

Oregon Housing and Community Services
GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS 2010
SUMMARY REPORT

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

Key Contact: Pegge McGuire, Community Resources Division Administrator
Oregon Housing & Community Services
725 Summer Street NE, Suite B
Salem, OR 97309-0409
Phone (503) 986-6700
E-mail Pegge.McGuire@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 and anti-poverty/family stabilization programs. During 2011, 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. Also, 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 also 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 Department’s 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 Klamath Tribe 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.

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, the 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 modifications 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, Burns Paiute, Warm Springs and Siletz Tribes to provide weatherization activities on tribal lands. Both the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and Confederated Tribes of the 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, Burns Paiute, Warm Springs and Siletz Tribes, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde have received certification through this program.

Low Income Energy Bill Payer Assistance

The department uses the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 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 and energy conservation activities, and support outreach activities designed to assure that eligible households are made aware of the assistance available. The Klamath Tribes, the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua, Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, Confederated Tribes of the Siletz, and Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw 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 regularly invite 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. OHCS provides free access to proprietary service delivery, 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, tailored annually to the Tribes' needs. General "help desk" support is provided on an on-going basis for Klamath LIHEAP program staff that may need technical guidance on program delivery and tracking components. Program staff attend fall and spring energy assistance training and business meetings along with other statewide energy assistance providers.

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 the Oregon's Indian population by raising their levels of nutrition and nutrition education. The program is administered at the Federal level by the Food and Nutrition Services, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. FDPIR is administered locally by either Indian Tribal Organizations or a state government agency.

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 administer their own FDPIR program.

- 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.

Limited Duration Rental Assistance

- Since 2005, the Oregon Coast Community Action Agency, a key department partner locally administering the U. S. Dept of Housing and Urban Development's HOME Tenant-based (rental payment) Assistance Program, has worked in partnership with the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians to serve tribal members. The HOME program provides rental assistance to eligible households for periods up to 18 months. During this service period, program participants receive additional case management and linkages to support self-sufficiency. (The contract between the Tribe and the community action agency has led to similar partnerships on several other services including drug and alcohol recovery, youth training and employment, business employment, and energy services.)

Home Ownership Programs

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 funds for all single family home ownership programs were drastically diminished during the 2009-2011 biennium due to general fund budget reductions and the downturn in the economy. This hindered OHCS' ability to sell bonds which fund the home ownership programs. We hope a shift in the economy and pending federal recovery program funds will improve the ability to reinstate the single family program in 2011.

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. The Centers conduct targeted education and outreach to tribal members throughout the state.

Other Cooperation with Partners & Tribes

The Department continues to be an active participant in Government-to-Government relations directly and through partnering organizations. The Department's Community Resources Division Administrator serves as the OHCS Government-to-Government key contact. She regularly attends and supports the quarterly Health/Social Services Cluster meetings (facilitated by the Department of Human Services) and Economic Development Cluster meetings (facilitated by Business Oregon). These meetings offer state agency and tribal representatives opportunities to build relationships and address common interests on a regular basis.

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. A number of agency staff participated in the events and training of Tribal Information Day.

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 and 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 2012

- The Department's Government-to-Government liaison 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 submit its annual Government-to-Government report.