



Government-to-Government Report on Tribal Relations 2023

Submitted to:

Legislative Commission on Indian Services

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Dec. 15, 2023

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Oregon's Nine Federally Recognized Tribes

This annual report is an opportunity to discuss the ways that Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) interacted with the nine tribes to improve outcomes for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) youth involved in Oregon's 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 2023

OYA's work with our tribal partners in 2023 to provide services to tribal youth included:

- providing culturally relevant and sustaining services to tribal youth and their families;
- holding four in-person Native American Advisory Committee (NAAC) meetings;
- continuing our contract with the Southern Oregon Indian Center and Nick Hall to provide Native American services for youth at Rogue Valley Youth Correctional Facility;
- leading Native American Heritage Month celebrations at several facilities;
- hosting pow wows, including visitors from the community and family members, at Oak Creek, Rogue Valley, MacLaren, and Tillamook youth correctional facilities;
- contacting other national tribes that youth in our care are enrolled in to ensure service delivery in the same manner we provide to Oregon tribal youth;
- meeting with Native youth at community programs; and
- finding new ways to support youth's individual needs as it pertains to their cultures.

Oregon Youth Authority: Overview

OYA currently supervises approximately 908 youth. About 534 of those youth are in communities on probation or parole. The remainder — approximately 374 youth — live in secure close-custody facilities.^[1]

OYA's close-custody facilities are:

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

OYA's transitional facilities are:

- Camp Tillamook Youth Transition Facility (Tillamook)
- Camp Florence Youth Transition Facility (Florence)
- Camp Riverbend Youth Transition Facility (La Grande)
- Jackie Winters Transition Program (Albany)

Research shows that one of the most effective ways 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 State/Tribal Public Safety Cluster meetings; and
- by providing direct services and support to tribal youth in OYA custody.

Leadership Changes

Clint McClellan retired from the Assistant Director of Facility Services position. Jana Mclellan, no relation to Clint, adopted the role in early 2023. Paolo Futi joined the joined the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations (OIIR) team as the team as the statewide Asian American/Pacific Islander coordinator and Vvdaul Holloway joined the team as the statewide African American services coordinator.

American Indian/Alaska Native Youth in OYA

Currently, 44 youth in OYA custody self-identify as being enrolled in an American Indian/Alaska Native tribe or being of tribal descent. Of those, 42 were committed to OYA through the juvenile justice system and two were sentenced in adult court but placed with OYA due to their young age.^[2]

^[1] Data from Juvenile Justice Information System database, July 2023

^[2] Data from Juvenile Justice Information System database, November 2023

American Indian/Alaska Natives make up approximately 1% of Oregon’s juvenile population but represent approximately 6% of youth in OYA’s custody. The 2022 Relative Rate Index, a comparison of youth of various ethnicities/races to their white peers, reports that American Indians are 2.3 times more likely to be referred to juvenile court.



Youth at Tillamook Youth Correctional Facility in jingle dress



Youth at Oak Creek Pow Wow

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

OYA’s DEI background

In 2019-20, OYA identified DEI as an Agency Key Initiative. OYA has spent the last few years (2020-22) laying a foundation for this work through agencywide education, policy change, inclusion of more youth voice, and the creation of our equity lens guide.

OYA’s DEI work now

OYA believes real change occurs when power and knowledge is held at every level and every individual feels seen, heard, and valued. To propel this forward, OYA increased staffing from one to three DEI team members. Since December 2022, the DEI team has worked to provide foundational learnings in preparation for growing systemwide capacity and support of OYA’s DEI goals through:

- Education and Training – curriculum, facilitated learning events and onboarding for new employees at OYA’s Training Academy. To date, the DEI team has provided over 75 trainings and 200 hours of facilitation time. This work includes developing new employee training and an overview of the impact of racism on communities of color including a specific focus on the nine tribes in Oregon.
- Resource Development – to support learning across the agency. The team has developed step-by-step guides and team-based exercises designed in alignment with anti-racist practices. Over the past year, they produced over 30 unique resource guides and materials tailored to support OYA’s DEI vision and staff development.

- Equity Planning Support – In collaboration with the DEI team, each department has developed equity action plans tailored to their field of work and DEI challenges. They include clear action steps and how teams will center equity and inclusion principles throughout their work.

OYA's future

Looking forward, the focus of DEI in OYA shifts from developing strong foundations to operationalizing our equity action plan goals. DEI initiatives are changing how OYA functions as a system to work with youth, families, and marginalized communities for lasting, sustainable change. The DEI team is working to:

Diversify the OYA Workforce – Improve Equitable Hiring and Retention Practices

- Increase the employee diversity profile of each Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) job category, and confirm all new position descriptions outline how equity and inclusion are part of the essential job functions.
- Launch Employee Resource Groups to support affinity, learning, and professional development for employees from communities of color.

Equitable Youth Programs & Services – Build Equity Dashboard

- Develop an equity dashboard to identify disparities and develop programs and services to eliminate these. Currently, OYA has contracts with 3 culturally relevant residential programs. None of these provide services specific to American Indian/Alaska Native youth. The dashboard is critical to visualize areas of disparity and work towards more inclusive youth services.

Infuse Equity and Inclusion into all Business Operations – Applying an Equity Lens

- Consistent application of an equity lens into all the agency's processes for strategic planning, contracting, priority-setting, and budgeting. Notably, the Business Services Department is working towards Sweat Lodge improvements and the procurement of culturally responsive art meaningful to OYA youth.

Over the 2023-25 biennium, OYA's DEI plan and future work is structured to create opportunities for collaboration and inclusion across the agency and foster intentional implementation plans that center equity as we continue our DEI journey.

Positive Human Development (PHD)

The Positive Human Development (PHD) model continued to be a priority in 2023. PHD is based on research that shows:

- therapeutic approaches are more effective at reducing recidivism than punitive ones;
- adolescents have less capacity than adults for self-regulation; and
- witnessing traumatic events can impact a child's brain, but 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.

Our agency's PHD culture helps support youth, staff, community partners, and our agency as we work together to:

- enhance safety and security;
- provide caring and supportive relationships;
- establish high expectations and accountability;
- provide opportunities for meaningful participation; and
- establish community connections.

Youth Reformation System (YRS)

YRS uses data, research, and analytics to help OYA and county juvenile departments deliver the right services to the right youth for the right amount of time. YRS data helps caseworkers make better-informed decisions to determine treatment needs, identify services for youth, and measure outcomes. Tools within YRS include:

- Escalation to OYA: this tool estimates the likelihood that a youth will escalate from county probation to an OYA placement; and
- OYA Recidivism Risk Assessment (ORRA): this tool estimates the likelihood that a youth will be convicted or adjudicated of a felony within 36 months of commitment to probation or release from OYA close custody.
- OYA Recidivism Risk Assessment – Violent Crime (ORRA-V): this tool estimates the likelihood that a youth will be convicted or adjudicated for a violent crime (one that results in physical harm) within 36 months of commitment to probation or release from OYA close custody.

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

The Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations (OIIR) supports diversity, equity, and inclusion for youth and staff in our facilities and in the community in these ways:

- provides cultural education and connection
- facilitates culturally specific groups and events
- supports marginalized youth in reaching their treatment goals
- provides language services for youth, families, and staff
- helps youth navigate immigration issues
- leads trainings in cross-cultural communication and LGBTQ+ issues
- oversees the tattoo removal program that is free to all OYA youth
- leads culturally specific advisory committees
- supports government-to-government relationships with consulates and tribes

Changes to the OIIR team 2023:

- Paulo Futi joined the team as OYA's statewide Asian American/Pacific Islander coordinator
- Vvdaul Holloway joined the team as OYA's statewide African American services coordinator
- Xavier Hudson started a rotation as the interim OYA Training Academy director. Training Academy is held at the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST)
- Hayden Campos left his position as the LGBTQI+ youth services coordinator. The position is currently vacant. A recruitment notice is imminent

The following individuals remain part of the OIIR team and continue to provide excellent services:

- Griselda Solano-Salinas, director of OIIR
- Leslie Riggs, tribal liaison/Native American programs coordinator
- Derwin Decker, Native American services coordinator, MacLaren YCF
- Javier Perfecto-Meza, tattoo removal coordinator/multicultural services coordinator, MacLaren YCF
- Ramon Díaz, hispanic services coordinator, MacLaren YCF
- Sir Roderick Edwards, multicultural services coordinator, MacLaren YCF
- Bridgette Johnson, youth services coordinator, Oak Creek YCF
- Eva Torres, youth services coordinator, Marion, Polk counties
- Paola Sumoza-Maciél, statewide Hispanic services coordinator
- Ian Rigerink, youth services coordinator, Clackamas and Washington Counties

- Aaron Kincy, Washington, Clackamas, and Multnomah counties
- Angelo Worley, youth services coordinator, Eastern YCF
- Samantha Batista, office support specialist

OYA's Tribal Relations

Tribal Liaison/Native American Programs Coordinator

Leslie Riggs is in his fourth year as the tribal liaison for OYA. He is a member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. He continues to develop relationships with representatives from the nine tribes in Oregon. He also connects with representatives from other federally recognized tribes across the United States. Riggs continues to convene Native American Advisory Committee (NAAC) meetings four times a year. Riggs also continues to co-chair the State/Tribal Public Safety Committee. Leslie works on several committees and work groups within OYA, too, which include, the Art Committee, a cultural questionnaire workgroup, and continues his role as co-project leader and member of the steering committee for an Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) restorative justice grant.

Native American Services Coordinator

Derwin Decker has been in his role as OYA's Native American Services Coordinator for five and a half years. He is of Modoc descent and is a member of the Klamath Tribes. Derwin provides culturally relevant and sustaining services to youth in close-custody facilities and community programs, including sweat lodge, drumming, talking circles, and smudging. Derwin works with youth on traditional crafts, such as making medicine bags, dream catchers, drums, and drum sticks. He also advocates for Native youth at multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings and collaborates with the nine tribes of Oregon and the Native American Rehabilitation Association (NARA). Derwin holds certifications in Alcohol and Drug Counseling and Anger Resolution Therapy.

Communications Liaisons

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

OYA's tribal liaison maintains communication with the key tribal contacts listed below, among others. Ongoing communications about youth in OYA's care are paramount to enhancing community safety and reducing recidivism. The tribal liaison informs key tribal contacts 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

- Jonathan Smith, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
- Brenda Meade, Coquille Indian Tribe
- Cheryle Kennedy, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- Kat Brigham, Confederated Tribes of Umatilla
- Diane Teeman, Burns Paiute Tribe
- Brad Kneaper, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw
- Carla Keene, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians
- Delores Pigsley, Confederated Tribes of Siletz
- Clayton Dumont Jr., Klamath Tribes
- Jackie Mercer, Native American Rehabilitation Association
- Shane Lopez-Johnson, Native American Rehabilitation Association

Memoranda of Understanding

OYA has memoranda of understanding (MOU) with seven of the nine tribes:

- 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

OYA does not have MOUs with The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. However, OYA follows the same policies and procedures as if we do.

State/Tribal Public Safety Committee

Leslie Riggs serves as the co-chair of the State/Tribal Public Safety Committee. 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. During 2023, all meetings were held virtually, and the committee decided to meet three times per year instead of four. Chief Jake McKnight of Grand Ronde had to step away from his position as co-chair due to time constraints. Chief Brian Dubray, of the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw stepped in to fill the role.

Native American Advisory Committee (NAAC)

The Native American Advisory Committee (NAAC) includes representatives from all nine tribes of Oregon; urban Indian agencies such as the Native American Rehabilitation Association (NARA) the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA); and tribal community representatives from across Oregon. In 2023, all meetings were held in person with a virtual option.

The 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 for 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; and
- 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;
- reviewing policies and procedures for maintaining communication between OYA and tribes; and
- contracting with more Native American cultural service providers.

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 meetings are relevant to the services provided by OYA, with intersecting matters dealt with by both agencies.

Annual Tribal Summit

The annual tribal summit was canceled in 2023 due to Oregon's tribal leaders attending the Tribal Nations Summit in Washington D. C during the same week.

OYA and Individual Tribes

OYA collaborates with Oregon's nine tribes and tribes from across the United States to provide support and services to AI/AN youth. OYA staff communicate with representatives from all tribes who have youth in our custody to ensure youth connect with programs and services tribes have to offer. There are various programs and services that youth are eligible for, even if they are not enrolled in an Oregon tribe and we do our best to connect them. Moreover, establishing and maintaining a cultural connection between youth and their tribes is critical in the development and well-being of the youth.

During the past year, four tribes did not have youth in custody with OYA: Burns Paiute, Cow Creek, Coquille, and the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw. Nevertheless, OYA communicates with tribes when Native youth are transitioning back to tribal communities. Youth may be enrolled in a tribe but live in another tribal community.

OYA has seen a growing number of youth in custody who are enrolled in tribes across the nation. The tribal liaison and Native American services coordinator contacted tribes as diverse as Wiyot, Aleut, Blackfeet, and Cherokee, to ensure all programs and services the youth are eligible for are being accessed.

A Shared Commitment

Collaborating on Facility Programs

OYA staff, contractors, and volunteers work together to meet the objective of incorporating and maintaining services for Native American youth in OYA's nine close-custody facilities.

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, facility staff, contractors, and volunteers. A list of these is provided at the end of this report under the heading of Descriptions of Programs and Services.

During 2023, OYA was able to resume almost normal programming. Minor limitations, such as the mixing of living units, made it harder to provide some of the activities. However, it was possible to mitigate the effects through careful planning to ensure all who expressed an interest in joining our activities had the opportunity.

Connecting Youth with Culture and 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 at OYA.

It is in OYA'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 for building identity and can provide an enormous sense of pride. Inclusion and belonging are important aspects of youth development. They can have a tremendous effect on a youth's self-worth.

The Native American services coordinator and tribal liaison find ways to support youth accessing their culture by working with unit staff to deliver information to youth. Staff collaborate with youth to determine what their interests are and then provide relevant resources. Resource connections have included access to tribal websites, tribal newsletters, and language, cultural, and historical information.

Coordinating Treatment Services

The tribal liaison and Native American services coordinator work with Juvenile parole and probation officers (JPPOs) and case coordinators to keep tribal representatives aware of the status of AI/AN youth in custody and to include them in assisting Native youth with treatment and transition services. Tribal representatives attend multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings as key decision makers. These representatives are aware of the services they have to offer in their communities and are versed in who OYA must contact for services youth can access while in our care and when they are ready to transition back to their communities. This ensures there is not a gap in services and builds a foundation for a successful transition.

Providing Culturally Relevant Services

AI/AN youth in OYA custody have a right to access their culture. OYA staff must provide youth with access to cultural and spiritual services. These include sweat lodge, smudging, pipe ceremonies, talking circles, support groups, pow wows, and cultural arts such as traditional drumming and singing. The tribal liaison and Native American services coordinator partner with tribal representatives, contractors, OYA staff, and other interested parties to ensure services are in place.

OYA committed to developing and building four cultural/sweat lodge areas for use by staff and tribal youth. Sites are planned for construction at Tillamook, Eastern, Oak Creek, and MacLaren youth correctional facilities. Meetings were held in 2023 to finalize the design elements and decide what materials are best at each facility. Construction is planned to begin in 2024.



Sweatlodge at MacLaren



Native American Heritage Celebration at Eastern Oregon YCF

Supporting Tribal Youth Transition

Native American staff work with tribal representatives, OYA's parole and probation offices and facility case coordinators around the state to provide better outcomes for youth transitioning from close-custody facilities back into their communities. Ensuring that cultural, behavioral, and mental health services follow youth on their departure is vital to their success. We also focus on education, employment, training among other resources to pave the way for youth to succeed.

Looking Ahead

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. 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. OIIR staff teach the Cross-Cultural Communications portion for new hires. Implicit bias and other issues dealing with race and culture are discussed in a deep and meaningful way. A DEI curriculum was developed and instituted as part of new employee orientation. It provides new employees a solid foundation in principles of DEI and solidifying the fact they will be working with diverse staff and youth.

Recruitment

At OYA, diversity, equity, and inclusion are more than just words on a page. To meet our mission and live our values as an agency, DEI must be at the heart of all we do. We support cultural competence, develop teams, and cultivate leaders in ways that are equitable to everyone, especially people of color, those who identify as LGBTQ+, or those from other marginalized communities. We are explicit and intentional as we identify resources that all our youth and staff need to grow and prosper. Our DEI work connects closely with our culture of positive human development, with safe and supportive environments where everyone is held accountable and connected to their community. The end goal is to protect the public and reduce crime by holding youth accountable and providing opportunities for reformation in safe environments.

We are also aiming to have our applicant pool demographics match that of our youth in terms of representation of people of color. In doing so, we are acknowledging the disproportionate representation of youth of color in the juvenile justice system at OYA and the difference a racially and ethnically diverse workforce can make on the development and success of our youth. At present there are 44 individuals, or 4.4 percent of OYA's workforce who identify as Native American.

Ongoing Relationship-Building and Support

OYA continues to maintain and develop new relationships with Oregon's nine tribes and urban tribal communities. The tribal liaison seeks 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, but also OYA policy.

Changes in tribal councils and staff as well as OYA staff create 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 close-custody facilities. By maintaining partnerships with our stakeholders, we ensure that we do our best to meet the needs of our tribal youth and our tribal partners.

OYA Director Joe O'Leary, Deputy Director Carlos Rodriguez, and OIIR Director Griselda Solano-Salinas provide continued support to the agency's tribal liaison and Native American services coordinator. They remain deeply interested in the circumstances of tribal youth involved with OYA and are always ready to assist in matters of concern for tribal partners and youth. The leadership team at OYA has worked hard to involve the tribal liaison and Native American services coordinator in projects and workgroups where high-level decisions are being made. This ensures that voices of the Native American community are included, because decisions made in workgroups around policy and service provision will have an impact on tribal youth and communities. Moreover, in 2023, a Native American liaison was recruited to serve on the OYA agency partnership committee. We had a very successful year in working with our tribal partners. Still, we are committed to finding new ways of working together.

Description of Programs and Services

Most of the descriptions that follow are for MaClaren YCF provided year-round, where the Native American services coordinator is based. He and the tribal liaison travel to the other closed facilities and camps to provide services to youth statewide. Native American Heritage Month is a busy time for the two staff, as they do their best to visit every camp, facility, and various community programs where there are AI/AN youth to ensure they are included. The following are descriptions provided to youth to generate interest in joining the activities:

Sweatlodge Ceremony

Join a traditional ceremony that combines the four elements; Earth, Water, Fire and Air to produce the steam in the Sweatlodge. The warm wet dark environment in the lodge represents our mother's womb where we are safe and taken care of. When we emerge from the lodge, we are humbled and "reborn".

Smudging Ceremony

Smudging, practiced by a wide variety of Indigenous people, is the practice of burning medicinal plants to cleanse ourselves and connect us with our spirit and with the Creator.

Drumming Circle

Gather to drum in drum "circles" to share rhythm with others from the surrounding community. The drum circle offers equality because there is no head or tail and includes people of all ages. Learn and practice respect, build connections and get in tune with each other and yourselves. The sound is said to improve people's moods, restore balance, promote healing, and provide a connection with the spirits.



Grande Ronde drumming circle at MaClaren

Native American Arts and Crafts Group

Create Native crafts such as dream catchers, medicine bags, and chokers. Express your creativity while learning Native history.



Tillamook youth with newly made moccasins



Moccasins at MaLaren

Native American Group

Native American circle promoting cultural practices.



The Haka during the Rogue Valley Pow Wow



Traditional games at Camp Florence



Dancers at the Tillamook Pow wow

Additional Contacts at OYA

For more information, please contact:

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