



NAVAJO DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT FOR SELF RELIANCE



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Department for Self Reliance Makes an Impression at the Six Tribal TANF Conference in Tucson, Arizona.

Window Rock, Ariz. - On March 12th and 13th, 2014 the Department for Self Reliance (DSR) attended the Quarterly Six Tribal TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) Conference in Tucson, Arizona to share the DSR's best practices.

DSR's Assistant Department Manager, Deannah Neswood-Gishey announced to the Tribal Liaisons of Arizona's Department of Economic Security (ADES) and the Arizona Tribal TANF programs (Pascua Yaqui Tribal YOEME Services Program, Hopi Tribal TANF Program, Salt River Pima – Maricopa Indian Community Life Enhancement and Resource Network, San Carlos Apache Tribal Nnee Bicho'Nii Program and the White Mountain Apache Tribal TANF Program) that in result of the restructuring of some Navajo Division of Social Services programs the Department for Self Reliance was established.

"We were known as the Navajo Nation Program for Self Reliance who implemented just the Tribal TANF program. Since January 2014, we have been given the added responsibility of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), General Assistance (GA), Funeral Assistance (FA) and Emergency Assistance (EA) for the Navajo Nation," stated Neswood-Gishey.

Neswood-Gishey gave an overview of the statistics generated by the DSR's Case Management software, Tribal Assistance System (TAS) for each of DSR's assistance programs.

FY 2014 (October 1, 2013 to current):

- DSR Tribal TANF has 7,718 recipients for a total assistance amount of \$5,449,318.00.
- DSR General Assistance has 1,553 recipients for a total assistance amount of \$1,031,394.00.
- DSR Funeral Assistance has 174 recipients for a total assistance amount of \$411,054.00.
- DSR LIHEAP assistance has 718 recipients for a total assistance amount of \$205,013.00.
- From January 7th to February 3rd, 2014 the DSR LIHEAP program has done 89 Orientations throughout the Navajo Nation with 3,614 attendees.

Statistics provided by Dr. Konstance Shirley, DSR's Senior Statistical Research Analyst

"Using our TAS and TANF program as a model for the new programs we oversee, we have been able to organize and incorporate the two new programs to assist thousands of people within a very short period of time," stated Neswood-Gishey.

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*Deannah Neswood-Gishey, DSR Assistant Department Manager
presenting at the Six Tribal TANF Conference.*



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The Navajo Nation was the first of the Six Tribal TANF programs to process its eligibility and payments to not be dependent on the state of Arizona.

The TAS provides the DSR with a central database of information which is accessible to each of its field offices.

Neswood-Gishey explained that the TAS allows the DSR to collect and generate its own federal data report, make faster local eligibility determinations, and quickly process payment for assistance. The TAS also allows the DSR to monitor suspected fraud, waste and abuse.

If the DSR did not administer its own Tribal TANF program with the TAS it would have no choice but to rely heavily on the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES).

During the conference, four of Arizona's Six Tribal TANF programs have reported that it has been very challenging to work with DES due to the cut backs of DES State Employees. "We have been getting applications denied by DES because we are a Tribal TANF. Being a Tribal TANF we are allowed to set up our TANF as we choose but our applications are being denied because state employees don't realize that we have different eligibility criteria. Our funding is in jeopardy because we are not meeting our deadlines and it is out of our hands. We are waiting on DES to process our applications, and they are already under staffed," stated, Hugo Guerra, Program Specialist for the Pascua Yaqui Tribal TANF.

The White Mountain Apache Tribe is the other Arizona Tribal TANF program that uses the TAS. "After seeing what the Navajo Nation can do with their TAS, we decided to get our own TAS program," stated Colleen Faden, Acting Director for the White Mountain Apache Tribal TANF program.

At the conference, the San Carlos Apache tribe and the Pascua Yaqui tribe expressed their strong interest in the TAS due to the proven success the Navajo Nation has shown with their program.

For more information contact the DSR Public Relations Section at 928.810.8553.

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