

NATIVE FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GUIDE

Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Public Assistance
P.O. Box 110640
Juneau, AK 99911-0640



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Introduction

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), commonly known as welfare reform, ended the entitlement to welfare cash benefits under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, and created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

In addition to establishing a fixed block grant that caps the amount of federal funding available for TANF and creating time limits on assistance, PRWORA gives American Indians and certain Alaska Native Organizations the authority to design and operate their own TANF programs. Like state agencies, Native Organizations are given great latitude in administering TANF, setting eligibility criteria, delivering services, and using federal TANF funds to promote activities that support self-sufficiency.

In Alaska, the authority to operate Native TANF programs is given to the following Alaska Native Organizations:

- Arctic Slope Native Association
- Kawerak, Inc.
- Maniilaq Association
- Association of Village Council Presidents
- Tanana Chiefs Conference
- Cook Inlet Tribal Council
- Bristol Bay Native Association
- Aleutian and Pribilof Islands Association
- Chugachmiut
- Tlingit and Haida Central Council
- Kodiak Area Native Association
- Copper River Native Association
- Metlakatla Indian Community of the Annette Islands Reserve

Background

From the outset, the State of Alaska has supported the establishment and development of Native TANF programs and has been committed to collaboration in the delivery of services to needy families applying for public assistance (TANF, Food Stamps, Adult Public Assistance and Medicaid). In October 1998, the Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) began the first Native Family Assistance Program in Alaska. At that time, the Division of Public Assistance (DPA) partnered with TCC and through a demonstration model was able to grant state funding to TCC to supplement their federal TANF block grant. TCC established a “significantly similar” program and used the same eligibility rules as the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP).

Building on TCC’s success, in 2000 the 21st Alaska Legislature passed a law allowing the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) to award Alaska Native Family Assistance grants on a temporary pilot program basis to four Alaska Native Organizations: Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (T&H), Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), and Metlakatla Indian Community. AVCP, TCC, and T&H chose to take advantage of the pilot program. Instead of requiring the Native Organizations to follow the same eligibility rules as ATAP, the legislation allowed state funding for Native Family Assistance Programs that were comparable to ATAP; the program rules no longer had to be the same as ATAP.

In 2005, the 24th Alaska Legislature further acknowledged the achievements of the pilot programs by passing a law that made the Native Family Assistance Program permanent. The law was also amended to expand the availability of Native Family Assistance grants to all of the 13 Native Organizations listed above that are authorized in the federal law to operate Native TANF programs.

Alaska’s Native Family Assistance Programs

As a result of this change in law in 2005, four more Native Organizations began operating Native Family Assistance Programs: Cook Inlet Tribal Council Incorporated, Bristol Bay Native Association, Kodiak Area Native Association, and Maniilaq Area Native Association.

There are currently seven Native Family Assistance Programs operating in Alaska. The seven existing Native Organizations and their beginning dates of operation are:

Tribal TANF Organizations in Alaska

	Beginning Date of Operation
• TCC (Tanana Chiefs Conference)	October 1998
• T&H (Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska)	July 2000
• AVCP (Association of Village Council Presidents)	October 2000
• CITCI (Cook Inlet Tribal Council)	July 2005
• BBNA (Bristol Bay Native Association)	October 2006
• KANA (Kodiak Area Native Association)	January 2009
• Maniilaq (Maniilaq Area Native Association)	July 2009

Alaska's Comparability Criteria

Tribal TANF is authorized by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, and reauthorized by the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. PRWORA includes a special rule for Alaska requiring Native Organizations to run programs comparable to the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), in consultation with the Native Organizations and the State of Alaska established five "comparability criteria." Alaska's comparability criteria are as follows:

1. Only families with at least one dependent child or a woman in the last trimester of pregnancy are eligible for assistance;
2. Benefit payments to eligible families may not exceed the amounts allowed under the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program;
3. To remain eligible for assistance, any minor parent of a dependent child must
 - Reside with a parent, legal guardian, or other adult relative, or in an adult-supervised supportive living arrangement,
 - Agree to have their cash benefit paid to their parent, legal guardian, or adult relative, or if applicable, to the adult head of an adult-supervised

supportive living arrangement, and

- Maintain attendance in a high school or other appropriate training program, unless the minor parent has a high school diploma or general equivalent diploma.

4. Families receiving assistance must participate in approved work activities within 24 months or sooner, unless the participant is exempt from work activity requirements.

5. Families receiving assistance must cooperate with the Native TANF program and the Alaska Child Support Services Division (CSSD) or their Native Organization (when the Native Organization operates a child support enforcement program) in their efforts to establish paternity and to establish, modify, or enforce a child support order for a dependent child in the assistance unit. A Native TANF program applicant may not begin to receive benefits until he or she has assigned all rights to child support to the Native Organization operating a TANF program for the period for which benefits are paid.

Funding

To receive federal funding to operate a Native TANF program in Alaska, and to receive a Native Family Assistance grant from DPA, Native Organizations must submit a federal TANF plan that complies with the comparability requirements described above.

The Native Organization and DPA begin their collaboration at this juncture. DPA provides staff resources and policy expertise to the Native Organization from the point of receiving their Letter of Intent, through ACF approval of their Native Family Assistance Program Plan, to program implementation and the first months of service delivery. This collaboration results in a Native Family Assistance Program that is geographically and culturally customized, while still meeting all comparability requirements.

In order for most Native Organizations to successfully operate state-comparable programs, they require both federal and state financial support. Native Organizations operating NFAPs receive their federal TANF block grant directly from ACF. The amount of the block grant is based on the total expenditures the state spent under the AFDC program in federal fiscal year 1994 to provide assistance and services to American Indian and Alaska Native families living in a Native Organization's service area.

DPA's state grant issued to Native Organizations operating Native Family Assistance Programs supplements their federal TANF block grant. The Native Organization may use their federal funding to provide a wide array of services to eligible families, as long as the services meet one of the primary purposes of TANF. Conversely, the Native

Organizations may only use their state grant for the purposes of paying cash assistance and supportive services to eligible families.

Service Population/Service Area

Native Organizations operating Native Family Assistance Programs in Alaska serves a specific population and operates within a specific region of the state. They must comply with the comparability requirement of providing TANF only to eligible families in which there is one caretaker relative and a minor child or a pregnant woman in her third trimester. However, with approval from ACF and the state, the Native Organization may elect to provide services to all eligible families within their service area, to only eligible Native families, or to other variances of a service population.

Shown below are the service populations and service areas for each Native Family Assistance Program. Service population terms are defined in varying definitions, as described in their specific TANF plan.

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) “Athabascan Self-Sufficiency Assistance Partnership Program” (ASAP)

<http://www.tananachiefs.org/index.asp>

Address: Tanana Chiefs Conference
122 First Avenue, Suite 600
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Contact Information:

Anita Taylor, (907) 452-8251
anita.taylor@tananachiefs.org

Service Population. TCC’s ASAP program serves eligible families in which the head of the household is an enrolled member of, or eligible for enrollment in, a federally recognized tribe. In two-parent families, one person must be designated as the head of the household. TCC will serve the family if the head of the two-parent household is enrolled or is eligible to be enrolled in a federally recognized tribe.

Service Area. The service area for TCC’s Native Family Assistance Program includes Fairbanks and surrounding communities within the Doyon Region of Interior Alaska. Communities in this service area include:

Alatna	Circle	Grayling	Nulato
Alcan	Circle Hot Springs	Healy	Rampart
Allakaket	Cold Foot	Healy Lake	Ruby
Anvik	Delta Junction	Holy Cross	Shageluk
Arctic Village	Dot Lake	Hughes	Stevens Village
Beaver	Dry Creek	Huslia	Takotna
Bettles	Eagle	Kaltag	Tanacross
Big Delta	Eagle Village	Koyukuk	Tanana
Birch Creek	Ester	Manley	Telida
Boundary	Evansville	McGrath	Tetlin
Central	Fairbanks	Minto	Tetlin Junction
Chalkyitsik	Fort Yukon	Nenana	Tok
Chena Hot Springs	Fox	Nikolai	Venetie
Chicken	Galena	Northway	Wiseman

Tlingit & Haida Central Council (T&H) Temporary Assistance for Native Families Program (TANF)

<http://www.ccthita.org/>

Address: Tlingit & Haida Central Council
9109 Mendenhall Mall Blvd., Suite 8
Juneau, AK 99801

Contact Information:
Alberta Aspen, (907) 463-7314
aaspen@ccthita.org

Service Population. The T&H TANF program serves eligible families in which the person that makes the application is the head of the household, and at the time of application is enrolled, or is eligible to be enrolled, in CCTHITA or a federally recognized tribe.

Eligibility does not exist if the individual that makes the application is not the head of the household and an enrolled tribal member. In a family where one parent is Native and one is Non-Native, the family will receive services from either DPA or T&H depending on which member was designated head of household and applied for services. Once the family selects their service provider, they remain with that service provider for the duration of their time on assistance.

Service Area. The T&H Native Family Assistance Program serves all communities within the Sealaska Region of Southeast Alaska, except Metlakatla. Communities within this service area include:

Angoon	Haines	Klawock	Sitka
Auke Bay	Hollis	Klukwan	Skagway
Coffman Cove	Hoonah	Pelican	Tenakee Springs
Craig	Hydaberg	Petersburg	Thorne Bay
Douglas	Juneau	Point Baker	Whale Pass
Edna Bay	Kake	Port Alexander	Wrangell
Elfin Cove	Kasaan	Port Protection	Yakutat
Gustavus	Ketchikan	Saxman	

Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) TANF Program

<http://www.avcp.org/>

Address: Association of Village Council Presidents
P.O. Box 219
Bethel, AK 99559



Contact Information:

Jolene Geerhart, (907) 543-7401

jgeerhart@avcp.org

Service Population. AVCP operates a TANF program providing temporary assistance and related services to all eligible families within its service area, including both Native and non-Native families.

Service Area. The service area for this program includes Bethel and surrounding communities within the Calista Region of Western Alaska. Communities in this service area include:

Akiachak	Emmonak	Marshall	Pitka's Point
Akiak	Georgetown	Mekoryuk	Platinum
Alakanak	Goodnews Bay	Mountain Village	Quinhagak
Andreafsky	Hamilton	Napakiak	Red Devil
Aniak	Hooper Bay	Napaimiut	Russian Mission
Atmautluak	Lower Kalskag	Napaskiak	Scammon Bay
Bethel	Upper Kalskag	Newtok	Sleetmute
Bill Moore's Slough	Kasigluk	Nightmute	Saint Mary's
Chefornak	Kipnuk	Nunam Iqua	Stony River
Chevak	Kongiganak	Nunapitchuk	Toksook Bay
Chaloonawick	Kotlik	Ohogamiut	Tuluksak
Crooked Creek	Kwethluk	Oscarville	Tuntutuliak
Chuathbaluk	Kwigillingok	Paimut	Tununak
Eek	Lime Village	Pilot Station	Umkumiut

Cook Inlet Tribal Council Inc. (CITCI) TANF Program

<http://www.citci.com/>

Address: Cook Inlet Tribal Council
3600 San Jeronimo Drive
Anchorage, AK 99508

Contact Information:
Holly Snowball, (907) 793-3323
hsnowball@CITCI.com



Service Population. The CITCI TANF program serves the following families:

- Child-only cases in which at least one child is an enrolled member in a federally recognized tribe;
- Two-parent families in which at least one parent is an enrolled member in a federally recognized tribe; and
- Single-caretaker families in which the caretaker is an enrolled member in a federally recognized tribe.

Service Area The service area for this program is the Municipality of Anchorage. The Municipality of Anchorage includes the following communities:

Anchorage
Chugiak

Eagle River
Girdwood

Indian
Peters Creek

Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA) Tribal TANF

<http://www.bbna.com/>

Address: Bristol Bay Native Association
P.O. Box 310
Dillingham, AK 99576

Contact Information:

Marlene Andrews, (907) 842-6293
mandrews@bbna.com

Service Population BBNA operates a TANF program providing temporary assistance and related services to all eligible families within the Bristol Bay service area, including both Native and Non-Native families.

Service Area The geographic boundary for the service area is contiguous with the Bristol Bay Region established by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. The villages of Bristol Bay include:

Aleknagik	Ekwok	Levelock	Pilot Point
Chignik Bay	Igiugig	Manokotak	Portage Creek
Chignik Lagoon	Iliamna	Naknek	Port Heiden
Chignik Lake	Ivanof Bay	Newhalen	South Naknek
Clarks Point	Kanatak	New Stuyahok	Togiak
Curyung	Kokhanok	Nondalton	Twin Hills
Egegik	Koliganek	Pedro Bay	Ugashik
Ekuk	King Salmon	Perryville	

Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) Tribal TANF

<http://www.kanaweb.org/>

Address: Kodiak Area Native Association
3449 Rezanof Drive
Kodiak, AK 99615

Contact Information:

Gwen Sargent, (907) 486-1361
gwen.sargent@kanaweb.org

Service Population Kodiak Area Native Association serves all eligible Native families within the Koniag region, in which the head of the household is an enrolled member of, or is eligible for enrollment in, a federally recognized tribe. In two-parent families, one person must be designated as the head of the household. KANA will serve the family if the head of the two-parent household is enrolled, or is eligible to be enrolled in a federally recognized tribe.

Service Area KANA serves all communities located in the Koniag region of the Kodiak Island Archipelago. Communities within the archipelago include:

Akhiok
Karluk

Kodiak
Larsen Bay

Old Harbor
Ouzinkie

Port Lions

Maniilaq Area Native Association (Maniilaq) Tribal TANF Assistance

<http://www.maniilaq.org/companyInfo.html>

Address: Maniilaq Area Native Association
P.O. Box 256
Kotzebue, Alaska 99752

Contact Information:

Michelle Dakai, (907) 442-7879
michelle.dakai@maniilaq.org

Service Population Maniilaq Association operates a TANF program providing temporary assistance and related services to all eligible families within the Maniilaq service area, including both Native and Non-Native families.

Service Area The Maniilaq service area is contiguous with the Northwest Arctic Borough. Communities include:

Ambler	Kiana	Kotzebue	Sealawik
Buckland	Kivalina	Noatak	Shungnak
Deering	Kobuk	Noorvik	

Information Exchange

The grant agreements between the State of Alaska DHSS and Native Organizations operating Native Family Assistance Programs (NFAPs) contain specific language regarding service coordination and exchange of information. A signed release of information form is not needed to share information with NFAP employees about mutual clients. CITCI uses DPA's Eligibility Information System (EIS) to determine eligibility and authorize cash assistance. AVCP, TCC, T&H, BBNA, KANA and Maniilaq have read-only access to EIS. Like DPA staff, NFAP staff must read DPA's Security Manual, complete security agreements, agree to safeguard client information, comply with State of Alaska laws and regulations governing the confidentiality and use and disclosure of public assistance records, and are subject to the penalties associated with misuse of information.

NFAPs negotiate and secure separate data exchange and memoranda of agreements with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Permanent Fund Dividend Division, and the Social Security Administration, permitting information exchange and use of interfaces.

Joint Case Processing

Special instructions for NFAP and DPA case processing procedures are located in the Administrative Procedures Manual section 116.

<http://dpaweb.hss.state.ak.us/manuals/admin/apm.htm> The section includes information on accepting and processing applications, change reporting, transferring cases, and other processes pertinent to the exchange of information and data between the NFAPs and DPA which affects other assistance programs such as Food Stamps and Medicaid.

The collaboration and coordination between DPA and the NFAPs is critical to providing assistance to all Alaskans in need. It is important to keep open lines of communication to maximize client service, administrative efficiency, and ensure timeliness and accuracy of eligibility and payment determinations.

Special Circumstances

A family who is eligible to be served by a Native Family Assistance Program may request to be served by ATAP, when the family demonstrates "special circumstances" exist. "Special circumstances" may exist when an individual chooses not to claim a tribal affiliation, and has not previously received tribal services. Please see TA MS 710-4 A. for more information on Special Circumstances, or e-mail the Policy & Program Development Team at DPAPOLICY@alaska.gov.

Note: The Alaska Native Family Assistance Programs have great flexibility under federal and state law to establish the eligibility requirements for their programs. These may differ from those provided under the State's Alaska Temporary Assistance

Program. The different eligibility rules do not constitute a "special circumstance" that would support the individual receiving benefits from the State's program, when they otherwise met the requirements to be served by the Native program.

Example: *A Native family is penalized under a Native Family Assistance Program because of non-compliance with their Family Self-Sufficiency Plan. The Native Family Assistance Program requires an adult family member to participate in parent-teacher conferences. The Alaska Temporary Assistance program has no similar provision. Although the family could receive a higher benefit payment if they were to be served by the State's program, they are still part of the Native Family Assistance Program's service population, and must be served by that program. The family's failure to comply with the FSSP requirement does not constitute a special circumstance.*

Effects of the Native Family Assistance Program on Other DPA Programs

In addition to DPA's Administrative Procedures Manual, the Alaska Temporary Assistance manual and Alaska Food Stamp program policy manuals include additional policies and processing instructions to guide application and case processing for families receiving assistance from a Native Family Assistance Program. For additional information please refer to:

ATAP Manual Sections

- 701-1B. Who The 60 Months Limits Apply To
- 701-1C. Months That Count Towards The 60-Month Time Limit
- 705 Application Process
- 705-2A. What Is An Acceptable Application Form?
- 705-2B. When Is An Application Required?
- 705-2G. Completing the Application Form
- 705-3C. Who Can Conduct The Interview?
- 705-3G. Do Disqualifications or Penalties Apply?
- 705-5B. Benefit Start Date
- 710-4 Native Family Assistance Programs and Eligibility for Alaska Temporary Assistance

Food Stamp Manual Sections

- 601 Application Process
- 601-2.A What is an Acceptable Application Form?
- 601-3.C Who Can Conduct the Interview?
- 601-5.B Benefit Start Date
- 602-1.G3 Special Provisions for Adults Subject to TANF Work Requirements

Submit any requests for policy clarifications to the DPA Policy and Program Development Team at: DPAPOLICY@alaska.gov.

