



2024 Government - to - Government Report

December 15, 2024

This annual report is submitted in accordance with ORS 182.166 (3), which requires agencies to submit a report on agency activities under ORS 182.162–182.168.



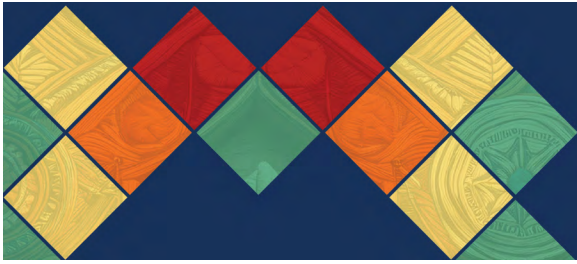
Oregon Department of Human Services
Tribal Affairs



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Introduction

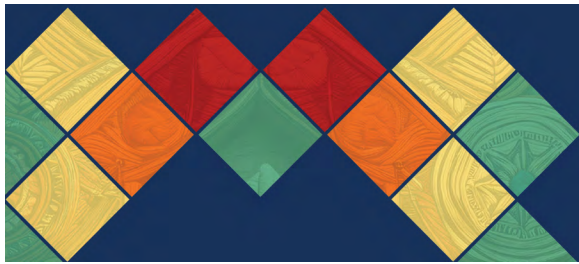
The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) is excited to release the 2024 Government-to-Government Report, in accordance with ORS 182.166 (3), which requires agencies to submit a report on agency activities under ORS 182.162–182.168. This marks the first report since the [ODHS/OHA O10-028 Tribal Consultation and Urban Indian Health Program Confer Policy](#) became operational for ODHS on January 1, 2024. The Office of Tribal Affairs has traditionally collaborated with ODHS programs to serve the Nine Federally Recognized Tribes of Oregon and Tribal communities across the state, and with the introduction of new protocols for Tribal consultation, this work has expanded.

This year's report highlights the progress and commitment the agency has made in implementing the new policy, upholding Tribal sovereignty, strengthening government-to-government relationships, and promoting effective communication with the Tribes. The agency prioritizes the privilege of serving Tribes and maintaining strong government-to-government relationships among its leaders.

We consider the initial implementation of the Tribal consultation policy one of our proudest accomplishments and look forward to receiving additional feedback as we strive for full implementation of the policy.



ODHS Leaders tour the Umatilla Indian Reservation in July 2024.



Agency contacts

The ODHS executive leadership team is responsible for developing and implementing agency programs impacting the Nine Tribes of Oregon. Each program leader is dedicated to consulting and engaging with the Tribes, and to support this effort, designated Tribal consultation contacts and Service Equity Managers have been assigned to assist.

Fariborz Pakseresht

Oregon Department of Human
Services Director

Sherril Kuhns

Interim Tribal Affairs Director

Leona Enright

Strategic Director of Tribal Initiatives

Ashley Harding

Senior ICWA Manager

Soren Metzger

Tribal Consultation and
Operations Manager

Seth Lyon

Chief Operations Office

Ed Flick

Office of Resilience and Emergency
Management Director

Eli Grove

OREM Tribal Emergency Coordinator

Nakeshia Knight-Coyle

Office of Aging and People with
Disabilities Director

Laura Hunker

Tribal Affairs Consultant

Aprille Flint-Gerner

Child Welfare Director

Tristan Fernandez

Senior Policy Analyst

Nathan Singer

Oregon Eligibility Partnership Director

James Barta

Engagement Strategies Manager

Azucena Moreno

Equity Strategy Manager

Claire Seguin

Self-Sufficiency Programs Director

Joanna Wright

Process Improvement Analyst
and Tribal Liaison

Dana Hittle

Office of Developmental Disabilities
Services Interim Director

Emily Terry

Service Equity and Inclusion Manager

Joli Torres

Medicaid State Plan and
Waiver Policy Analyst

Lupe Sims

Tribal Affairs Consultant

Keith Ozols

Vocational Rehabilitation Director

Bambi Bevill

Statewide Direct Services Manager

Dion Jordan

Office of Equity and Multicultural
Services Director

LeMont Boyd

Racial Equity Transformation Manager

Princess Neely,

Service Equity Manager (APD)

Ashley Wortman

Service Equity Manager (CW)

Missy Obryant

Service Equity Manager (C/S)

Frieda Bikele

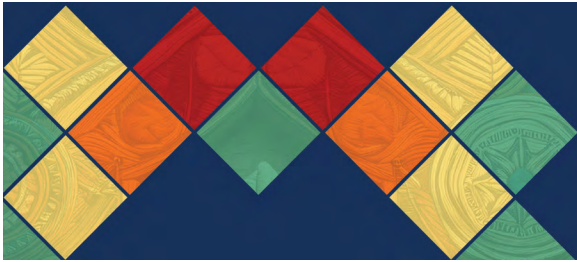
Service Equity Manager (SSP)

Joaquin Ramos

Service Equity Manager (ODDS)

Rochelle Perez

Service Equity Manager (VR)



Tribal consultation process

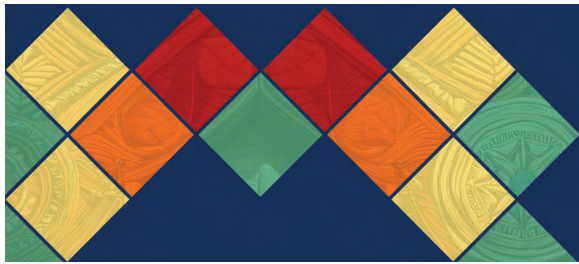
The Office of Tribal Affairs supports the ODHS consultation process with the Nine Tribes of Oregon. Each individual ODHS program—Aging and People with Disabilities (APD), Child Welfare Division (CW), Oregon Eligibility Partnership (OEP), Office of Resilience and Emergency Management (OREM), Self-Sufficiency Programs (SSP), Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS), and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)—is responsible for developing and implementing internal processes to identify “Critical Events” to initiate the ODHS Tribal consultation process.

ODHS State Plan Amendments needing Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approval are routed through the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) state plan manager. Similarly, the updated process for new waivers or waiver renewals needing CMS approval are coordinated by ODHS Tribal Affairs and sent to the OHA Tribal Affairs Office to facilitate Tribal consultation.

Figure 1 is a high-level overview of the ODHS process as facilitated by the Office of Tribal Affairs:



Figure 1



Tribal engagement

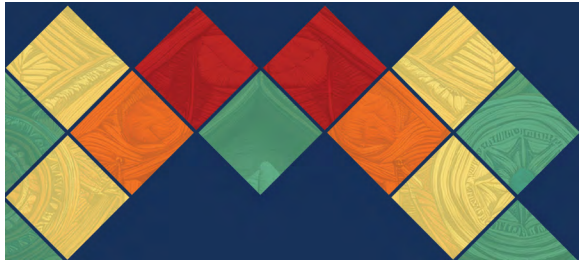
As part of the implementation efforts for the newly adopted policy, the Office of Tribal Affairs is educating ODHS leaders and staff about the differences between engagement and formal Tribal consultation with the Nine Tribes of Oregon. Tribal consultation is a more structured form of communication that emphasizes trust, mutual respect, and shared responsibility. It involves an open exchange of information and opinions among decision-makers, leading to mutual understanding and comprehension. This consultation is integral to a deliberative process that fosters effective collaboration and informed decision-making, with the goal of reaching consensus on important issues and achieving better outcomes for ODHS and the Nine Tribes of Oregon.

In contrast, engagement is generally less formal and occurs more frequently. While Tribal consultation typically involves Tribal governmental officials through Tribal Councils or their designees, engagement can include various forms of interaction, such as in-person or virtual meetings with Tribal officials or staff, phone calls and text messages, participation in statewide or national conferences, training sessions, general email correspondence, newsletters, program reports, and partnership meetings. An agency-wide Tribal Engagement Toolkit is available to ODHS Leaders and staff to assist with Tribal engagement efforts.

The Office of Tribal Affairs has incorporated feedback from Tribal governmental officials regarding the importance of engagement prior to initiating Tribal consultation through the official Dear Tribal Leader Letter (DTLL) notice. This approach encourages ODHS programs to begin with engagement to build strong relationships with Tribal governmental officials and staff. Through these relationships, ODHS notifies Tribes about funding opportunities, impacts to services, and changes to regulatory requirements that necessitate Tribal consultation.

Examples of ongoing Tribal engagement opportunities include:

- ODHS Directors / Oregon Tribes Quarterly Convenings
- Senate Bill 770 Health and Human Services Quarterly Cluster Meetings
- Annual Aging and People with Disabilities Title VI Statewide Meet and Greet
- Aging and People with Disabilities Title VI Regional Meet and Greet
- Aging and People with Disabilities Tribal Symposium
- Quarterly Indian Child Welfare Act Advisory Council Meetings
- Annual Tribal-State Indian Child Welfare Act Conference
- Child Welfare Qualified Expert Witness Training
- Child Welfare Motivational Interviewing Training
- Monthly Tribal Emergency Preparedness Coalition
- Annual Vocational Rehabilitation In-Service
- Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Meetings
- Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Meetings
- Tribal Domestic Violence Coalition Meetings
- Self Sufficiency Program District Leadership – Tribal Leadership meetings
- SNAP Education Meetings with Indigenous People's Work Group



Training

The Office of Tribal Affairs is collaborating with the Human Resources Organizational Professional Development Unit to develop a series of trainings for ODHS leaders and staff. These trainings will focus on building foundational knowledge about Tribal history and sovereignty, outlining consultation requirements, and providing tools for effective Tribal engagement, including the ODHS Tribal 101 eLearning which became available to all staff in November 2024. While trainings are in development, the Office of Tribal Affairs has worked with designated Tribal consultation program contacts and the existing Office of Equity and Multicultural Services – Service Equity Manager structure to offer support and presentations to agency leaders and staff at various levels throughout the organization.

In 2024, presentations on Tribal history, sovereignty, government-to-government relationships, and Tribal consultation and engagement have included:

January 2024

- APD Central Office and District Manager on Tribal consultation
- Office of Child Welfare Programs on Tribal consultation
- CW/SSP District Managers on Tribal consultation
- Government Relations on Tribal consultation
- OEP All Managers Meeting on Tribal consultation
- SSP All Analysts Meeting on Tribal consultation and engagement (on-going)
- SSP SNAP Partner Meeting on Tribal consultation
- ODHS Managers Tribal Culture & History (on-going)
- SSP Community Partnership Coordinators on Tribal consultation

March 2024

- APD Long Term Supports and Services on Tribal consultation
- New Manager Introduction on Tribal consultation (on-going)

May 2024

- Operations Leadership Team Meeting on Tribal consultation & engagement
- ODDS Case Management Conference on Tribal 101 and Tribal 102
- OEMS Service Equity Manager Meetings on Tribal consultation (on-going)
- ORRAI Community of Practice Gathering on Tribal consultation
- Special Projects Office Team Weekly on Tribal consultation
- OHSE Monthly Manager All Call on Tribal consultation (on-going)

August 2024

- Vocational Rehabilitation In-Service on Tribal 101 and Tribal 102
- CW Service Equity Council on Tribal consultation
- SSP Community Partnership Coordinators on Tribal engagement

September 2024

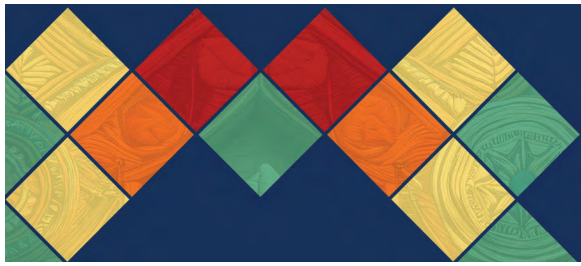
- Child Welfare Equity, Training, and Workforce Development on Tribal sovereignty
- Leadership Academy on Tribal 101

October 2024

- 2024 Tribal/State ICWA Conference on communication best practices, Tribal consultation and engagement

November 2024

- State of Oregon Data Equity Summit on Tribal 101 and engagement



Tribal consultation communication strategy

ODHS is committed to upholding Tribal sovereignty and fostering culturally responsive government-to-government relationships. To achieve this, we have developed a comprehensive Tribal Consultation Communication Strategy aimed at ensuring all internal staff understand their roles and responsibilities under the policy. Our strategy is built around three distinct phases, each designed to enhance awareness, operationalize policy, and evaluate outcomes.

Phase 1: Set context – Building awareness

In November 2023, we initiated our first phase, focusing on education and awareness. This phase included comprehensive dialogue with Tribal consultation program contacts and awareness for ODHS staff on the historical context of Tribal relations, emphasizing the significance of Tribal sovereignty. By clarifying the purpose and importance of Tribal consultation, we aim to foster a deeper understanding among staff. Additionally, we established clear points of contact for any inquiries related to consultation requirements, ensuring that staff know exactly who to reach out to for guidance.

Phase 2: Implementation – Operationalizing policy

As we moved into January 2024, we transitioned into the implementation phase, officially operationalizing the policy while continuing our awareness efforts. This phase began with a celebratory announcement to staff, highlighting the policy's effective date and providing access to essential resources via the Our Work Link (OWL) page. This page offers templates and training materials to support staff in their consultation efforts. We began emphasizing the importance of programs setting up their internal processes and of staff knowing the appropriate contacts

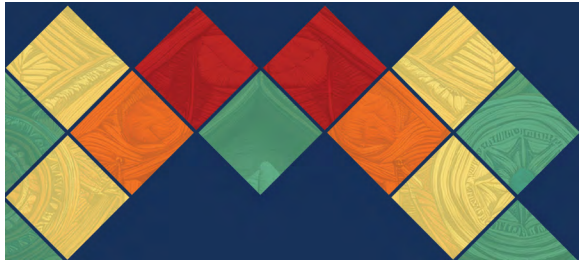
for any questions regarding consultation, reinforcing our commitment to effective communication. Additionally, policy updates were provided regularly during monthly open office hours and agency-wide manager all-call meetings.

Phase 3: Reporting – Outcome and performance evaluation

As programs began to implement the policy, we started tracking progress to support the final reporting phase, during which we focused on evaluating our performance and ensuring compliance with requirements. ODHS is required to report on outcomes of consultations within 30 days of their conclusion. For ongoing issues identified during consultations, ODHS is required to provide Tribes with regular status updates. Additionally, we delivered monthly updates on all rule-making activities, found on the [ODHS Tribal Consultation Webpage](#). We've concluded the year with the 2024 Government-to-Government Report summarizing our activities and outcomes.



ODHS Staff at the ODDS Case Management Conference in May 2024.



Key Insights of ODHS Tribal Consultation

In 2024, the Office of Tribal Affairs within the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) has been actively engaged in managing and tracking a wide range of Tribal consultation inquiries and critical events. These inquiries, which cover a variety of programmatic and policy topics, have been systematically categorized by status, type, and lead program. Notably, this includes new waivers or waiver renewals requiring Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) approval that have been sent through the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Office of Tribal Affairs. The data reflects the ongoing efforts to facilitate consultation processes with Tribes, address critical events, and ensure alignment with required CMS guidelines and state initiatives. The following breakdown provides a detailed overview of the critical event inquiries and the Tribal consultation requests processed during this period.

- **There were 62 Critical Event inquiries made to the ODHS Office of Tribal Affairs in 2024**
- **Office of Tribal Affairs was tracking the following inquiries by status at the time of this report:**
 - » 3 ODHS Consultation requests sent through the OHA process as required by CMS
 - » 24 Completed Tribal consultation requests,
 - » 17 Cancelled inquiries,
 - » 9 Outstanding inquiries,
 - » 7 Dear Tribal Leader Letter notices in development, and
 - » 2 Current Dear Tribal Leader Letter notices to Tribes.

- **29 Tribal consultation requests initiated and completed in 2024 (including requests sent through the OHA process and current notices with Tribes)**
 - » APD – 6 completed Tribal consultation requests
 - » CW – 3 completed Tribal consultation requests
 - » ODDS – 4 completed Tribal consultation requests
 - » SSP – 7 completed Tribal consultation requests
 - » VR – 1 completed Tribal consultation requests
 - » Other Shared/Central Services – 8 completed Tribal consultation requests
- **Total Critical Event inquiries by lead program**
 - » APD – 14 inquiries
 - » CW – 12 inquiries
 - » ODDS – 9 inquiries
 - » SSP – 13 inquiries
 - » VR – 2 inquiry
 - » Other Shared/Central Services – 12 inquiries
- **Of the 29 Tribal consultation requests initiated and completed, requests by type**
 - » 6 Funding opportunities
 - » 3 Medicaid waivers
 - » 13 Program development or changes
 - » 4 Rule changes
 - » 3 State Plan Amendments



2024 Continuous Improvement

To foster continuous improvement in our processes, we have consistently sought and welcomed feedback throughout all phases of implementation from ODHS leaders and staff, Tribal government officials, and partner agencies. The feedback received in 2024 has been instrumental in enhancing the ODHS Tribal consultation process, and is categorized below into external, internal, and future focus areas for 2025.

External feedback:

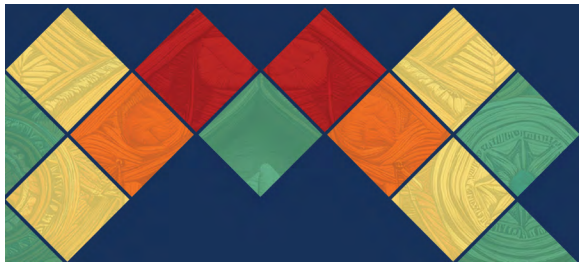
- Engage with Tribal governmental officials about the Critical Event prior to issuing the official “Dear Tribal Leader Letter” that initiates Tribal consultation.
- Clearly indicate “ODHS Consultation” in email notices to ensure the purpose is evident.
- Be selective with requests sent to Tribal governmental officials, focusing on funding opportunities, service changes, and regulatory requirements.
- Streamline communications by consolidating all relevant information into a single notice.
- Develop a process to offer Tribal consultation on 2025 Legislative Concepts and the 2025-2027 Agency Request Budget.
- Official contact list for Tribal consultation should be specific to each Tribe.

Internal feedback:

- Simplify the Government-to-Government Report to focus on the requirements outlined in ORS 182.166, as well as the specific requests made by Tribal governmental leaders.
- Continue monthly Office Hours for Tribal consultation program staff to provide staff support and facilitate communication.

Looking forward to 2025:

- Include a breakdown by Tribe in future reports to provide more specific insights.
- Review 2024 Tribal consultation requests with Tribal governmental officials to identify any items that were missed or should not have been included.
- Increase engagement opportunities with Tribes before the formal Tribal consultation process begins.
- Continue educating ODHS leaders and staff on the distinction between formal Tribal consultation and general engagement.
- Revisit internal ODHS program processes for identifying Critical Events to ensure Tribes are appropriately consulted and engaged in a timely manner.
- Remove silos by encouraging collaboration and open communication between different programs.
- Ensure alignment in communication and procedures across all teams and levels of the organization.
- Address role overlaps by promoting collaborative engagement to improve cooperation.
- Expand structured processes to strengthen coordination between the central office and district operations.



Tribal consultation notices by ODHS program

Aging and People with Disabilities

4/16/2024	Adult Protective Services Rule Changes
4/30/2024	Oregon Project Independence-Medicaid
5/21/2024	Acuity-Based Staffing Tool Rule Changes
8/19/2024	Funds for Senior Emergency Medical Services
10/29/2024	2024 Elder Justice Act Funding
10/31/2024	Agency with Choice

Child Welfare Division

5/7/2024	Doris Duke Foundation Opt-In Award to ODHS
6/5/2024	Title IV-E Prevention Plan Amendment
12/5/2024	Practice Model

Office of Developmental Disabilities Services

1/8/2024	CMS Waiver Renewal for Medically Involved Waiver, Medically Fragile Waiver, and Behavioral Waiver
1/29/2024	CMS Waiver Amendment to add new Children's Extraordinary Needs Waiver to 1915 (b) (4) Waiver
7/9/2024	CMS Waiver Amendments related to program efficiency and accessibility updates.
11/6/2024	American Rescue Plan Act Funding Opportunity

Self-Sufficiency Programs

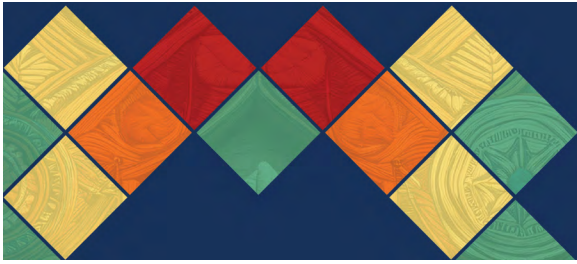
1/8/2024	Vision into Action
2/29/2024	Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Program
6/13/2024	TANF Support Services Rule Changes
6/18/2024	Federal Fiscal Year 2025 SNAP State Plans
6/24/2024	Family Support and Connections Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Grants
10/25/2024	Federal Fiscal Year 2025 Approved SNAP State Plans
11/20/2024	Federal Fiscal Year 2026 SNAP Employment and Training State Plan

Vocational Rehabilitation

1/2/2024	2024-2028 State Plan
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Other Shared/Central Services

12/22/2023	Resilience Hubs and Networks Grant Program
1/2/2024	ODHS Strategic Planning
5/9/2024	Proposed Rulemaking for Child Abuse Investigations
6/25/2024	Tribal 101 Training
8/19/2024	ODHS Buildings and Service Centers
9/24/2024	Tribal Relations
10/31/2024	2025 Legislative Concepts and 2025-2027 Agency Request Budget
11/13/2024	Organizational Assessment and Restructure Recommendations



Conclusion

In conclusion, we at the Oregon Department of Human Services are proud to present the 2024 Government-to-Government report, which underscores our ongoing commitment to enhancing our partnership with the Nine Federally Recognized Tribes of Oregon. This report highlights our dedication to upholding Tribal sovereignty, improving our consultation processes, and fostering effective communication.



ODHS Leaders tour the Long House on Umatilla Indian Reservation in July 2024.

The sections included are agency contacts, the Tribal consultation process, engagement strategies, training initiatives, and our communication strategy which reflect our commitment to transparency and accountability in our efforts. Additionally, specific 2024 Tribal consultation requests by program demonstrate the progress we have made and the opportunities for collaboration to improve our work.

As we move forward, we are eager to continue this journey, actively seeking feedback from Tribal leaders, agency directors and staff, and communities as we strive for full implementation of the Tribal consultation policy. Together, we can achieve culturally responsive outcomes that respect and honor the voices of the Tribes we serve.



2024 Government -to- Government Report

For questions on the 2024 Government-to-Government Report contact Soren Metzger, Tribal Consultation and Operations Manager at Soren.K.Metzger@odhs.oregon.gov or 503-277-9602.



Oregon Department of Human Services

Tribal Affairs

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