Oregon Commission on Children & Families
Government to Government Report, 2007

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By the Oregon Commission on Children & Families

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The Oregon Commission on Children and Families (OCCF) is the largest umbrella advocacy group for children and families in Oregon. Created by legislation in 1993, and further defined by SB555 in 1999, OCCF promotes positive outcomes for children and families through a process driven by local decision-making.

The Commission provides no direct services, but is responsible for statewide planning, standards setting and policy development, and provides communities with research based best practices on which to base local programs for children and families.

OCCF is intentional in working with the tribes through its partnerships with state tribal liaisons and tribal representatives on issues that better the lives of Oregon's children and families. Respect of tribal ways and sovereignty is OCCF's highest concern when working with the Oregon Native American community.

The Cultural Competency and Gender Specific Committee, Title IV-B (2), Healthy Start, Juvenile Crime Prevention and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) are among several programs and initiatives that OCCF works directly with Oregon tribal communities.

Engaging the Tribal Councils

Mickey Lansing, the OCCF Executive Director, and Iris Bell, the OCCF Deputy Director, have been engaging the Tribal Councils to understand how the Commission can better support their needs in their communities. With plans to engage all of the Tribal councils in Oregon, Ms. Lansing and Mrs. Bell have recently had the opportunity visit with Cheryle Kennedy, Chair of the Grand Ronde Tribe, along with their general manager, Chris Leno, and their director of program operations, John Mercier. The primary goal was to listen and learn about their concerns for the tribal community and their youth. The conversation focused on programs the tribe is involved in and opportunities for collaboration and partnership with the Commission. There are many ways in which the Commission system can support tribal youth and their families and the Commission plans to continue forward to further dialog and will be working more closely with Oregon's nine tribal councils and their program liaisons.

Community Comprehensive Planning

One of the Commission's statutory responsibilities is to convene and facilitate Comprehensive Community Planning for Children and Families every six years. The plans recognize the interdependence between strong, caring communities and healthy children, youth and families. To support this focus, the legislation directs state agencies and local communities to plan together to provide coordinated programs that address the needs, strengths, and assets of all the residents of the

county to include the Native American tribal members in the counties and the reservations.

Currently local communities and counties are engaging in their planning process to be complete in January of 2007. As the plans have been developed the Local Commissions are engaging and involving members of tribal communities that wish to participate in the planning process. As the plans are analyzed and results are used to develop and drive the State Commission Plan for Children and Families, involvement of tribal governments will be a top priority.

Partners for Children & Families,
Cultural Competency and Gender Specific Services
The Oregon Commission on Children & Families, in partnership with other state agencies, supports the Partners for Children and Families Cultural Competency and Gender Specific Services Committee which serves as an advisory body on issues relating to children, youth and families within a cultural context.

The Cultural Competency Coordinator position is primarily funded by the OCCF, with support from Partners for Children and Families Agencies. The position provides support and coordination to the Cultural Competency and Gender Specific Services Committee and serves as a liaison between the Committee and other interagency and advocacy groups. This includes representing the Committee at the Tribal/APACSA Prevention and SB770 Health Services Cluster Quarterly meetings.

Committee members actively participate in the organization of the Governor's Summit on Minority Overrepresentation in the Juvenile Justice System and the Violence Prevention Summer Institute.

Healthy Start
Healthy Start Family Support is a voluntary home visitation/family support program offering services to all new families during the prenatal period and/or at the time of birth. OCCF supports local Healthy Start programs as they implement best practice standards. In 2007, Healthy Start became accredited by Healthy Families America, a best practice home visiting program model. One of the essential elements of the Healthy Families model is cultural competency. Each local Healthy Start program is required to develop an annual Cultural Competency Review that examines all aspects of service delivery with the goal of ensuring that the program is culturally competent. The Cultural Competency Review is approved by the local Healthy Start Advisory Board, which recommends steps to address any issues discovered through the review.

Healthy Start has a tribal member on its statewide Advisory Committee. This group provides direction for program planning and implementation throughout the state, and reviews the cultural sensitivity analyses of local programs, making suggestions for improvement. Each local program has an Advisory Board, made up of diverse community members. Some local Boards include tribal members.

Strategies for outreach to engage tribal communities in Healthy Start include:
• Hiring tribal home visitors and assigning them to Native American families whenever possible.
• Staff training on tribal cultures is required. Through enhanced knowledge of tribal people, staff are enabled to effectively engage and retain Native American families.
• Outreach to tribal leaders for participation in program planning and implementation, including membership in local advisory bodies.
• Encouraging tribal participation in special events sponsored by the program.
• Shared training with staff of tribal organizations, related to common areas of interest and practice.
• Encouraging Healthy Start staff to participate in tribal coalitions with other service providers.

Court Appointed Special Advocates
Federal and state laws mandate that the court shall appoint a CASA for every abused and neglected child involved in a dependency case. In 1987, the Oregon Legislative Assembly enacted what is now ORS 419A.170, mandating appointment of a CASA for each of these children. A CASA is a trained citizen volunteer, subject to the direction of the court. A CASA volunteer's primary responsibility is to represent the best interest of the child and work to assure that each child safely returns to or finds a safe and permanent family as soon as possible.

CASA volunteers connect children with their tribes throughout Oregon and across North
America. During 2006 in Oregon, 5.8% of the victims of child abuse and neglect and
12.4% of children in foster care were Native American* with some of them assigned a
Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer. In each case, the CASA endeavors to determine if the child is a member of a tribe and to engage that tribe in determining the child's best interest. To provide culturally appropriate advocacy for Native American children, all CASA volunteers are required to

complete training in cultural competency and training specific to the Indian Child Welfare Act. In addition, each program has been supplied with a copy of *The Indian Child Welfare Act Handbook, A Legal Guide to the Custody and Adoption of Native American Children*, by B.B. Jones, American Bar Association 1995 and other training materials.

Cultural competency and diversity in CASA volunteers, program staff and governing boards is both integrated into each major standard of the National Standards for Local CASA Programs and comprises an additional major standard. The design and language of this standard was influenced by the recommendations of the Oregon Cultural Competency Committee working in concert with the OCCF CASA State Coordinator, a member of the NCASAA Standards Committee.

CASA programs throughout the state work to engage and support each of the tribes to help work with and train volunteers and to support the recruitment of volunteers, publicize events and support fundraisers.

Most recently the Commission has begun engaging the Grand Ronde Tribe on the type of support needed for the development of a CASA program within their Tribal Community.

**The Status of Children 2006*, Oregon Department of Human Services

Juvenile Crime Prevention

The Commission on Children and Families administers state and federal money dedicated to reducing juvenile delinquency and improving the juvenile justice system.

State Juvenile Crime Prevention (JCP) Funding:

Each of the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon receive a $50,000 JCP grant award for the 2005-2007 biennium. The OCCF continues to fund these grants this fiscal year to help to pay for activities identified in the tribes' juvenile crime prevention plans. Please see the below table for JCP funded activities.

Tribal JCP plans are reviewed and approved by the Juvenile Crime Prevention Advisory Committee (JCPAC). State law requires the plans to focus on youth who are at high risk of becoming involved, or further involved, in the juvenile justice system. Dave Fullerton is a tribal representative, appointed by Governor Kulongoski to sit on the JCPAC.

Tribe JCP Activities, 2005-2007

Burns Paiute Mental health services, mentoring and tutoring.
Beneficiaries: 10-20 youth per year

Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Monthly prevention activities, Snow Camp, Family Camp, and Camp Myrtlewood.
Beneficiaries: 10 youth served per year.

Coquille Indian Tribe Mentoring, teen group, after school program, cultural activities, Snow Camp, Camp Ta Nae, referrals for drug and alcohol assessments and treatment.
Beneficiaries: 10-20 youth per year

Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians Contract with provider for Multi-systemic Therapy (MST) services to families of high risk youth.
Beneficiaries: 6 families per year

Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Alcohol and drug intervention, after school activities, parent classes, mentoring, tutoring and leadership skills.
Beneficiaries: 40 youth per year

Klamath Tribes Alcohol and drug treatment, mental health services and mentoring.
Beneficiaries: 10-20 youth per year

Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians Mental health and individual skill building and support
Beneficiaries: 20 youth in two year period

Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Alcohol, drug, mental health treatment; mentoring and after-school activities for youth in tribal charter school.
Beneficiaries: 20 youth per year

Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Mental health therapist for high risk youth.
Beneficiaries: 20 youth per year

State-administered Federal Funding:

Oregon receives annual grants of federal Title II Formula Grant and Title V Delinquency Prevention Grant funds from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). Grant amounts are based on the state's youth population and Congressional budget approval.

Title IV-B (2) Promoting Safe and Stable Families

The 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act approved by Congress, amends title IV (B) to add additional components for time-limited family reunification services along with adoption promotion and support provisions. The amendment increased

funding and also changes the name from Family Preservation and Support to Promoting Safe and Stable Families. The 1997 Act was reauthorized in 2001 for a period of five years and again increased funding.

The Oregon Commission on Children & Families allocated a total of $8,600 to each of the nine tribes who have elected to participate in the grant program for the 2006-2007 fiscal year. Participating tribes submitted plans to OCCF for funding. Tribal plans continued much of the work from 2005 - 2006 which included methods and services: to support families at risk of children being placed in foster care; to assist families in the process of reuniting with children who have been in foster care; and families who have adopted, or plan to adopt, children out of foster care. This funding has been a key piece for tribes to continue family preservation and support programs that meet the cultural needs of their members.

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