youth in custody to include them in assisting native youth in treatment and for transition services

### **Providing culturally relevant services**

AI/AN youth in OYA custody have a right to access their culture. OYA staff must provide youth, should they want them, cultural services, including; sweat lodge, smudging, pipe ceremonies, talking circles, support groups, pow wows, and cultural arts, such as; traditional drumming, singing and other native arts to maintain a connection to their culture. The tribal liaison and

Native American services coordinator partner with tribal representatives, contractors and other interested parties to ensure services are in place.

### **Supporting tribal youth transition**

The Tribal Liaison works with tribal representatives and county parole and probation offices around the state to provide better outcomes for youth transitioning from closed facilities and camps back into their communities. Ensuring that cultural services, as well as behavioral and mental health services, follow youth on their departure is vital to their success.

### **Training opportunity for OYA staff**

All new OYA staff receive an orientation on tribal governments and state law governing the legal relationship between tribes and the state. Training on tribal governments during new employee orientation ensures OYA staff have a basic awareness of tribal issues and the agency's notification policy.

Cultural responsiveness training is required for all OYA staff working with youth in OYA custody. All new staff are expected to have a basic awareness of Native American cultural values, beliefs, and customs. This training begins laying the foundation for new employees to work with tribal youth and emphasizes the need for culturally relevant services.

### **Resources**

The tribal liaison will continue to work with Oregon's nine tribes. He is looking for ways to create new and improved dialogue avenues with the tribes, OYA facility and field staff, families and youth. Keeping the channels of communication open is not only a best practice; it is a policy.

### **Recruitment**

The tribal liaison and Native American services coordinator are actively seeking contractors to work in OYA facilities. The tribal liaison and our contracts specialist were able to revise the application to streamline the process. This was to reduce barriers for contractors to bring their expertise to our facilities. OYA youth are already benefiting. Moreover, OYA is actively working towards recruitment of Native Americans for employment within our agency as part of our newest DEI strategic initiative.

### **Looking ahead**

OYA and its tribal partners have done some incredible work together in 2019. Improvements, however, can always be made. The Tribal Liaison looks forward to designing and implementing new ideas to assist our youth and to provide better outcomes for them in 2020.

### **Ongoing relationship building**

OYA continues to maintain and develop new relationships with Oregon's nine tribes and urban tribal communities. Changes in tribal councils and staff as well as OYA staff provide a situation in which information must be shared vigorously and continually. OYA strives to be a good partner in providing services to AI/AN youth in the community and closed facilities. By

maintaining partnerships with our stakeholders, we ensure that we do our best to meet the needs of our tribal youth and those of our tribal partners.



Native American Heritage month mini celebration at Eastern YCF

### **Additional Resources**

For more information, please contact:

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