

Appendix B

Next Steps for Tribal TANF Research and Data

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is conducting this study? This study is being conducted by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) and the Office of Family Assistance (OFA), which are both part of the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF). ACF contracted with MEF Associates (MEF) and Kauffman and Associates (KAI) to carry out the project. MEF is a small company that works to improve the lives of children and families through research and program assistance. KAI is an American Indian woman-owned consulting firm dedicated to uplifting American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) people, communities, and programs.

What is the purpose of this study? The purpose of this study is to hear directly from AIAN communities about their experiences with Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Tribal TANF). The project team is working directly with Tribal TANF knowledge holders to gather information about what is going well, what is challenging, and recommendations for future directions for Tribal TANF research and data. ACF will use this information to inform future directions for Tribal TANF research, technical assistance, and related programs.

The main objectives of the study are to answer the following questions:

1. What are successes, challenges, and opportunities experienced by Tribal TANF programs?
2. What are Tribal TANF programs' needs and experiences related to TANF data collection, use, and reporting?
3. What recommendations do Tribal TANF programs have for next steps for Tribal TANF research and data?
4. How can we ensure this study is responsive and beneficial to tribal communities and Tribal TANF agencies?

Why are you asking me to participate? You are being asked to provide your wisdom and perspective on Tribal TANF. You can help us understand how ACF can better learn about and support Tribal TANF programs.

How do I participate?

- **Talking Circles** - You may be contacted by email and invited to participate in an in-person or virtual talking circle. Some talking circles will be an

opportunity to discuss overall needs and experiences related to Tribal TANF. Some talking circles will be focused on needs and experiences related to Tribal TANF data. Talking circles are expected to take place in 2026 and 2027.

- **Survey** - You may be contacted by email and invited to participate in a survey about Tribal TANF data. The survey is expected to be available in 2027.
- **Knowledge Sharing Visits** – The study team will visit up to five Tribal TANF programs for in-person knowledge sharing visits to gain a deeper understanding of Tribal TANF in a few communities. The study team may reach out to your program to ask about your interest in hosting a visit, or you may reach out to the study team directly to express interest (see contact information below). Knowledge sharing visits are expected to take place in 2027.

Is my participation voluntary? Your participation is entirely voluntary. Even if you choose to participate in any of the study activities, you can also choose to stop or take a break at any point.

Will my TANF benefits be affected if I decline to participate? Your decision to participate in this study or to not participate will not affect your TANF benefits in any way, now or in the future. Your decision to participate or not, as well as what you share, will be kept private by the study team and will not be shared with your Tribal TANF program.

Are there any risks? Participation in this study involves minimal risks. You may feel uncomfortable answering certain questions, but you are free to skip any question you do not wish to answer. We will take every precaution to keep your information private to the extent permitted by law. We will also stress the importance of privacy during Talking Circles and ask participants to keep what is shared within the circle private. However, there is a risk that the participants in the Talking Circles will share information with individuals outside the circle.

We will securely store information collected from this study and will remove any personally identifying information from the information that we store. However, there is always a small risk that someone outside the study team will see the information that we collect. If this occurs, we will make multiple efforts to notify you. **Are there benefits by agreeing to participate?** While you may not benefit directly, findings from this study may shape future directions for Tribal TANF research and data, which may lead to new opportunities related to Tribal TANF and its services.

What will happen to my information? All information you share will be stored securely and kept private to the extent permitted by law. Any recordings will be used only to check our notes and then the recordings will be destroyed as soon as possible. Notes will be destroyed at the end of the project. When we share what we have learned from this project publicly, the information you share will be combined with what we hear from others. We will not include your name or any personal details in any information that we share publicly.

Who can I contact if I have questions about the study? You may contact MEF Project Director Emily Schmitt (emily.schmitt@mefassociates.com) or KAI Project Director Tyler LaPlaunt (tyler.laplaunt@kauffmaninc.com).

Who can I contact if I have questions about my rights as a study participant? You may contact the Health Media Lab Institutional Review Board (info@hmlirb.com, 202-246-8504)

A government agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB number for this information collection is XXXX-XXXX and the expiration date is XX/XX/XXXX.