A REPORTING SYSTEM FOR PUBLIC LAW 102-477, INDIAN EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND RELATED SERVICES DEMONSTRATION ACT

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

NARRATIVE REPORT

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR) Public Law 102-477 Employment and Training program (477 program), services Oregon’s Washington, Yamhill, Polk, Multnomah, Marion, and Tillamook counties. The majority of CTGR tribal members, who accessed services in the 2015 reporting period, were located in Polk and Yamhill counties; while the majority of Native Americans from other federally recognized tribes resided in the Multnomah County area. We are a confederation of tribes that are motivated to implement educational, economic develop, and training opportunities in an attempt to create individual self-sufficiency through employment; however, our various Tribal and geographical demographics created unique challenges for our consumer’s success.

Our staff consist of three full time caseworks, one supervisor whose wage was split 50% 477 and 50% Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR), one trainee caseworker whose fulltime wages were split 50% 477 and 50% TVR. One of the three caseworker’s caseload consists, primarily, of individuals who lived in the Portland Oregon metro area; specifically, Multnomah and Washington counties.

The most recent ACS data shows Native American unemployment rates, in our service counties/area, as follows: Marion County 18.8%, Multnomah County 19.1%, Polk County 19.8%, Tillamook County 1.1%, Washington County 10.2%, and Yamhill County 20.9%, while the BLS unemployment rates, by county, for the general population shows: Marion County 7.4%, Multnomah County 6.0%, Polk County 6.7%, Tillamook County 6.9%, Washington County 5.6%, and Yamhill County 6.4% (we are unable to explain the Tillamook Co. statistical anomaly).

The Tribal members that accessed the CTGR 477 program, in 2015, came from densely populated urban areas and our rural community. In both Polk and Yamhill counties, employment opportunities were limited and the majority of our tribal members worked for our gaming facility, our administrative offices, or one of the CTGR building projects in 2015. The CTGR
477 program worked in conjunction with other tribal departments, such as, the Tribal Employee Rights Office (TERO), Human Resources, and TVR in an attempt to increase employment outcomes while decreasing expenditures to the 477 program. During the 2015 reporting period, we were able to see an increase in employment through the construction trades as a direct result of coordinating services with our Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO).

We have had successes; however, there still seems to be internal capacity issues including limitation of resources. An increase of eligible applicants from other federally recognized tribes created an increased cost for 2015. The increased cost depleted our General Assistance budget within the eighth calendar month and it was necessary for our tribal government to privately fund the remaining months of 2015 essentially leaving Native Americans from other federally recognized tribes without GA services (unmet needs) for the last quarter of 2015. We saw other barriers that included a lack of diverse hands-on training opportunities, financial constraints inherent in pursuing education/training while raising a family, lack of adequate and culturally appropriate counseling opportunities, and social stigmas contributing to employment barriers. Some of the most common barriers to employment consisted of transportation issues, absenteeism, and lack of adequate training/education.

Our Employment and Training program is designed to meet, and/or remove barriers to employment for Native Americans. Our program assumes a holistic and aggressive approach that prepares job opportunities of our clients. The provision of a significant support systems over an uninterrupted period has demonstrated that obstacles can be overcome. We stress interview techniques and a strong work ethics; thus, allowing applicants to personally invest in their own individual future. We offered Native Wellness Training, mock-interviews, resume building, open house outreach, and many employment specific trainings throughout the year. In an effort to address systemic employment barriers, in our rural community, the 477 Program has made a conscious effort to increase economic develop.

In 2015 we were able to work in conjunction with multiple programs to support a tribal member in opening his own auto repair business. The 477 case worker worked on a team with Children and Family Services, Polk Co. Probation, TVR, Post Treatment, Wellness, and Polk Co. Mental Health to develop a successful plan where the Tribal Member was able to successfully open an auto repair business. This Tribal member is now contracting work from various Tribal entities and is offering a needed service to our rural community that, until now, had no auto repair shop.
We saw the 477 program assist individuals in a variety of ways. As with many Native communities, alcohol and drugs play a major role in unemployment. The 477 program assisted an individual in formulating an Employability Development Plan that focused on wellness and job search opportunities. The client had experienced repeated setbacks due to alcohol and drug issues. The plan encompassed interaction with Behavioral Health in conjunction with job readiness and seeking employment. Using a holistic approach, a plan was adapted to address individualized needs. Through implementing accountability techniques, the 477 program was able to minimize the individual’s risk of continued use and closely monitor measured success. The 477 program had in place degrees of accountability that, when used properly, motivated the individual to engage in treatment. The individual was able to secure unsubsidized employment and the individual’s plan shifted to adapt to specific needs. The consumer is today successful as a result of hard work, maintained focus on health, job search, job retention, and a holistic employment plan approach.

In conclusion, 2015 has had successes while internal capacity issues seem to be an ongoing issue. An influx of eligible applicants from other federally recognized tribes had created an increased cost for 2015 and essentially left Native Americans from other federally recognized tribes without GA services for the last quarter of 2015. We have made a concerted effort to work in conjunction with other tribal departments, such as, TERO, HR, and TVR in an attempt to increase employment outcomes while decreasing the expenditures to the 477 program. Our commitment to increasing economic development and securing unsubsidized employment outcomes for Native Americans and Alaska Natives is our continued focus for 2015 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Michael Herrin
477 Supervisor