

Fort Belknap Indian Community



Fort Belknap Agency
656 Agency Main Street
Harlem, Montana 59526-9455
PH: (406) 353-2205
FAX: Council - (406) 353-4541
FAX: Departments - (406) 353-2797

Fort Belknap Indian Community
(Tribal Govt.)
Fort Belknap Indian Community
(Elected to administer the affairs of the community and
to represent the Assiniboine and the Gros Ventre
Tribes of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation)

TESTIMONY OF THE FORT BELKNAP INDIAN COMMUNITY 'Indians and Tribal Services

Testimony to the State of Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

Good morning. My name is Loren 'Bum' Stiffarm. I serve as the chief administrative officer for the Fort Belknap Indian Community Council on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. My responsibilities are to provide administrative oversight to all of the federal, state, and local tribal programs funded by various agencies.

The Fort Belknap Indian Community strongly supports the collaborative efforts demonstrate by Montana state agencies in providing supplemental or primary funding for many of our programs that serve the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine tribal members. We receive over \$2 million dollars in funding for various types of programs that benefit our membership.

We currently have programs ranging from Low Income Energy Assistance Program, TANF, Supplemental Nutrition, Summer Foods Program, Commodity Program, Head Start Food Program, Women & Infant Care, and especially the Foster Care, and reimbursements for the Medicaid Program.

These programs provide a wide variety of services to over 2,200 people on our reservation. These numbers are probably duplicated as some of our clients participate in more than one program.

One of the more challenging and discouraging aspects of funding available to tribes or for tribes is the amount of contract funds for Workforce Development. We have experienced a situation where the DPHHS awarded funds for workforce development and employability to a non-Indian organization and services were never provided to Indian tribes under three separate contracts. I wrote testimony to HB 110 to hopefully prevent this from happening in the future.

All told the funding amount was **\$963,193** to provide 'Tribally Designated Workforce Training' was paid to Rural Dynamics, Inc., Great Falls, MT. This was paid in January 2011, July 2011 and finally the last contract in July 2012. In addition Rural Dynamics was given an additional \$600,000 to provide financial literacy with FES funding. These funds were provided directly to Rural Dynamics without a Request for Fund Proposals announcement.

I used to be a member of the State Tribal Economic Development Commission under the Department of Commerce and had the great opportunity to see first hand the successes on Indian reservations utilizing funding from this department. Many of our community residents used this departments funding to enhance their individual businesses while the tribe utilized these funds to improve businesses on the reservation.

Tribal Consultations are now the law of the land and should be fully enforced by laws enacted by this body. Agencies must come to the reservations and positive and open dialogue should be made with the highest quality of services provided to us and agreed to by both parties.

Unfortunately, Indian Tribes have high unemployment rates but we are creating new and innovative ways to address this problem. And, with a collaborative approach between Tribes and State agencies this situation can be addressed and resolved.

Indian Tribes are tired of being used to obtain funds from state and federal governments. Our tribal enrollment numbers are used as well as other statistics and then no services are provided to us.

However, there are other departments within the DPHHS and other agencies that lend us assistance in providing for our tribal membership. As an example, during the Flood of 2011 the Disaster Emergency Services division provided the funding to meet many of our emergency needs at that particular time.

Please continue funding not only from the Department of Public Health and Human Services but from all other state agencies. It is our opportunity to success. Thank you for your time. I know you will make the right decision for the future of all people living in Montana.

State of Montana
Funding to the Fort Belknap Indian Community
from
State Agencies for FY 2012

Program	Clients	Amount
Low Income Energy Assistance Program	150	\$107,799
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)	250 families	256,156
Tobacco Prevention	50	93,564
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	221	95,379
Foster Care	45	304,450
Medicaid	110/monthly	400,000
HIV: AIDS Activity	50	13,581
Early Childhood	140	7,074
Personal Assistance	31	300,000
Public Health Education	250	28,235
Summer Foods Program	450/daily	80,869
Commodity Program	251	262,423
Head Start Food Program	140	70,000
Women & Infant Care	285/monthly	45,131
Total		2,064,661