

## TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM MANAGERS AND STAFF INTERVIEW GUIDE

*[Note: This guide is intended for managers and staff of Tribal TANF programs. These respondents will be familiar with the Tribe's demand for TANF, efforts to connect TANF recipients with employment opportunities, and relationships among the Tribe, TANF program, and other support programs. Since the respondents will vary for each tribe, not all questions will apply to all respondents.]*

### Introduction/Purpose of the Study

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview today.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a researcher from the [Urban Institute, a non-profit research organization OR Support Services International, an Indian-owned consulting firm] located in the Washington, D.C. metro area. With me today is [name and affiliation]. I'm here today because the Urban Institute, on behalf of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), is studying how Tribal TANF programs are being implemented and how Tribal members are being served.

The study will describe how current Tribal TANF programs are operating, and what innovative programs are being implemented that can inform other Tribal TANF programs. This study includes analysis of Census and administrative data as well as in-person interviews and discussion groups. [Name of tribe/village] is one of 4 sites we are visiting to conduct interviews. In each site, we will be with speaking with administrators and staff of the Tribal TANF program and other organizations, and TANF clients, to better understand the TANF program.

Interviews will cover the way the Tribal TANF support system is organized and how different programs relate to each other; views on the performance of the TANF program; perceptions of social/economic conditions; training and work opportunities; and key challenges and innovations. These interviews will provide important information on local arrangements, particularly as they relate to households in need and the opportunities available to them.

We will use what we learn today and from other interviews to contribute to a report to HHS, participating tribes, and other tribes interested in operating TANF programs. This report will be released in the summer of 2013.

### **Privacy Statement** *[Interviewer must read this]:*

Before beginning the interview, I (we) want to remind you that your participation is voluntary. I (we) know that you are busy and will try to be as brief as possible. We have many questions and are going to talk to many different people, so please do not feel as though we expect you to be able to answer every question. This interview is **not** part of an audit or a compliance review. We are interested in learning about your ideas, experiences, and opinions about (TRIBAL TANF

A Descriptive Study of Tribal TANF Programs  
Guide for Interviews with Staff of Tribal TANF Programs

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PROGRAM NAME) and related programs in your Tribal area/village. There are no right or wrong answers. We want to know what you think.

This data collection effort is authorized under 42 USC 612 and Section 412 of the Social Security Act for the purpose of describing how current Tribal TANF programs are operating, and what innovative programs are being implemented that can inform other Tribal TANF programs. We will use what we learn today and from other interviews to contribute to a report to HHS, participating tribes, and other tribes interested in operating TANF programs. This report will be released in the summer of 2013. Our study began in September 2011 and will end in September 2013. Your participation is voluntary and your statements are private to the extent permitted by law. This interview is not part of an audit or a compliance review. Your comments will not affect the program's management or your involvement with the program.

In addition, before we start, I want to let you know that although we will take notes during these interviews, information is never associated with your name or the name of any respondent in any report, discussions with supervisors or colleagues, or HHS. When we write our reports and discuss the study findings, information from all informants is compiled and presented so that no one person can be identified.

Finally, you are free to terminate this interview at any time for any reason. Your participation is strictly voluntary.

We have scheduled this meeting for [1 hour - LENGTH OF INTERVIEWS WILL VARY BY TYPE OF RESPONDENT. INTERVIEWERS SHOULD REFER TO SCHEDULE]. Is that still convenient? (If yes) Are you willing to participate in this interview?

Do you have any questions before we begin? If you have any questions during the interview, please do not hesitate to ask-- if something is not clear, just let me know. Okay?

## **I. Background and Context**

1. Please describe your position/role. (Probe: What is your job title? What are your responsibilities related to (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME)? What are your overall responsibilities? How long have you held this role? In the past, did you have other positions in the program? (If yes) please tell me about them.
2. What service area does the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) program cover?
3. Could you please give us a general sense of the demographic characteristics of the population(s) served by the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) program. (e.g., age, household structure, etc.)

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4. What are the barriers (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) clients face related to finding and retaining employment? (Probe: Size of region/ accessibility, lack of job opportunities, skills)
5. Does the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) program participate in the "477 Program" (PL 102-477)? If not, why not? If it does participate, what are the benefits of participating in "477?"

## II. Tribal TANF Policies/Priorities

*I would like to focus now on the priorities and policies of the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) program.*

6. Please describe the overall strategy or mission of the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) program.
  - a. Are there priorities among the program's objectives (e.g., participation, work requirements, skills development, and poverty reduction)?
7. What are the performance or outcome goals of the program? How is progress toward these goals measured, if at all?
8. To what extent does the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) program incorporate community planning or engagement into its decision-making and planning?
9. How does the Program identify, incorporate, and enhance employment opportunities for recipients (e.g., subsidized employment; blended funding)?
10. What are the Program's work participation requirements for clients? (*Note, tailor wording to use local terms, e.g. "self-sufficiency hours".*)
  - a. Which activities can recipients participate in to fulfill work participation requirements (e.g. job search, job training, education, activities to address substance abuse or domestic violence, etc.)?
  - b. Which activities do clients participate in most commonly?
  - c. What policies exist regarding the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) program's subsidized employment, job training, education/post-secondary education, post-employment training?
11. What are the sanction policies for noncompliance with work requirements?
  - a. How are penalties (sanctions) applied against individuals/families?

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- b. Is it common to have families in sanction status? About how often are the different sanctions applied?

12. What are the time limits for (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) cash assistance?

- a. How common is it for individuals/families to lose eligibility due to time limits?
- b. How frequently are exemptions from the time limit granted? Under what conditions are clients exempted from time limits?

13. Have the work requirements, sanctions, or time limit policies changed over time or have they been pretty consistent since the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) program was first implemented? How long have the current policies been in place?

- a. Were these policies designed to accommodate Tribal culture and circumstances? If so, how?

### III. Service Delivery Practices

*I would like to focus now on the service delivery practices of the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) program.*

14. Please describe the Program's service delivery model. Generally, how does the program distribute benefits or services to clients?

- a. What are the processes for eligibility and intake for (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME)? What, if any, assessments and screenings are used? What is the process for re-determination over time?
- b. To what extent is (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) coordinated with other support organizations (Probe: substance abuse prevention and treatment, SNAP, social services, child support enforcement, Indian Child Welfare, vocational education and rehabilitation, workforce development, post-secondary education/training, and economic development)?
- c. Does the office that handles eligibility and intake also handle the delivery of services, or are clients referred elsewhere for services? What follow-up occurs for clients referred to services or placed in jobs?
- d. From your perspective, are enough services available in your community to meet the needs of your clients?

15. Has the service delivery model changed over time, or has it been pretty consistent since the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) program was first implemented? How long has the current model been used?
16. To what extent are information systems automated as opposed to paper-based? Is the technical capacity of your program sufficient for your needs?
17. How are barriers to successful job placement and employment (e.g., domestic violence, substance abuse/addiction, lack of safe affordable housing) addressed by the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) program? How are they addressed in the Tribe/Tribal communities?
18. What is the Program's approach to outreach and providing information about (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) to potential recipients?
19. We've already discussed how your program incorporates Tribal culture in its policies. Can you give me any example of how elements of Tribal culture are integrated into (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) service delivery?
20. What are the skills and knowledge that program staff need in order to effectively serve clients? What training is provided to (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) program staff?
21. Has your tribe used **TANF funds** to develop innovations or initiatives **beyond cash assistance** (e.g., fatherhood programs, school-to-work, apprenticeships, and family stability, assessment, job readiness skills development, contextual education, workplace based training, apprenticeships, subsidized employment, participant or staff incentives)?
22. What additional **non-TANF resources** are available to (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) recipients for service delivery, social services, education, training, and employment?
  - a. Where are these resources located? Are they available in Tribal communities?
  - b. How do people who live in remote areas access resources??
23. Has your (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) office engaged in partnerships with other organizations to provide services to your clients?
  - a. If so, please describe the partnerships. Does your office generally benefit from having such partnerships? Would you like to engage in more partnerships or fewer?
  - b. If not, do you see a need for partnerships with other organizations? Are there barriers to forming such partnerships?

24. How common is it for Tribal members to move between (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) and state TANF programs?
- a. Does the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) Program do anything to encourage or discourage this movement?
25. From your perspective, what are the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) Program's biggest challenges in serving recipients?
26. Are there aspects of your program that you would like to improve? What is the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) Program's highest priority for improvement?
- a. What do you see as the challenges to making this improvement?
  - b. What do you see as the consequence if this improvement is not made?

#### **IV. Outputs and Outcomes**

27. What is the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) Program's work participation rate and how has it changed over time?
- a. In your opinion, to what extent do (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) work requirements affect the work participation rate?
28. In your opinion, do you think (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) recipients have benefitted from participating in the Program? If not, why not? If so, how have they benefitted?
- a. Do you have a sense of whether the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) program has helped recipients become self-sufficient?
  - b. Do you have a sense of whether the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) program has helped clients improve their job skills or other skills?
  - c. Do you know if there have been income gains among (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) recipients in the past [timeframe]? What do you think the gains are due to?
29. Has the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) program used performance information, such as surveys of recipients or employers, income data or employment data to inform policies or service delivery?
- a. If so, can you give an example of how it has done so?

30. What do you think would be different in your community if the Tribal TANF program were not there?
31. *(Probe, if not already addressed.)* Has the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) program and recipient outcomes affected the larger Tribal community? Can you give an example or two?
32. What do you think have been the greatest successes of the (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) program? Can you give us any examples of promising practices?
33. If you were giving advice to another Tribal TANF program, what aspects of your program would you suggest that they borrow?

**V. Wrap-up.**

This has been a great discussion and we are grateful for your time Thank you so much for sharing this information with us. Is there anything else you want to be sure to say to us before we go, or that we should have asked?

If we have any questions, may we follow-up by e-mail or phone?