

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### PREFACE

The Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) created the Tribal Child Support Directors Resource Guide (Resource Guide) in collaboration with numerous tribal child support directors. This Resource Guide is not a policy document and does not replace existing federal regulations, statutes, or OCSE policy guidance documents, which take precedence. This Resource Guide originated in a handbook developed jointly by OCSE and tribal child support directors in Region 10. For your convenience, OCSE will maintain and update this Resource Guide, which you can access on [OCSE's Tribal Webpage](#).

This Resource Guide will help orientate new tribal child support directors during their first weeks on the job and can serve as a desk reference for both new and seasoned directors. It provides a broad overview of basic program information, federal requirements and policy, and practical advice and resources. Use the [Table of Contents](#) page to select a particular topic of interest.

This Resource Guide is not comprehensive. If you have specific technical and policy questions, please contact your federal OCSE and Office of Grants Management (OGM) representatives. We also encourage you to contact other tribal child support directors to take advantage of their knowledge and expertise.

OCSE welcomes the tribal child support directors, those new to the program looking for guidance as well as those who have been operating a child support program and may be looking for additional support. We hope you find this Resource Guide informative and useful!

*"We welcome you in to our program to answer your questions, to provide our help and assistance. We look forward to working with you and building a relationship between our programs. Family and childrn are cherished and always come first so if we can help your program please do not hesitate to contact us. – huy"*

- Kimberly Reynon-Spisak, Puyallup Tribal Program

#### THE NINE ORIGINAL IV-D TRIBES



Figure 1: Logos of the original nine tribes operating child support programs

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the tribal child support community! Whether you are new to the child support world or a seasoned director, this Resource Guide will be useful as a learning resource and a desk reference. Child support is a complex program.

As a new child support director, you will need to learn about every aspect of the program, perhaps rather quickly. We hope this Resource Guide will help you acquire the knowledge needed to administer a successful child support program. With so much to learn, you might feel overwhelmed, so give yourself adequate time, and do not expect to remember everything right away. For the seasoned child support director, we hope this Resource Guide will be helpful in your day-to-day program management or possibly with new staff orientations.

This Resource Guide is broken into sections to help you learn the history of the program, fundamental components of the federal agencies that oversee child support programs, federal regulations that govern the program, and other useful information. The Resource Guide was developed by OCSE with the assistance, guidance and feedback of tribal child support directors.

### GLOSSARY

Child support seems to have a language of its own. You will quickly realize your child support colleagues use a language full of acronyms unique to the child support profession. Below is a list of the most common ones with a full glossary available on the OCSE website: [OCSE's Child Support Glossary](#). Give yourself time to learn the terminology. Before you know it, you will be communicating like a pro!

Acronym & Abbreviations	Brief Definition
ACF	Administration for Children and Families: The agency that houses OCSE within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
AT	Action Transmittal: A policy document sent out by OCSE which instructs state and tribal child support programs on the actions they must take to comply with new and amended federal laws. The document has basis in federal law and regulation.
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations: Regulations published by the federal government. The federal tribal child support regulations are contained in 45 CFR Parts 309 and 310.
CP	Custodial Party: The person who has primary care, custody, and control of the child. Custodial party is a relative or other person with legal custody of the child.
EFT	Electronic Funds Transfer: A process by which money is transmitted electronically from one bank account to another.
FFC	Full Faith and Credit: A doctrine under which a state or tribe must honor an order or judgment entered in another state or tribe and enforce it as if it were an order within its own territory, but may not modify the order unless properly petitioned to do so.

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Acronym & Abbreviations	Brief Definition
FFCCSOA	<p>Full Faith and Credit for Child Support Orders Act: A doctrine under which a state or tribe must honor an order or judgment entered in another state or tribe and enforce it as if it were an order within its own territory, but may not modify the order unless properly petitioned to do so. This principle was specifically applied to child support orders in federal law that took effect in 1994, under the Full Faith and Credit for Child Support Orders Act (FFCCSOA). FFCCSOA requires states and federally funded tribal child support agencies to enforce child support orders made by other states or tribes if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the issuing state or tribe’s tribunal had subject-matter jurisdiction to hear and resolve the matter and enter an order;</li> <li>the issuing state or tribe’s tribunal had personal jurisdiction over the parties; and,</li> <li>the parties were given reasonable notice and the opportunity to be heard.</li> </ul> <p>FFCCSOA also sets limits on state and tribal authority to modify another state or tribe’s child support orders in instances when the state or tribe seeking to modify the order has jurisdiction to do so and the tribunal that originally issued the order no longer has continuing exclusive jurisdiction over the order either because the child and the parties to the case are no longer residents of the issuing state, or the parties to the case have filed written consent to transfer continuing exclusive jurisdiction to the tribunal seeking to make the modification.</p>
FFP	<p>Federal Financial Participation: The portion of a state or tribe’s child support expenditures that are paid by the federal government.</p>
FFY	<p>Federal Fiscal Year: The period that runs between October 1 and the following September 30. This is the federal grant cycle year.</p>
FPLS	<p>Federal Parent Locator Service: The FPLS is an assembly of systems operated by OCSE, to assist states and tribes in locating noncustodial parents, putative fathers, and custodial parties for the establishment of paternity and child support orders. The expanded FPLS consists of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The National Directory of New Hires (NDNH): a central repository of employment, unemployment insurance, and wage data from State Directories of New Hires, State Workforce Agencies, and federal agencies.</li> <li>The Federal Case Registry (FCR): a national database that contains information on participants in child support cases and child support orders.</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, the FPLS also has access to external locate sources such as the Internal Revenue Service, the Social Security Administration, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, the National Security Agency, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.</p>
HHS	<p>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: HHS is the U.S. government’s principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves.</p>
IM	<p>Information Memorandum: A document that provides state and tribal child support agencies with information on program practices that can be useful to program improvement.</p>

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Acronym & Abbreviations	Brief Definition
IV-A	(Four-A): Refers to Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act. Title IV-A established the public assistance program that may include TANF, food share, childcare, and medical assistance.
IV-D	(Four-D): Refers to Part D of Title IV of the Social Security Act. Title IV-D established the child support program.
IV-E	(Four-E) Foster Care: Refers to Part E of Title IV of the Social Security Act. IV-E provides benefits or services for foster care maintenance to children entitled to foster care.
IWO	<p>Income Withholding Order: An order that requires an employer to withhold support from a noncustodial parent’s wages and transfer that withholding to the appropriate agency (the Centralized Collection Unit, the State Disbursement Unit or tribal child support agency.) Sometimes referred to as a wage withholding or garnishment.</p> <p><u>Direct Income Withholding</u>: A procedure, whereby an income withholding for support from one state can be sent directly to the noncustodial parent’s employer in another state, without the need to use the child support agency or court system in the noncustodial parent’s state.</p> <p><u>Immediate Wage Withholding</u>: An automatic deduction from income that starts as soon as the order for support is established and an income withholding for support is received and implemented by the noncustodial parent’s employer.</p>
MTS	Model Tribal System: The MTS is an automated child support system, designed based on tribal requirements, specifically for the management of tribal child support programs.
NCP	Noncustodial Parent: The parent who does not have primary care, custody, or control of the child, and who may have an obligation to pay child support. Also referred to as the Obligor.
NPRM	Notice of Proposed Rulemaking: A formal federal publication of proposed rules before they are made final. There is a public comment period.
OCSE	Office of Child Support Enforcement: The federal agency responsible for the administration of the Child Support Enforcement program. Created by Title IV-D of the Social Security Act in 1975, OCSE is responsible for developing child support policy; oversight, evaluation, and audits of state and tribal child support programs; and providing technical assistance and training to those programs.
OGM	Office of Grants Management: The office within ACF (but separate from OCSE) responsible for approving budgets and issuing grants to operate tribal child support programs.
OLDC/inForm	On Line Data Collection (new name inForm): An electronic portal through which fiscal and program reports due to the federal government must be submitted.

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Acronym & Abbreviations	Brief Definition
PIQ/PIQT	Policy Interpretation Question (Tribal): An official reply from OCSE to an inquiry submitted by a state or tribal child support agency concerning application of policy. Although questions often arise from a specific practice or situation, the responses are official statements of OCSE policy on the issue.
Plan	Program Development Plan and Comprehensive Program Plan: The documents that a federally recognized tribe or tribal organization must submit as part of their application to request tribal IV-D funds pursuant to 45 CFR 309.
PMS	Payment Management System: a secure, online grants payment platform which provides awarding agency and grant recipient customers with efficient grant and grant-like payments, cash management, and personal grant accounting support services. <a href="https://pms.psc.gov/">https://pms.psc.gov/</a>
PRWORA	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996: PRWORA mandated that states enact necessary legislation to improve the collection of child support. This legislation authorized direct funding for tribal IV-D programs.
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families: The public assistance program (Title IV-A of the Social Security Act) that provides cash assistance to families.
TDCL/IDCL/ DCL	(Tribal)/(International) Dear Colleague Letter: A letter sent out to the child support community (tribal, international and state), and interested partners, that conveys information on child support program activities.
UIFSA	Uniform Interstate Family Support Act: The law enacted by all states that provides mechanisms for establishing and enforcing child support obligations in interstate and international cases (when a noncustodial parent lives in a different state or foreign country from the child and the custodial party). Among the law's provisions is the ability of state child support agencies to send withholding orders to employers across state lines. (Tribes are not required to enact UIFSA).

## FEDERAL OVERVIEW

This section provides an overview and history of the child support program, which will help you to understand how your program fits in the national program. OCSE is an office within the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS)

The goal of HHS is to enhance and protect the health and well-being of all Americans. HHS administers more than 100 programs across its operating divisions. These programs protect the health of all Americans and provide essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves. HHS has 11 operating divisions which administer a wide variety of health and human services and conduct life-saving research for the nation, protecting and serving all Americans. The Office of the Secretary, Operating Divisions, and Regional Offices administer the HHS programs.

## Tribal Child Support Directors Resource Guide

Below is a map of the ten Regions operating the HHS programs:

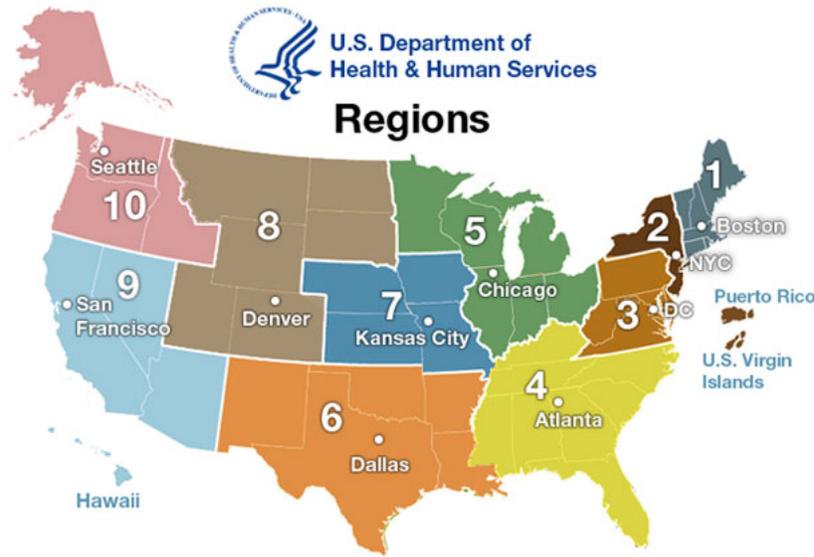


Figure 2: HHS Interactive Regions Map

The interactive map provides more information about each regional office and the services they provide.

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### FEDERAL ORGANIZATION

The Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs (IEA) serves as the focal point in the Office of the Secretary for the Department of Health and Human Services consultation with tribal governments on policy, regulatory and legislative issues that have a significant direct impact on tribal governments and tribal organizations. The complexity of the federal-tribal intergovernmental relationships results from treaties, statutes, executive orders and court decisions. IEA responsibilities for tribal governments are carried out in the same manner HHS facilitates and coordinates all departmental activities with state and local governments.

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### ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (ACF)

ACF is a division of HHS that promotes the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals and communities with partnerships, funding, guidance, training and technical assistance. Led by the Assistant Secretary, ACF is comprised of 19 offices, including OCSE, the Office of Administration, and the Office of Regional Operations that represents 10 regional administrators around the country. ACF programs fund a variety of programs from Native American Language Preservation to Refugee Resettlement to Child Care and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. The breadth of ACF programming allows it to make a positive impact on the lives of individuals and families around the country.



Figure 3: ACF Logo

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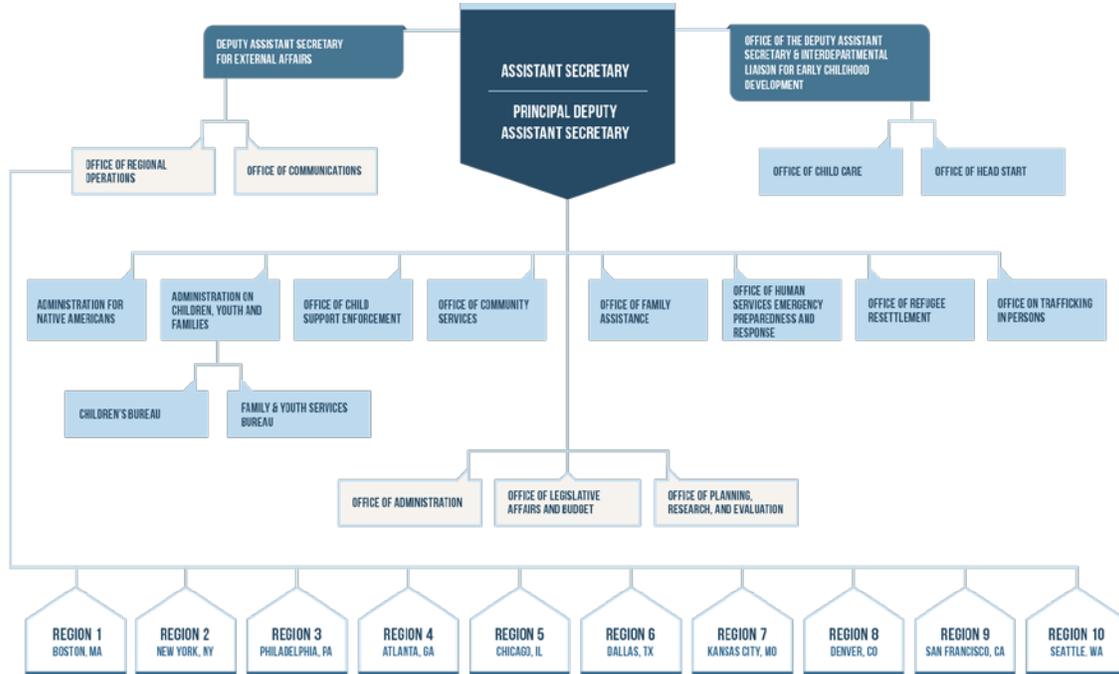


Figure 4: Organizational Chart for Administration for Children and Families

As of November 19, 2015

## OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT (OCSE)

OCSE partners with federal, state, tribal, and local governments and others to promote parental responsibility so that children receive support from both parents, even when they live in separate households. Part of ACF, OCSE is headed by the Commissioner of Child Support Enforcement and has nine divisions, including the Division of Regional Operations (DRO).

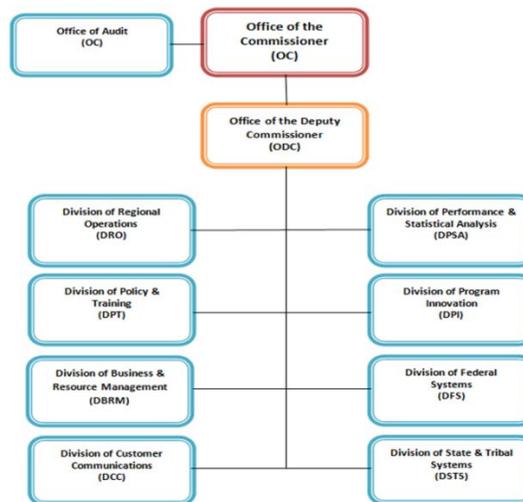


Figure 5: Organizational Chart for the Office of Child Support Enforcement

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DRO has ten regional offices and coordinates the tribal child support program. Each OCSE regional office consists of a Regional Program Manager (RPM) and several Program Specialists. The RPM reports to the Director of DRO within OCSE. Your tribe will have one Program Specialist assigned to you as your primary point of contact.

OCSE helps states and tribes develop, manage and operate their programs effectively, according to federal law and regulation so they can successfully meet the needs of children and families they serve. Your regional Program Specialist should be your first point of contact when you have questions or concerns about your program.

The child support program's core mission is to locate parents and their assets; establish paternity; establish, modify and enforce child support orders; and distribute child support payments. While the particulars of the program may vary from tribe to tribe and state to state, these core services are available to all parents who need them.

The focus of the child support program continues to evolve and improve to meet the needs of families more effectively. Although the core establishment and enforcement functions will always be at the center of the program's purpose, reaching out to both parents in new ways is increasingly important to collect consistent child support payment and remove barriers to payment.

Many tribal and state programs can:

- improve economic stability through referrals to employment, job training programs and other financial planning services;
- engage fathers in the lives of their children from a very early age;
- ensure all children have the medical coverage they need to be healthy;
- help parents learn how to have healthier relationships with one another and their children;
- help prevent the need for child support cases in the first place; and
- work carefully with parents who have family violence issues in their lives.

## OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT/DIVISION OF MANDATORY GRANTS

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The Office of Grants Management (OGM) is part of the Office of Administration and directly administers, manages, provides financial stewardship, and technical guidance to more than 60 ACF program and regional offices for discretionary grants, mandatory grants, and cooperative agreements.

Specifically, OGM, is responsible for:

- reviewing, processing and issuing the notice of grant awards for the tribal child support programs;
- ensuring that business and financial responsibilities of grants administration are carried out;
- managing ACF's discretionary, formula, entitlement and block grants in the region;
- directing all grants and cooperative agreements;
- ensuring compliance with applicable statutes, regulations and policies;
- performing audit resolutions; and
- providing leadership and technical guidance to ACF programs on grant operations and grants management issues.

## Tribal Child Support Directors Resource Guide

### ACF ADDRESSES AND CONTACTS

#### OCSE Central Office – Washington DC:

Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Child Support Enforcement  
330 C Street, SW, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20201

#### Office of Grants Management – Washington DC:

Administration for Children and Families  
Division of Mandatory Grants  
330 C Street, SW, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20201



Figure 6: Map of ACF Regional Offices

#### REGION 1

JFK Federal Building, Room 2000  
Boston, MA 02203  
Phone: (617) 565-1020  
Fax: (617) 565-2493

#### REGION 2

26 Federal Plaza, Room 4114  
New York, NY 10278  
Phone: (212) 264-2890  
Fax: (212) 264-4881

#### REGION 3

801 Market Street, Suite 8300  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
Phone: (215) 861-4000  
Fax: (215) 861-4070

#### REGION 4

61 Forsyth Street, Ste. 4M60  
Atlanta, GA 30303-8909  
Phone: (404) 562-2800  
Fax: (404) 562-2981

#### REGION 5

233 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 400  
Chicago, IL 60601-5519  
Phone: (312) 353-4237  
Fax: (312) 353-2204

#### REGION 6

1301 Young Street, Suite 914  
Dallas, TX 75202  
Phone: (214) 767-9648  
Fax: (214) 767-3743

#### REGION 7

601 E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 349  
Kansas City, MO 64106-2808  
Phone: (816) 426-3981  
Fax: (816) 426-2888

#### REGION 8

1961 Stout Street  
Denver, CO 80294  
Phone: (303) 844-3100  
Fax: (303) 844-1188

#### REGION 9

90 7th Street, 9th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
Phone: (415) 437-8400  
Fax: (415) 437-8444

#### REGION 10

701 Fifth Ave., Suite 1600  
Seattle, WA 98104  
Phone: (206) 615-2519  
Fax: (206) 615-2574

# PROGRAM HISTORY

## THE FEDERAL OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

The federal child support program was established in 1975 under Title IV, Section D of the Social Security Act. Sometimes, you will hear the child support program referred to as the IV-D Program. The funding for Indian Tribes and tribal organizations is authorized under section 455(f) of the Social Security Act, as added by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA, Public Law 104-193) and amended by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (Public Law 105-33). The NPRM and interim rule were published in the Federal Register on August 21, 2000 (NPRM: 65 FR 162 et seq.; interim final rule: 65 FR 162 et seq.).

PRWORA added new enforcement tools, new technology, and expanded laws and distribution options and authorized the tribal program. Initially the child support program was established as a “welfare recovery” program to help offset public assistance paid to support children raised by single parents.

Today, 95% of support collections are paid to families and are not kept by states to repay assistance. In the 40 years since the inception of the child support program, the demographics of American society have changed and the number of children affected by changing family structure has grown significantly. In 2014, more than one-quarter (26.2 percent) of all children under 21 years of age who lived in families, lived with only one of their parents. Altogether 22.1 million children under the age of 21 lived in families with one parent.<sup>1</sup>

Divorce Rates: Divorce rates increased dramatically between 1965 and 1974, when the annual number of divorces nationwide more than doubled to 977,000. By 2014, the rate of divorces in the U.S. was 3.2 for every 1000 people in the population.<sup>2</sup> While the divorce rate has leveled off, families where parents live apart have not.

Births to Unmarried Parents: The number of births to unmarried parents has been dramatically increasing for the past 40 years. In 1976, there were an estimated 468,100 births to unmarried women,<sup>3</sup> while in 2014, births to unmarried women totaled 1,604,870 or 40.2 percent.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An estimated 13.4 million parents. U.S. Census Bureau, *Custodial Mothers and Fathers and their Child Support: 2013* (Jan. 2016)

<sup>2</sup> National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System: *National Marriage and Divorce Rate Trends, 2000-2014*. Note: The National Center for Health Statistics no longer publishes total numbers of divorces due to the difficulty in estimating those numbers for non-reporting states.

<sup>3</sup> National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System: *Trends and Differentials in Births to Unmarried Women: United States 1970-1976* (May 1980). Note: Total is based on 100 percent of births in selected states and a 50 percent sample of births in all other states.

<sup>4</sup> National Center for Health Statistics, 64 Monthly Vital Statistics Rep. No. 12, *Births: Preliminary Data 2014*, December 23, 2015.

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Child Poverty: Children living in households with one parent are much more likely to live below the poverty level than those living with two parents. For example, the 2013 poverty rate of all custodial parents was 28.8 percent -- about twice that of the total population.<sup>5</sup>

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### HISTORY AND AUTHORIZATION FOR TRIBAL CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAMS

The legislation noted above provides authorization for direct federal funding for tribal child support programs. PRWORA created the authority to establish tribal child support programs with direct funding. To jumpstart implementation, OCSE announced Special Improvement Project (SIP) grants available to federally recognized tribes and tribal organizations. The grant funding provided an opportunity for Tribal Nations to enhance an existing child support program.

There were seven tribes that applied for, and received, the SIP grants directly. Three other tribes collaborated with their states to establish a tribal child support office. The following seven Tribal Nations received a SIP award on September 1, 1999:

- Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate
- Lac du Flambeau Band of Lac Superior Chippewa
- Lummi Nation
- Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe
- Puyallup Tribe
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation
- Central Council for Tlingit and Haida Tribes

The following three Tribal Nations collaborated with their respective states:

- Navajo Nation: collaborated with New Mexico, which funded three offices on the Navajo Reservation using state IV-D funds in 1996.
- Chickasaw Nation: collaborated with Oklahoma and co-authored the SIP application that OCSE awarded to Oklahoma. The Chickasaw Nation established a tribal child support office in 1998.
- Menominee Nation: collaborated with Wisconsin, which was awarded the SIP funds to assist Menominee Nation to establish a child support office on the Menominee Reservation.

OCSE consulted extensively with tribes on developing the tribal regulations; all federally recognized tribes were invited to attend. OCSE held six Nation-to-Nation Consultations, lasting 2 ½ days each. During consultation, a number of tribes, including those listed above, expressed concern that efforts they had under way, including the demonstration projects, would be unduly delayed or disrupted if they had to wait for the final rule to receive funding to continue the programs that they put into place. In response to this concern, and in an effort to ensure that tribes can begin to provide services as quickly as possible, OCSE issued an [Interim Final Rule](#) that took effect immediately upon publication.

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<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Custodial Mothers and Fathers and their Child Support: 2013* (Dec. 2011).

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On March 30, 2004, after additional consultation and public input, OCSE published the [Final Tribal IV-D Program Rules](#) in the Federal Register that provided the mechanism for the development, enhancement and/or ongoing operations of a tribal child support program. OCSE released [Action Transmittal \(AT\)-04-01](#) to disseminate the Final Rule. The U.S. Government Publishing Office maintains and encourages use of a current electronic version of [45 CFR 309](#) and [45 CFR 310](#). The regulations cross-reference [45 CFR 75 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements](#) for HHS awards, which apply to tribes.

Your OCSE Regional Program Manager or Program Specialist will provide you with a “wheel” as a handy desk tool that summarizes the basic program requirements. Additional information on the Tribal Wheel is included in the Financial Requirements section.

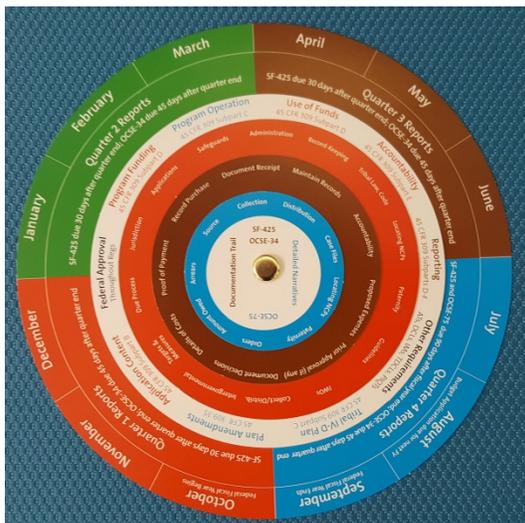


Figure 8: Tribal Wheel Front



Figure 9: Tribal Wheel Back

The number of tribal child support programs has grown significantly since 2004. OCSE maintains current information on the tribal child support agencies via an interactive map on its website: [Tribal Child Support Agencies Map List](#).

## TRIBAL CONSULTATION POLICY

The [Department of Health and Human Services Tribal Consultation Policy](#) was developed jointly with tribal participation in 2004 and was signed in January 2005. It was then evaluated and revised in 2008. In December 2010, HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius signed a new and improved Tribal Consultation Policy that was in direct response to President Obama’s November 2009 [Executive Memorandum](#). You can find additional information on the [HHS.gov](#) website.

The [ACF Tribal Consultation Policy](#) supplements the HHS Tribal Consultation Policy and was created in consultation with tribal leaders and a Federal/Tribal Workgroup. Acting Assistant Secretary George Sheldon signed this Policy on August 18, 2011.

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OCSE is committed to and adheres to the ACF Tribal Consultation Policy. The OCSE Commissioner has invited tribal leaders to engage in written consultation on a number of issues. In addition, OCSE holds informal discussion with tribal child support directors using a model that is referred to as “tribal conversations.” This approach was effective in learning about the impact of medical support regulations; discussing the required annual OCSE 75 Statistical and Narrative Report; reformatting the Annual Report to Congress; reviewing annual tribal budget submissions; and discussing possible updates to the tribal child support regulations.

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### TRIBAL CHILD SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Each tribal program is unique, yet you may find that you may share many things in common with other programs. Many established tribal child support directors have significant knowledge and experience, and they welcome your questions and encourage contact from you.

Two organizations also provide reliable sources of information:

- National Association of Tribal Child Support Directors (NATCSD): <http://natcsd.org>
- National Tribal Child Support Association (NTCSA): [www.supporttribalchildren.org](http://www.supporttribalchildren.org)

Contact information for all the federally funded tribal child support agencies may be found on the OCSE website on this list of [Tribal Child Support Program Contact Information](#).

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### CHILD SUPPORT WEBSITES AND GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Visit OCSE’s website to view an [interactive map](#) which allows you to see a pop-up list of state and tribal child support program contact information.

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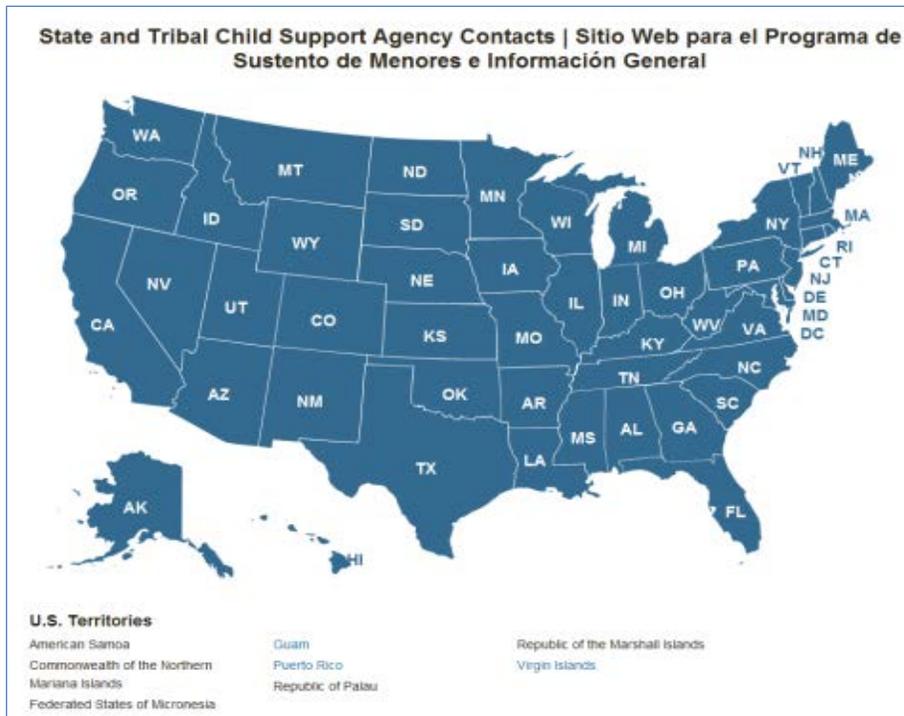


Figure 10: Child Support Websites and General Contact Information Map

### THE ROLE OF STATE CHILD SUPPORT AGENCIES

As mentioned earlier, states have been operating child support programs since the mid-1970s. To the best of their ability, states provided child support services to tribal members who often had orders for child support already established. As you develop your tribal child support program, developing a healthy relationship with the state child support agency is important. Some things to consider include determining:

- what type of partnership is needed;
- whether to use the state automated child support system;
- how to transfer pre and post judgment cases to the tribe, and
- training needs.

### TRIBAL-STATE PARTNERSHIPS

We recommend that the tribal child support director contact the state child support director to schedule an initial meeting. The first meeting is usually an introductory one while subsequent meetings may use agendas to structure discussions on a variety of topics. Your focus should always be the children and families you serve; your goals should be to strengthen your partnerships, and you should always aim at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of how you provide services. Meetings with the state child support director may be an appropriate activity during the start-up phase. Tribes and states must work together to ensure that families receive the support they deserve by:

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- working cooperatively together;
- extending the full range of services to another child support program; and
- recognizing valid child support orders issued by other tribunals.

For more in-depth information on working cooperatively with your state partner, see [PIQT-05-01](#) and [PIQT-05-02](#) on OCSE's website.

### MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

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An MOU is a formalized statement of the mutual expectations between two parties; for example, two tribal programs or a tribal and state program. It is not legally binding but does represent a commitment by the parties to conduct interagency business in a specified manner. An MOU can be a powerful tool since it requires the parties to come to mutual agreements. Components to an MOU include, but are not limited to a:

- description of the partner agencies;
- brief history of the relationship of the agencies;
- purpose of the MOU;
- roles and responsibilities of each program;
- description of the resources each program can contribute to the project;
- designation of person(s) responsible for the project management;
- reporting methodologies and deadlines;
- duration of the MOU; and
- signature(s) of authorizing person(s).

### SERVICE AGREEMENTS

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A service agreement is generally considered a contract wherein a service is formally defined. Service agreements can be legally binding depending on the language included. The components of a service agreement include, but are not limited to:

- scope of services;
- parties responsible for the delivery of services and the delivery time;
- general terms of the agreement including fees and reporting;
- sanctions for non-compliance of the agreement, and
- authorized signatures.

According to 45 CFR 309.60(c), if a tribal child support program delegates any function of the tribal child support program to another tribe, state, or another program or entity pursuant to a cooperative arrangement, contract or tribal resolution, copies of the documents must be appended to the Comprehensive Program Plan and submitted to OCSE for approval.

### WORK PLANS

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## Tribal Child Support Directors Resource Guide

Work plans are the road map for how agencies will complete certain tasks. A work plan details the procedures to be followed to accomplish the intended work. Work plans usually include, but are not limited to:

- overview of the project;
- breakdown of the steps needed;
- list of the parties responsible for the steps; and
- timeline for completion and cost projections, if applicable.

Work plans are often included as addendums to MOUs or Service Agreements.