



Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children

Navajo Regional Hearing

Cross Systems Models, Innovations and Best Practices

DEPARTMENT FOR SELF RELIANCE

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The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) stated that, “the best welfare solutions come from those closest to the problems, not the federal government” and gave tribes the flexibility to design their own TANF programs.

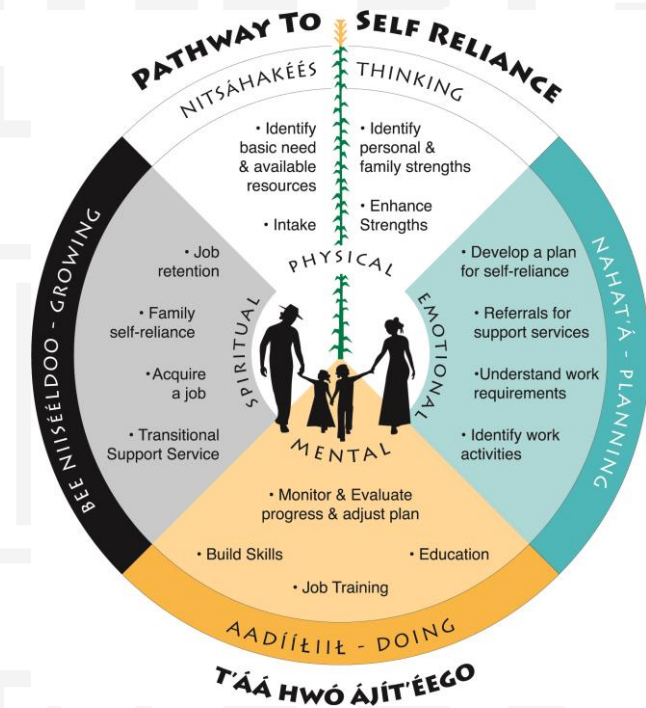
- The Department for Self Reliance (DSR), the Navajo Nation’s TANF program was established in 2000 and provides assistance and services to 2,600 families including 6,838 children each month through seven field offices located on and near the Navajo Nation.
- In 2007, the DSR selected the Tribal Assistance System (TAS) Case Management Software owned by the Eaglesun Company. The TAS software has 37 modules that can be tailored to meet the needs of federal funded programs. In 2009, DSR began using TAS for its case management services.
- The benefits of using TAS:
 - DSR has improved its case management services to families and children.
 - DSR provides services to children through the School Clothing & Supply Incentives; Subsidized Youth Employment; Perfect Attendance, Honor Roll, Academic Improvement, and Graduation Incentives.
 - DSR provides accurate data reports for submittal to the Navajo Nation, State, and Federal partners as needed, including Navajo Head Start, First Things First, Office of Diné Youth, and Navajo Workforce Development.
 - DSR submits the mandatory 196-T and Federal Data Reports each quarter timely.
 - DSR direct services enters all eligibility and case management decisions locally, and a batch is uploaded every two weeks for monthly assistance to families.
 - DSR has had a clean Single Audit for the past 10 years.



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What works

- The DSR uses the flexibility to meet the needs of families and children:
 - The DSR incorporates Navajo traditional values and teachings into the program using the traditional concept of T'áá hwó ájit' éego, which is a powerful Navajo teaching that promotes living with a purpose, making conscious decisions, exercising personal discipline, and taking responsibility for one's life.
 - The DSR integrated the Navajo Service Delivery Model (Thinking, Planning, Doing and Growing), called the Pathway to Self Reliance, into the western case management process.
 - The DSR offers parenting support that includes Fatherhood is Sacred/Motherhood is Sacred Curriculum; Family and Child Education Program; Head Start Parent Classes; Financial Literacy; TABE testing; and other resources.
 - DSR provides Youth Support/Resources such as referrals to summer programs, STEM/AISES camps, Upward bound, and offers Subsidized Youth Employment.
 - DSR established the Pathway to Quality Service for DSR staff training, development, and retention.
 - DSR established the Education and Career Services to provide Extended Certificate Training programs and Subsidized Adult Employment.



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What doesn't work

- DSR is the only department within the Navajo Division of Social Services (NDSS) using TAS which limits cross coordination, collaboration, and communication between NDSS programs.
- DSR makes referrals for parents and children to other NN programs, but no response is provided on the status of the assistance and services provided.
- Lack of data sharing and coordination with other state, tribal, and federal programs to assist eligible families.
- Different case management software that don't communicate and hinder sharing data and eligibility on DSR applicants across the Nation.
- Other federal programs lack the flexibility that is provided to state and Tribal TANF programs.
- The Navajo Nation does not have readily available the expertise of trained and qualified IT professional staff to help programs to improve and maintain their overall IT infrastructure.
- Lack of coordination and collaboration between programs to support families and children with appropriate services.



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Recommendations

- Provide additional funding for programs to use a case management software program that can be tailored to automate the case management services to improve the application process and the provision of quality case management services and timely benefits to families and children.
- A case management software that is used by multiple federal funded programs to improve coordination and case management services to families and children.
- Offer flexibility, similar to TANF, for other federal funded programs to keep funds until expended (e.g. CCDF, Navajo Head Start)
- More federal funding for technology infrastructure that includes expansion of internet services.
- Authorization for TANF funds to be used for the construction of permanent TANF office(s) due to the lack of facilities on the Navajo Nation.



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