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DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

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*Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona*

**Arizona Department of Economic Security**

***Tribal Consultation Activity Report***

***July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023***

**AGENCY OVERVIEW**

**Purpose:**

The Arizona Department of Economic Security (ADES/Department) works to strengthen and build strong relationships with Arizona's 22 Sovereign Tribes. The Department is committed to working with American Indian Tribes to improve the quality, availability, and accessibility of human services provided to adults, youth, and children. The Department's Tribal Government Consultation Policy ensures that ADES engages in ***open, continuous, and meaningful communication and consultation*** with the 22 Arizona Tribal Nations. These exchanges consist of information-sharing, with a focus on mutual understanding, and an accountable process for meaningful and timely consultations on policies with tribal implications.

**ADES Office of Tribal Relations Team:**

To ensure that the Department thoroughly engages and is accessible to the 22 Arizona Tribes, the ADES Office of Tribal Relations (OTR) currently has a Tribal Relations Manager and five Tribal Liaisons, each covering specific ADES divisions, fostering increased transparency, promoting continued sharing of information and cultivating trust.

The Tribal Relations Manager is the point of contact with the Tribal Nations' Leaders and Executive Staff. The role of the Tribal Relations Manager is to ensure the Department is in good standing with its Tribal Government Consultation Policy, that the relationship and partnership with the 22 Sovereign Tribes are consistent and productive and to inform the Tribes of timely issues and concerns that may involve their members/programs. Creating effective and efficient program development goals and strategies through data and analysis is one of the position's primary responsibilities.

The role of a Divisional Tribal Liaison is to act as a conduit between the ADES division they support and each Sovereign Tribe's Social Services Department Program Leader and staff; providing guidance, support, and technical assistance to the Tribes on divisional services spanning more than 50 different ADES Programs. The Divisional Tribal Liaisons also assist in identifying potential issues or gaps in ADES policy, procedures, and processes and work with the Tribal Relations Manager and division leaders to develop process improvements. ADES's interaction with Tribal Nations is guided by these [five principles](#).

**HIGHLIGHTS**

During State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2023, the OTR Team remained connected to Tribal partners to provide support and technical assistance as they began opening up programs and services after COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. OTR ensured the continuation of the six Temporary Assistance

for Needy Families (TANF) Tribes' TANF Tribal quarterly meetings, improved the process for the Tribal Ombudsman to assist with inquiries and accessibility issues faced by rural and Tribal communities, published [quarterly newsletters](#) specifically targeting tribal families and programs to inform about new and/or updates on programs and services and continued to update the OTR website to include information about upcoming events and meetings to keep Tribal partners connected and informed. OTR also continued to engage with tribal program staff through regular Tribal Informational Forums (TIF) that were held virtually and had a breakout session format. Also, during SFY 2023, OTR added a new Division Tribal Liaison position supporting the Division of Child Care and the Arizona Early Intervention Program.

In addition, six TIFs were scheduled. Each TIF was held virtually to accommodate all tribes. A total of 471 participants attended the virtual TIFs, which included [divisional breakout sessions](#) to provide relevant updates and information. The TIFs were held on the following dates:

- July 20, 2022;
- September 28, 2022;
- November 30, 2022;
- February 22, 2023;
- April 26, 2023; and
- June 28, 2023.

To establish ongoing one-on-one conversations between ADES Leadership and Tribal Government Elected Leaders, the Tribal Relations Manager continues to schedule “Meet & Greets” and one-on-one meetings with Tribal Leaders/Council to discuss specific programmatic details. For example, the Division of Employment and Rehabilitation Services Workforce Team met with three tribal leaders in the month of June 2023 to discuss the Nineteen Tribal Nations Workforce Development Board (NTN WDB). The Workforce Team presented a one-hour session to explain past work, current state, and future opportunities on how ADES can support and partner with the 13 Tribes that make up NTN WDB.

## **CHALLENGES**

ADES has seven programmatic divisions with over 50 programs to administer for the state. It can be challenging to keep up with and address each of the 22 Tribes' needs and inquiries and maintain relationships to express their concerns, opinions, and ideas. It remains a top priority of ADES to consult with Tribal communities as programmatic changes are developed and implemented. To this end, ADES is organizing strategies to ensure strong, local partnerships are cultivated and expanded. By the end of SFY 2023, OTR established five full-time Division Tribal Liaisons to ensure that the information is provided to the tribes in a timely manner. In addition, the OTR is outlining a plan to complement programmatic-based liaisons with regional liaisons who will focus on establishing direct relationships with tribal leaders within their geographic regions. Historically, ADES has liaisons who represent and can speak to specific programs within the Department. The addition of regional support will strengthen our commitment to understanding and partnering directly with Tribal Governments in their varied Arizona communities.

ADES continues to work on identifying long-term facility or land lease opportunities, as the current facility conditions are not ideal. Earlier this year, the forced closure of the Window Rock office created a significant challenge. Extensive community outreach and Director communication and coordination with Tribal leaders yielded itinerant sites at Ft. Defiance and Ganado Chapter houses. Complementing these sites, ADES has co-located with New Mexico Human Services in

nearby Gallup, New Mexico. ADES is committed to serving our Tribal communities, while challenges with permanence persist.

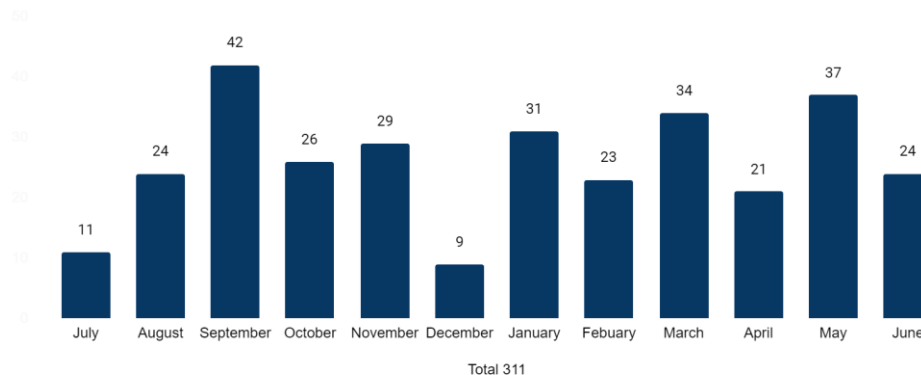
### **TRIBAL CONSULTATION POLICY REVISIONS**

Since the end of SFY 2022, ADES has opened the ADES Tribal Government Consultation Policy (DES 1-92-03) for review and comments by the tribes to help with drafting a policy that works well for all entities. Currently, there have been no significant changes or comments provided by the tribes to suggest specific changes to be made, however, ADES continues to offer tribes opportunities to revise and provide feedback as it is reviewed at every ADES Tribal Consultation gathering.

### **TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT**

A total of 311 meetings were held during SFY 2023 with Tribal programs and Tribal staff. The meetings with Tribes were either quarterly meetings held for the Tribal TANF Programs, ADES Division of Developmental Disabilities informational meetings, or individual meetings with Tribal staff on various divisional programs and service coordination. The DES Director met with the Navajo Nation Social Services Director and key leadership staff to discuss potential program collaboration and visited the Nation and met with key Tribal leaders.

**FY 23 Tribal Engagement**



### **TRIBAL CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES**

The ADES OTR originally scheduled two Tribal Government Consultations during Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, however only one was held due to rescheduling requests from the Tribes because of conflicting meetings that the tribes prioritized. The first was originally scheduled for June 2022, then it was rescheduled to November 16, 2022, and was eventually rescheduled for January 2023. Despite the challenges with conducting Tribal Government Consultations during the past fiscal year, ADES ensured constant communication and engagement. The date of the Tribal Government Consultation and the topics presented are listed below.

- January 12, 2023 - Tribal Consultation agenda consisted of a review and request for feedback on the ADES Tribal Government Consultation Policy, and each Division provided key topics for tribal leaders to consider.
- The next Tribal Consultation for the year 2023 is scheduled for November 1, 2023.

***AGENCY TRIBAL LIAISON - POINT OF CONTACT FOR TRIBAL AFFAIRS***

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