

COHARIE INTRA-TRIBAL COUNCIL, INC.



Project Title:	Community Health Navigator to Assist in Understanding Medication and Medical Instruction
Award Amount:	\$127,095
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	Sept. 2007 – Sept. 2008
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 3 jobs created
- 7 elders involved
- 21 youth involved
- \$18,885 in resources leveraged
- 147 individuals trained
- 17 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Coharie Tribe is a state recognized tribe located in eastern North Carolina, 70 miles southeast of Raleigh. The area is rural and economically depressed due to the decreased demand for tobacco products and the closing of numerous textile mills. The Tribe has roughly 2,530 enrolled members, with approximately 1,650 living in Sampson and Harnett counties in 4 distinct communities.

As a state recognized tribe, the Coharie do not qualify to receive services from the Indian Health Service, and must rely on the health services that serve the general public. These services are often unaffordable, culturally inappropriate, and unavailable in extremely rural areas. Due to the economic

hardship facing the two counties, many families do not have health insurance and are therefore unable to receive health care and purchase preventative medicine. In addition, many tribal members, especially elders, have serious medical problems but cannot access health care resources.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the project was to assist members in understanding the health care system, provide information and training on healthy living, and develop a comprehensive health resource manual.

The project’s sole objective included all three of the above pieces. Project staff included a community health outreach coordinator who was responsible for organizing community clinics and workshops and working with the community to address their health needs. The coordinator developed an assessment survey to determine tribal members’ health requirements. After reviewing the 71 returned surveys, project staff organized a community meeting to further discuss problems and potential solutions. The outcome of the meeting was the desire for

the project to focus on seniors who have difficulty understanding their diagnoses, prescriptions, and medication doses.

Project staff also included a health navigator who provided services such as transport to and from doctors' offices and assistance during provider visits. Based on the results of the survey and community meeting, the health navigator focused on providing services to tribal elders. As a registered nurse, she was able to help elderly patients understand their diagnoses, prescriptions and treatment options. As a tribal member, she also provided culturally appropriate advice to patients and served as an intermediary between tribal elders and their doctors. Over the course of the project, the health navigator worked with more than 65 tribal members, increasing their access to health care, knowledge of medications, and confidence in their doctors' diagnoses.

The outreach coordinator also organized four clinics and five workshops. The workshops were open to all tribal members and were mainly educational, often including presentations by representatives from local health organizations, doctors and dietitians. Clinics focused more on the delivery of medical services such as diabetes screenings and blood pressure tests. Both the workshops and the clinics were well-attended, with project staff reporting over 100 participants.

Finally, the coordinator also worked to develop a Healthcare Access Manual. The purpose of the manual is to make tribal members aware of the health services available in the local community. The document includes listings of, and contact information for, local hospitals and providers, including specialists.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

This project greatly benefited tribal elders. Their trust in the health navigator facilitated

open communication regarding their conditions. Where elders previously did not want to speak with their doctors, they now feel more comfortable given the presence of the health navigator at their appointments. Project staff noted improved health for some of the elders using the project's services, and the discovery of previously undiagnosed illnesses. The project also reduced some of the health costs by providing elders access to free transportation, medication samples and discounted medical supplies.

The project increased tribal members' education through the clinics and workshops. People are now more aware of what services are available due to the Healthcare Access Manual, and are also able to take advantage of discounted rates. Tribal members discussed their health problems more readily during the clinics, as they felt more comfortable in the environment. Tabatha Brewer, the outreach coordinator, stated, "People have realized where they can go, that there is help, that they need to pay attention to their bodies, and what resources are available."

Local doctors are thankful for the project because their diagnoses are better understood and adhered to. The project improved the delivery of their services to tribal members. They also have time to see more patients, as the health navigator helps explain their diagnoses, saving time during visits.

The health navigator program was so successful in the Coharie community that project staff shared it with three other tribes implementing similar projects.

TUSCARORA NATION OF INDIANS OF THE CAROLINAS



Project Title:	Community Assessment to Establish Baseline Data
Award Amount:	\$95,635
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	Sept. 2007 – Sept. 2008
Grantee Type:	Native Nonprofit

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 1 job created
- 2 Native American consultants hired
- 35 elders involved
- 20 youth involved
- \$6,480 in resources leveraged
- 40 individuals trained
- 16 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Tuscarora Nation of Indians of the Carolinas is not a federally recognized tribe, and therefore operates as a nonprofit organization. There are currently 750 band members living within a 20-mile radius of the town of Maxton in south central North Carolina.

South central North Carolina is suffering a severe economic downturn due to the decline of both the tobacco and textile industries. Tribal members, who made their living by farming and working in factories for decades, now find themselves unemployed. Many do not have the education or skills necessary to seek jobs elsewhere. The illiteracy rate of members is

high and has been estimated at 67%. As a result of these challenges, the Tribe lacks the organizational capacity for social and economic self-sufficiency.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The project was the result of a tribal strategic planning session. The purpose of the project was to build the organizational capacity of the Tribe to respond to members’ social needs.

The first objective was to develop and conduct a comprehensive community assessment to establish a tribal demographic profile. The project coordinator partnered with the Nor El Muk Band of Wintu Indians in California and the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California to develop two surveys. Project staff also consulted with local agencies for advice on survey development. One survey was used to record language and cultural information, while the other was strictly a demographic survey. Trained volunteers administered the survey by going door to door, collecting a total of 85 surveys. Once staff members began tabulating the data, they realized the surveys’ significance in identifying the needs of tribal members, many of which focused on adult education. In response,

project staff partnered with Richmond Community College to provide tribal members with literacy and GED classes, and have now served over 35 people.

Objective two focused on establishing an administrative office and developing 12 policies and procedures. The tribal office was established in the first months of the project and also serves as a community center, including areas for holding community events and a kitchen, as well as project staff offices. The project coordinator contacted other tribes in the area to seek advice in developing tribal policies and procedures. Over the course of the project, staff developed eighteen personnel policies, three property and procurement policies, and two financial policies. The tribal council received training on the new policies and subsequently adopted them.

The third objective of the project was to develop a community resource directory. The cultural survey included a tool to assess tribal members' access to services, and results indicated many tribal members lacked access to health care, education and youth services. Based on the survey results, project staff scheduled meetings with local, state, and federal agencies who provide services in these areas to discuss available assistance and the criteria for access to the programs offered. Project staff developed sixteen partnerships with agencies that provide services in the following areas: addiction and crisis intervention; Headstart programs; parental skill building; computer skills training; summer youth programs; and literacy and job skills training. Project staff then created a resource directory listing agency services and contact information to distribute to tribal members.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The creation of a tribal center provides tribal members with a facility they can use for gatherings and events, which increases

community cohesion. The space is also used for the literacy and GED classes. Tribal members are proud of the center, and the project coordinator feels this has bolstered their self-confidence.

The policies and procedures training increased the tribal council's capacity for tribal management and governance. The project served to broaden their minds as to the future goals of the Tribe. At the project's end, the council was a much stronger unit with increased confidence and direction.

After the project's completion, the Tribe was unable to maintain the lease on the tribal center building, and therefore lost the space. The tribal council is currently researching opportunities for loans and grants to purchase another building.

“The project has been good for me. I didn't get much education. It's been 40 years and I am now coming back to [my] education.”

Joseph Brooks, Tribal Chief