

## TANF-RELATED PROGRAM MANAGERS AND STAFF INTERVIEW GUIDE

*[Note: This guide is intended for respondents identified as managers or staff of related programs that serve the same or similar population as those served by the local TANF program. Respondents will be familiar with the Tribe's demand for TANF and relationships between the Tribe, TANF program, and other area 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, DC metropolitan 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 these interviews. In each site, we will be speaking with administrators and staff of the Tribal TANF program and other organizations, and TANF recipients, 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 TANF and related

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

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support 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 organization and its program. What is the relationship between your office/program and the XXX (TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM NAME) TANF program?
2. What service area does your program cover?
3. What is your position in this organization? (Probe: How long have you held this role?)

**I would like to understand more about the geographic, economic, and political contexts in which your program and Tribal TANF operate.**

4. From your perspective, what is the status of the economy in the Tribal community? What is the employment availability? What are the main job providers in the community?

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- a. From your perspective, has the national recession affected employment and income in your community?
- 5. In your experience, how has demand for TANF and other supports changed over time?
- 6. Please describe the demographic characteristics of the population that is served by both your program and the TANF program (age, household structure, etc.).
- 7. What are the barriers Tribal members face finding and retaining work (Probe: size of region and accessibility, lack of job opportunities, and skills)?

## II. Public Assistance Organization and Management

**I would like to focus now on the organization and management of the Tribal TANF program and public assistance programs in general.**

- 8. Describe the organizations that compose the local public support system. How do they relate to one another?
  - a. To what extent is your organization coordinated with TANF and other support systems (substance abuse prevention and treatment, SNAP, child support enforcement, vocational education and rehabilitation, workforce development, post-secondary education/training, and economic development)?
  - b. Do clients of one program receive referrals to other programs and services?
  - c. How do your organization and the TANF program work together to achieve worker self-sufficiency?
  - d. How has the relationship among the organizations changed over time?
- 9. How does your program relate to the Tribal structure (leadership; organization; relationships with other bodies, etc.)? What is the relationship and interaction between your organization and other political bodies within your Tribe, such as State entities, county or municipal governments, or the Tribal government?
  - a. To what extent do political bodies have influence over the policies and management of your program and other support programs, such as State entities, county or municipal governments, or the Tribal government?
  - b. How has this relationship changed over time?

10. What kind of Technical Assistance do you receive from the state and regional offices? (If any: Is this level of assistance sufficient for your needs?)
11. Does the XXX TANF 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?"

### III. Tribal Public Assistance and TANF Policies/Priorities

**I would like to focus now on the priorities and policies of the Tribal TANF and related public assistance programs.**

12. Do you have a sense of the overall strategy or mission of the XXX TANF program and its priorities? If so, how would you describe them?
  - a. How, if at all, does the TANF program accommodate Tribal culture and circumstances?
13. How does the XXX TANF Program identify, incorporate, and employment opportunities for TANF recipients (e.g. subsidized employment; blended funding)?
14. What is your impression of XXX TANF policies that exist regarding subsidized employment, job training, education/post-secondary education, post-employment training?
15. How are barriers to successful job placement and employment (e.g., domestic violence, substance abuse/addiction, lack of safe affordable housing) handled by the XXX TANF and other programs? Tribal communities?
16. To what extent is community planning and engagement incorporated into the XXX TANF decision-making and into public assistance in general?
17. Do you think that the XXX TANF Program's priorities for assisting recipients are appropriate? If you could alter the office's programs to better meet the needs of the community how would you do this?

### IV. Service Delivery Practices

**I would like to focus now on the service delivery practices of the Tribal TANF and related public assistance programs.**

18. Are you familiar with the XXX TANF program's service model? Generally, how does it distribute funds or services to recipients?

19. What **non-TANF** resources are available to XXX TANF recipients for service delivery, social services, education, training, and employment?
  - a. Where are these resources located? Are they available in Tribal communities?
  - b. Are they accessible to people who live in remote areas?
20. Please discuss one or two examples of present or past partnerships your organization has engaged with to provide services to your clients. (Probe: How did the partnership begin?)
  - a. Does your organization generally benefit from having such partnerships? Would you like to engage in more partnerships or fewer? What are examples of successes that can be shared with other Tribes?
21. What is the XXX TANF's approach to outreach and providing information to potential recipients?
22. What do you believe are the biggest challenges in serving recipients in this area? Do you think the XXX TANF program is addressing these specific challenges? If so, how?
23. What do you think is the highest priority for improving services to households in need, if any?

## V. **Outputs and Outcomes**

24. What is your impression of how the local XXX TANF office is operated? How does it perform as far as serving recipients and meeting its assistance and support goals?
  - a. Do you have a sense of whether the XXX TANF program has helped recipients achieve self-sufficiency? How do you define self-sufficiency?
25. Do you think TANF recipients have benefitted from participating in [NON-TANF PROGRAMS DISCUSSED DURING INTERVIEW]? If not, why not? If so, how have they benefitted?
26. From your perspective, how has the public assistance network, in general, in this area affected the population in need?
27. Do you think the XXX TANF program and recipient outcomes have affected the larger Tribal community? Can you give an example or two?

## VI. **Wrap-up.**

This has been a great discussion and we are grateful for your time. 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?