

Oregon Housing and Community Services
GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS 2012
SUMMARY REPORT

Director: Margaret S. Van Vliet, Oregon Housing & Community Services

Key Contact: Richard Mathews; Community Services Manager
Oregon Housing & Community Services
725 Summer Street NE, Suite B
Salem, OR 97301-1266
Phone: (503) 986-2097
Email: Richard.Mathews@hcs.state.or.us

Oregon Housing and Community Services (“the department”) serves tribal nations and Native Americans in Oregon by providing funding, training and technical assistance, and capacity building for affordable housing development as well as anti-poverty and family stabilization programs. During 2012, we conducted the following activities impacting Oregon’s nine federally recognized tribal nations:

Training and Technical Assistance/Capacity Building for Affordable Housing Development

With the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) implementation of the Native American Housing and Self-Determination Act; tribal communities have greater responsibility and opportunity for providing housing assistance, related services, housing planning and reporting than in the past. Oregon Housing and Community Services continues to assist tribes with these responsibilities providing technical expertise where invited. Tribal representatives are regularly invited to participate in the Department’s regional Consolidated Funding Cycle (CFC) trainings to learn how to access the state’s affordable housing resources and to other Department activities across the state. Much of the Department’s relationship-building with and technical assistance for housing development partners is accomplished through the Regional Advisors to the Department (RADs). Since our Department delivers virtually all programs through partners at the local level, the RADs serve as the Department’s main outreach staff to local organizations and initiatives, connecting providers with the State office.

- The Eastern Oregon RAD met with The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) regarding existing housing projects and on-going compliance requirements to support rental subsidy levels. The Eastern Oregon RAD and OHCS asset and property management staff members continue to work collaboratively to identify options to successfully support the tribe’s affordable housing projects. Additionally, the RAD has worked with CTUIR staff in the development of a future proposal for an additional 24-unit affordable housing project.
- The Eastern Oregon RAD continues to interact informally with the Burns-Paiute representative at most S.E. Regional Alliance meetings.

- The Central Oregon RAD participated in meetings with the local community action agency and The Klamath Tribes representatives in planning a home ownership fair conducted in the Klamath Lake area.
- The Mid-Willamette Valley RAD worked extensively with members of The Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians in the development of an affordable housing project application for submission to our Consolidated Funding Cycle.
- The Southern Oregon RAD, in leading a SW-Regional Solutions Team pilot project to address the replacement of substandard mobile homes in a Curry County, is working with the Tolowa Tribe of the Smith River Rancheria, which is located just south of the Oregon-California border. Traditional Tolowa lands extended throughout Del Norte (California) and Curry counties, and into Coos and Josephine counties. Many Tribal members reside in Curry County, and Brookings and other parts of the county benefit from tribal cultural and economic activities. The Tolowa have also discussed with the RAD their interest in affordable housing development in Brookings.
- Additionally, as part of the outreach for the mobile home replacement project, the Southern Oregon RAD met with the Coquille Tribal Housing Authority, based in Coos Bay, to inform them of the project and ascertain their interest in participating. The Coquilles have a few tribal members in Curry County, and wish to be kept apprised of the pilot's progress. They have indicated their desire to actively participate when the project expands into Coos County.

Program Assistance

Programs administered by the department are available to all Oregonians who meet income and other eligibility requirements including those who live in tribal communities and Native Americans who live on non-tribal lands in Oregon. Some major programs are described below.

Low-Income Home Weatherization

Funds from the U.S. Department of Energy Weatherization Assistance Program are used in conjunction with other funds from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, utility companies, Bonneville Power Administration, and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program funds to perform cost effective weatherization measures on houses occupied by low-income families. Weatherization services include energy saving modification of heating systems; anti-infiltration measures; water heater traps; insulation for attics, ducts, floors, walls; and/or storm windows to eligible low-income families. This program is available to both home owners and renters. Through weatherization, fuel consumption is reduced and health and safety repairs are made resulting in lower heating bills and long term preservation of the housing stock.

- OHCS currently contracts with The Klamath Tribes and The Confederated Tribes of Siletz to provide weatherization activities on tribal lands. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Burns Paiute Tribe, and The Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation conduct weatherization activities in conjunction with their local community action agency partners.

Weatherization Training and Technical Assistance

- The Department currently offers weatherization training in cooperation with Oregon Energy Coordinators Association (OECA) for all local weatherization service providers including tribal staff members. The Residential Energy Analyst Program (REAP) is sponsored and endorsed by the Department and staff members of The Klamath Tribes, The Confederated Tribes of Siletz, and The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde who have received certification through this program.

Low-Income Energy Bill Payment Assistance

The Department uses the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide energy assistance payments to vendors (i.e., utilities and heating oil companies) to help low-income households pay their winter energy bills. The funds also provide energy education, energy conservation activities, and support outreach activities designed to assure that eligible households are made aware of the assistance available. The Klamath Tribes, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, The Confederated Tribes of Siletz, and The Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians have administered LIHEAP programs for several years now. They apply to the federal government for direct funding from HHS to administer LIHEAP funds to tribal members. The department has provided program management and tribal liaison staff time assisting and advising tribal staff. Department staff has invited tribal staff to trainings offered to partners as learning opportunities even though the department's relationship with the tribes on this program is not contractual.

- The Klamath Tribes directly contract with the federal government to administer the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The program assists home energy assistance payments. In support of The Klamath Tribes administering their own LIHEAP, OHCS provides free access to proprietary service delivery as well as tracking and reporting software designed to support the LIHEAP program. The Information Services Division of the Department has continued to maintain that relationship and continues to create and support updated software modules and tailored annually to the Tribes' need. General "help desk" support is provided on an on-going basis for The Klamath Tribes LIHEAP program staff that may need technical guidance on program delivery and tracking components.
- In addition to "help desk" support, Tribal program staff members have attended energy assistance training and business meetings along with other statewide energy assistance providers as networking opportunities.

Emergency Food Distribution

The Department is responsible for administering several emergency food distribution programs in the state and facilitates efforts to alleviate hunger.

The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) provides commodity foods to low-income households, including the elderly living on the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla

Indian Reservation, and to Native American families residing in Umatilla and Morrow counties in order to promote the general welfare and to safeguard the health and well-being of Oregon's Indian population by raising their levels of nutrition and nutrition education. The program is administered at the Federal level by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its subsidiary agency, Food and Nutrition Services.

Many households participate in the FDPIR as an alternative to the Food Stamp Program because they do not have easy access to the food stamp offices or authorized food stores. Each month, participants may select from over 70 products including frozen meats (bison included), canned fruits and vegetables, soups, spaghetti sauce, macaroni, cheese, pastas, cereals, rice, egg mix and nonfat dry or evaporated milk, flour, cornmeal, crackers, beans and dehydrated potatoes to help them maintain a nutritionally balanced diet. The FDPIR program is available to all tribes in Oregon. Four tribes: Burns Paiute Reservation, The Klamath Tribe, The Confederated Tribes of Siletz, and The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs administer their own FDPIR program directly with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

- The Department continues to administer the FDPIR program for The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation (CTUIR) through a contract with the Community Action Program of East Central Oregon (CAPECO). The program provides benefits to all eligible persons living in the tribal boundaries of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and all eligible tribal members living within a region that extends outside the boundary of the reservation. The designated service area includes Umatilla and Morrow Counties in Eastern Oregon.

Home Ownership Program

Using the Department's home ownership programs for dwellings on sovereign lands presents many challenges due to federal regulatory restrictions. The Department continues to work with tribes and financial partners to overcome the barriers to home ownership lending on tribal lands as well as other locations.

Department staff continue to monitor the work of the Federal Home Loan Bank's Sovereign Lending Task Force, attending when possible, and continue to explore use of HUD's 184 Loan Program to assist tribal members in purchasing homes.

Much of the department's technical assistance for homebuyers is provided through local Community Housing Resource Center partners (Centers). Centers conduct targeted education and outreach to tribal members throughout the state.

Training on Government-to-Government Relations

The Department pursued several opportunities for staff to enhance their knowledge of Native American cultures and the unique issues related to developing safe and affordable housing and critical supportive services for tribal members.

Partnerships with Community-based Organizations

The Department is a small agency that accomplishes its large mission by partnering with an extensive network of community-based organizations including tribal organizations, community action agencies, community development corporations, housing authorities, non-government organizations, and non-profit as well as for-profit affordable housing developers. These partners are encouraged by the Department to serve tribal needs and to include tribal members in the composition of their boards and committees. The Department continuously seeks ways to encourage better relationships between tribal and other partner organizations.

OHCS Government-to-Government Relations Goals for 2013

- The Department's Director will continue to attend and support Economic/Community Development Cluster and Health/Social Services Cluster meetings as well as the annual Summit.
- OHCS staff will continue to enhance relationships with Oregon Tribal housing entity representatives. The Department will continue to provide information about the agency and its programs and services to Tribal housing entities and social services staff across the state.
- The Department will seek additional training opportunities on Government-to-Government relations and encourage agency staff to participate.
- The Department will continue to track its activities with the Oregon Tribal Community and submit its annual Government-to-Government report.