1.1 Purpose. This chapter establishes Indian Affairs' (IA) policy and procedures for submission of the Financial Assistance and Social Services Report (FASSR), the Request for Additional Funds (RAF), and the required accompanying documentation.

The FASSR is the only report that is required to submit for the welfare assistance program. The FASSR is utilized to determine the amount of welfare assistance funding to be distributed to Tribes and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) agencies each Fiscal Year (FY) and Calendar Year (CY). Additionally, the FASSR is used to prepare and submit a RAF.

1.2 Scope. This policy applies to BIA agencies that provide direct services for welfare assistance components under 25 CFR Part 20. It also includes BIA and IA Office of Self Governance (OSG) officials responsible for processing funding requests from: (1) Tribes receiving welfare assistance funding through an Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA) (Pub. L. 93-638) contract or a self-governance annual or multi-year funding agreement; (2) Tribes that operate a General Assistance program under an approved Indian Employment, Training, and Related Services Demonstration Act of 1992 (P.L. 102-477) Plan; and (3) Tribes that operate a General Assistance program under an approved Tribal Redesign Plan in accordance with U.S.C. 13(d) and 25 CFR Parts 20.202 to 20.210.

The term "Tribes" is inclusive of Tribes within Tribal consortia.

1.3 Policy. IA's policy mandates the distribution of welfare assistance funds to Tribes and BIA agencies in accordance with the approved IA methodology. This methodology is designed to ensure fair and equitable treatment of potential recipients of welfare assistance funds. Additionally, the policy addresses funding shortfalls and avoids the shutdown of any welfare assistance programs. IA is not authorized to reallocate welfare assistance funds to other tribally contracted, compacted, or Bureau-administered programs when short fall occurs.

Distributions to Tribes are made in accordance with each Tribe's self-determination contract or self-governance funding agreement.

1.4 Authority.

A. Statutes and Regulations.

1) P.L. 93-638, Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA) of 1975, as amended

2) P.L. 102-477, Indian Employment, Training and Related Services Demonstration Act of 1992, as amended

3) 25 CFR Part 20, Financial Assistance and Social Services Programs

4) 25 U.S.C. § 13d, Limits on use of appropriated funds by Bureau for general or other welfare assistance

5) 25 U.S.C. § 13d-1, Standards of need as basis for general assistance payments by Bureau of Indian Affairs; ratable reductions

6) 25 U.S.C. § 13d-2, Enrollment and general assistance payments

7) 25 U.S.C. § 13d-3, Tribal authority to change eligibility for, or amount of, general assistance payments

1.5 Responsibilities.

A. **Deputy Bureau Director, Office of Indian Services (OIS), BIA** provides direction and support for the execution and coordination of IA's welfare assistance program.

B. **Chief, Division of Human Services (DHS), OIS** provides monitoring, guidance, technical support, and training, including developing processes and procedures for implementing the welfare assistance program in accordance with governing statutes and regulations. Additionally, the Chief is responsible for managing and supporting direct funding and activities related to social services, welfare assistance, and Indian child welfare, with the goal of promoting the safety, financial security, and social well-being of Indian communities and individual Indian people.

C. **Director, Office of Self Governance (OSG), IA** is responsible for implementing Title IV of the ISDEAA (P.L. 93-638), as amended, in relation to welfare assistance funding. The Director is responsible for:

1. Distributing the end-of-year FASSR form annually to self-governance Tribes.
2. Providing technical assistance to Tribes for accurate completion of the FASSR form, including guidance on its use for submitting a RAF and the development of necessary documentation, reports, and information.
3. Collecting and analyzing reports from Tribes to verify their accuracy and completeness.
4. Completing the FASSR checklist to certify Tribal data and submitting the FASSRs to the DHS, OIS.
5. The OSG Director must sign all final certified FASSRs.

6. Submitting the memorandum(s) and supporting documents, to the DHS, OIS, for all self-governance Tribes that request additional welfare assistance funding.
7. Awarding welfare assistance funds according to the established methodology and each Tribe's ISDEAA self-governance annual funding agreement.

D. **Chief, Division of Workforce Development (DWD), OIS** is responsible for implementing P.L. 102-477 Agreements (also known as "477 Agreements"), which may include welfare assistance funding. The Chief is responsible for:

1. Distributing the end-of-year FASSR form annually to Tribes with an approved P.L. 102-477 Plan that receive funding through an ISDEAA Title I contract.
2. Providing technical assistance to Tribes for accurate completion of the FASSR form, including guidance on its use for submitting a RAF and the development of necessary documentation, reports, and information.
3. Collecting and analyzing reports from Tribes to verify the accuracy and completeness of all submissions.
4. Completing the FASSR checklist to certify Tribal data and submitting the FASSRs to the DHS, OIS.
5. The DWD Chief must sign all final certified FASSRs.
6. Submitting the memorandum(s) and supporting documents, to the DHS, OIS, for all self-governance Tribes that request additional welfare assistance funding.
7. Awarding welfare assistance funds in accordance with the established methodology and each Tribe's ISDEAA Title I Contract.

E. **Regional Directors (RDs)** are responsible for overseeing the BIA Human Services program through the established organizational structure to ensure that support and technical assistance are provided to Tribal governments.

F. **Regional Social Workers (RSWs)** are responsible for oversight of Tribal/agency programs within their region, including:

1. Distributing the end-of-year FASSR form annually to Tribes and BIA agencies within the region.
2. Providing technical assistance to Tribes and BIA agencies for accurate completion of the FASSR form, including guidance on its use for submitting a RAF and the development of necessary documentation, reports, and information.
3. Collecting and analyzing reports from Tribes and BIA agencies and verifying accuracy and completeness of all reports.

4. Completing the FASSR checklist to certify Tribal data and submitting the FASSRs to the DHS, OIS.
5. The RSW must sign all final certified FASSRs.
6. Submitting the memorandum(s) and supporting documents to the DHS, OIS, for all Tribes that request additional welfare assistance funding.
7. Awarding welfare assistance funds in accordance with the methodology and each Tribe's ISDEAA Title I Contract.

G. **BIA Agency Human Services Staff** are responsible for:

1. Submitting the FASSRs to their respective Human Services Regional Office.
2. The Superintendent must sign all final certified FASSRs.

1.6 Standards, Requirements, and Procedures.

This section outlines the FASSR requirements, welfare assistance categories, distribution methodology, and RAF process.

A. FASSR Requirements.

1) The FASSR must include a data and a narrative section. The data section includes allocations, expenditures, and carryover amounts/shortfall information. The narrative section provides the "story" to explain the data and is an opportunity to inform policy makers of any unique program circumstances. Both sections of the FASSR must be completed. FASSRs that do not include both a data and a narrative section are incomplete and will not be certified.

2) To be certified, a FASSR form must:

   a) Be submitted in the specified Microsoft Excel format; handwritten reports and Adobe PDF submission will not be accepted. A complete FASSR must include both a data and a narrative section.

   b) Accurately report allocations, expenditures, and carryover amounts. Each Tribe/agency must specify carryover funds in the cell under the "End-of-Year Status" column (above Column Q next to "carryover amount"), which will automatically populate in the narrative section of the FASSR, (question 7).

   c) Be electronically signed by the Tribe/agency representative and by the respective offices: regional social worker (for BIA and ISDEAA Title I contract Tribes); DWD; or OSG; confirming that the information in the report is complete and accurate. To "sign electronically" means that the name and title of the Tribe/agency representative *and* the regional social worker (for

BIA and ISDEAA Title I contract Tribes), DWD, or OSG must be typed into the Excel form prior to its submission to the DHS. Unsigned FASSRs will not be certified, and respective offices should provide technical assistance to the Tribe in obtaining signatures.

3) All FASSRs must be submitted by the regional office, DWD, or OSG with an accompanying FASSR checklist for certification, which must be completed by the respective office. The FASSR checklist is a guidance tool to assist offices in analyzing the FASSR and that all components have been certified.

4) Due Dates for FASSR Submission.

The FASSRs must be submitted by the respective due dates provided below. The forms are due by 5:00 pm EST. If received after 5:00 pm EST, the forms will not be accepted or approved.

If any of the due dates below fall on a Saturday or Sunday, the FASSR is due the next working business day (Monday).

For Tribes and BIA Agencies to their respective offices:	**Due Dates**
FY Tribes/BIA agencies	October 31
CY Tribes	January 31

For BIA regional offices, DWD, or OSG to submit the FASSR to OIS, DHS:	**Due Dates**
FY Tribes	November 30
CY Tribes	March 2

B. Welfare Assistance Categories.

Welfare assistance is provided only when no comparable financial assistance or social services are available from state, Tribal, county, local, or other Federal agencies.

IA welfare assistance categories are funded each year at rates established by the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (AS-IA) or by the state. The current rates are provided below and are subject to change:

- Child Assistance (state rate, including adoptions and guardianships)
- General Assistance (state Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) rate)
- Adult Care Assistance (state rate)

- Burial Assistance rate (a maximum of $3,500 per burial)
- Emergency Assistance (a maximum of $1,500 per household)
- Disaster Assistance and the Tribal Work Experience Program remain unfunded and welfare assistance funds cannot be used for these purposes.

C. Distribution Methodology.

IA uses the end-of-year FASSR to determine the amount of welfare assistance funding to distribute to Tribes and BIA agencies each new FY/CY. The determination procedures are as follows:

1) Initial Distribution of Welfare Assistance Funds – Estimated Need

On October 1, IA uses actual expenditures reported in the end-of-year FASSR for the last complete year (which would be two years before the current year) or the prior year RAF FASSR, if it was approved, adjusted for carryover to calculate the estimated need for each Tribe and BIA agency. Estimated need is defined as actual prior year expenditures reported on the FASSR, subject to carryover adjustments and fixed amounts for Tribal Redesign Plans for General Assistance consistent with 25 CFR Parts 20.202 to 20.210.

In a FY when Congress enacts a **full year appropriation** by October 1, the initial distribution of welfare assistance funds meets 75 percent of a Tribe or BIA agency's estimated need for that year. For example, if a Tribe's estimated need was calculated at $100,000, the Tribe would receive $75,000 in the initial distribution.

In a FY in which Congress enacts a **continuing resolution(s)**, DHS distributes welfare assistance funds by prorating the funding based on the calculated 75 percent of a Tribe or BIA agency's estimated need. The BIA regional offices, DWD, and OSG are responsible for allocating funds directly to each BIA agency and each Tribe based on the Tribe's self-determination contract or self-governance funding agreement.

2) Final Distribution of Welfare Assistance Funds – Actual Need

The final distribution of welfare assistance funds is based on expenditures reported in the FASSR from the previous year. The methodology for the final distribution will use reported ***actual expenditures*** to adjust the estimated need. The BIA defines the actual need as actual prior year expenditures reported on the FASSR, subject to shortfall *and* carryover adjustments, and to fixed amounts for Tribal Redesign Plans for General Assistance consistent with 25 CFR Parts 20.202 to 20.210.

All Tribes and BIA agencies must submit the completed end-of-previous year FASSR according to the due dates to the appropriate office, either the BIA regional office, DWD, or OSG to receive a final distribution of current FY welfare assistance funds.

OIS, DHS makes the final distribution of current FY welfare assistance funds to the BIA regional offices, DWD, and OSG no later than June 15, subject to the availability of appropriations. If June 15 falls on a Saturday or Sunday, then the final distribution will be made no later than the following Monday.

3) Statutory Cap

If the annual appropriations act caps the amount of welfare assistance funding that can be distributed and the national welfare assistance need, as determined by expenditures reported on the end-of-previous year FASSRs, is greater than the capped welfare assistance amount, then welfare assistance funds will be disbursed pro rata based on the final calculated actual need for all Tribes and BIA agencies operating welfare assistance programs. A pro rata distribution ensures that the total distribution does not exceed the funding amount enacted by Congress.

For example, if the appropriation enacted by Congress is $74.7 million and the calculated actual need for all Tribal and BIA agencies operating welfare assistance for that FY is $93.0 million, a pro rata distribution will be made to ensure that the total distribution of funds remains within the funding level of $74.7 million enacted by Congress. This would result in a pro rata distribution in which each Tribe and BIA agency receives a percentage of its calculated actual need.

D. RAF Process.

The use of a RAF is encouraged when a program anticipates a potential shortfall in welfare assistance funds for the current operating year. The RAF documents how a program’s projected expenditures and financial need for the FY/CY exceeds its prior year expenditures.

If a Tribe or BIA agency projects a potential shortfall in welfare assistance funds for the current year, it is imperative that coordination occurs with the appropriate BIA regional office, DWD, or OSG, (herein referred to as the “respective program office”) to submit a RAF package. The RAF package must demonstrate how the level of expenditures for the current funding year is expected to be greater than the program’s reported expenditures in the previous operating year.

For instance, if a Tribe operates on a FY and is experiencing a shortfall, the Tribe must submit both: 1) a FASSR for the current year that outlines the actual and projected expenditures, and 2) the RAF form. The FASSR must clearly show the projected expenditure for the current year in comparison to the reported expenditures documented in the previous year FASSR.

Additionally, the RAF must describe what would happen if the Tribe or BIA agency were to experience a shortfall in funding. Tribes and BIA agencies operating on either a FY or CY basis must submit supporting documentation (i.e., financial reports or other budgetary documents) that substantiate *actual* expenditures to support the RAF. Tribes are encouraged to explain how a shortfall in funding impacts their programs and community.

1) Preparing a RAF Package

   Each program must coordinate with its respective program office, to submit the RAF. Although the submission of the RAF is optional, it is important to note that <u>the FASSR is required for a program to receive welfare assistance funding</u>.

   Before submitting an RAF, the program should compare its actual expenditures from the previous year certified FASSR (column P) with its projected expenditures on the current year FASSR (column P). The RAF must include a minimum of four months of supporting documentation of actual expenditures.

   For FY programs, actual expenditures will be assessed from October to April. The projected expenditures will cover quarters 3 and 4. For CY programs, the actual expenditures from January to April will be evaluated, and the projected expenses will be for quarters 2, 3, and 4.

   Programs are required to fill out the RAF form and must attach their current year RAF FASSR. The respective program will analyze the data to illustrate the potential impact on the program should additional welfare assistance funding not be allocated. The RAF narrative must provide comprehensive details justifying the request for additional funding. Although the RAF form and RAF FASSR are required, programs are encouraged to submit any additional supporting documentation to support the request.

   RAF submission does not guarantee an increase in funding. If the RAF is approved, the program's need is adjusted to the higher level requested, however it will be subject to pro rata distribution (if applicable).

A completed RAF package includes:

- A memorandum from the BIA Regional Director, OSG Director, or DWD Chief must accompany the RAF package to document review and approval;
- Request for Additional Funds (RAF) Form; and
- A current year projected FASSR with a full year of projected expenditures, demonstrating a shortfall in funding.

2) Submitting a RAF Package

All program RAF submissions must be submitted to their respective offices by 5:00 pm EST on May 8, to ensure consideration. The respective offices will evaluate and recommend approval for the program's RAF package.

3) Due Dates for RAF Package Submission

The respective offices will submit a memorandum and RAF documentation to OIS, DHS at DHS_FASSR@bia.gov, no later than 5:00 pm EST on May 22. RAFs received after 5:00pm EST will not be accepted or approved.

For Tribes and BIA Agencies to their respective offices:	**Due Date**
FY/CY Tribes/BIA agencies	May 8

Submit RAF package to OIS, DHS:	**Due Date**
BIA regional office, DWD, or OSG	May 22

E. Limitations.

1) Financial Assistance and Social Services Programs are subject to annual Congressional appropriations.

2) Distribution of welfare assistance funds will *only* be made based on the approved methodology.

3) A Tribe's RAF represents a request for increased welfare assistance funding under 25 U.S.C. 5325(b). By statute, such increases are at the discretion of the IA and are subject to the availability of appropriations.

4) Each FY since 2009, Congress has placed a statutory cap on the amount of welfare assistance funding the BIA can distribute to Tribes for welfare assistance payments.

However, the appropriations language has historically provided that, "*federally recognized Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations of federally recognized Indian Tribes may use their Tribal Priority Allocations (TPA) funds for unmet welfare assistance costs.*"

1.7 Forms.

The FASSR and RAF Forms are located on the BIA Online Forms website: https://www.bia.gov/policy-forms/online-forms (click on the tab labeled "Indian Affairs Specific Forms and Guidance").

Approval

Digitally signed by BRYAN MERCIER
Date: 2026.08.03 16:13:10 -04'00'

08/03/2026

Bryan K. Mercier Date
Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs