OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

OCSS Commissioner
Tanguler Gray

Tribal Point of Contact
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Tribal Website
www.acf.hhs.gov/css/child-support-professionals/tribal-agencies

TRIBAL CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Over 60 tribes and tribal organizations operate comprehensive child support programs. Tribal child support programs provide services to Native American families consistent with tribal values and culture. In FY 2022, tribal programs managed 53,000 cases and collected over $51 million for families.

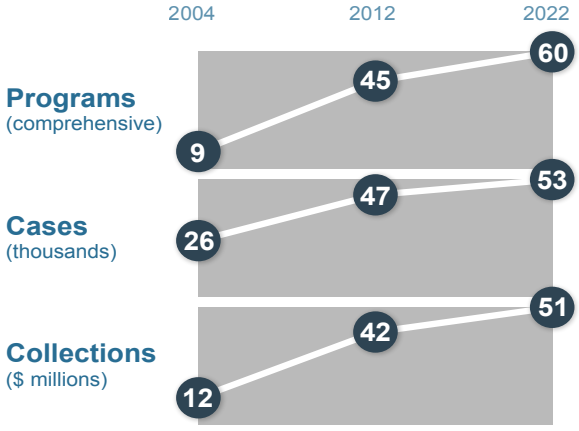
What a Tribal Child Support Program Does

- Locates parents
- Establishes paternity
- Establishes support obligations
- Monitors and enforces obligations
- Disburses and distributes collections

What OCSS Does

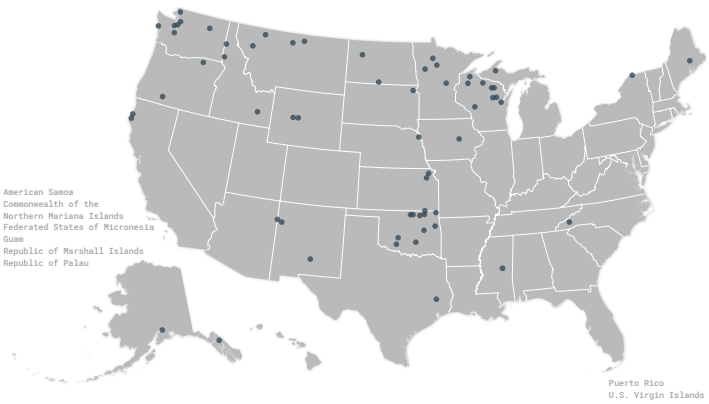
- Conducts site visits
- Hosts regional, state, and tribal meetings
- Reviews state and tribal plans and related legislation
- Shares best practices
- Provides training for specific program areas
- Helps resolve problems
- Promotes efficiency and effectiveness
- Ensures programs adopt and conform to federal laws, regulations, and policies

Tribal Program Growth



Tribal Program Locations

(as of January 2024)



Tribal Funding

Child Support Program Awards

Section 455(f) of the Social Security Act authorizes direct awards to federally recognized Indian tribes and tribal organizations to operate child support programs in accordance with 45 CFR, Parts 309 and 310. Tribes must submit the required information and documents to apply for start-up or comprehensive funding based on their ability to comply with program requirements.

Interested tribes or tribal organizations should start by applying for start-up funding. The tribal start-up program provides a two-year award, capped at $500,000, to support activities that demonstrate the tribe can meet regulatory requirements. During this time frame, tribes will create a program development plan, draft tribal code or law, develop policies and procedures, and other tasks necessary to apply to administer a comprehensive tribal child support program. More than 60 tribes receive funding annually to support their comprehensive tribal child support program.

Competitive Grants

Section 1115 Demonstration Grants – Section 1115(a) of the Social Security Act authorizes OCSS to fund demonstration grants. Tribes operating approved comprehensive child support programs are eligible to apply. Funding opportunities are announced via a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) which are usually issued once a year. Each NOFO provides information about the demonstration project for that year, including funding levels and project goals. Each funding topic is unique, and proposals are scored by subject-matter experts to see which best support requirements in the NOFO.

Since 2018, OCSS has awarded seven Section 1115 grants to tribal child support agencies for research and improvements to the child support program:

- OCSS made one award in 2022 to support domestic violence survivors who need child support services but were unable to access them due to safety concerns.
- Two awards went to tribes in 2021 to develop programs that educate teens and young adults about the financial, legal, and emotional responsibilities of parenthood. They are collaborating with schools and community-based organizations to integrate child support and responsible parenting education into a wide range of youth-centered systems.
- OCSS made two awards to tribes in 2019 to test how child support programs can improve intergovernmental case processing and collections from parents who live in different states, tribes, or counties.
- Two tribes received grant awards in 2018 to test two-way digital communication approaches to engage with parents.

Learn More about Tribal Child Support

Contact OCSS.Tribal@acf.hhs.gov for more information on applying for start-up funding and enhancing current programs through technical assistance.