January 8, 2020

Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board Quarterly Meeting

Tulalip, Washington

Elder Committee: E. Arlen Washines, Deputy Director, Yakama Nation Department of Human Services.

1. **The Confederated Tribes and bands of the Yakama Nation is a Sovereign Government under the Treaty of 1855 with the United States with an Area Agency on Aging (AAoA). The AAoA provides tribal elders 55 years old + and older adult none members 60 years old + with services within their Planning and Service Area (PSA). The Yakama Nation has had its contracts in place for over 40 years. The Yakama AAoA works with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Aging and Long Term Support Administration (ALTSA), Home and Community Services Division (HCS), State Unit on Aging (SUA) and Area Agency on Aging Specialist in developing short and long term plans for overall services and activities. The purpose for services from DSHS are to support continued partnerships by providing information to staff and assistance in establishing productive action plans to move the program forward in sustainable service provisions.**
2. **The Yakama Nation AAoA is a unique partnership in that the program is supported by a variety of funding sources including the Yakama Nation General Fund which covers the administration and used as a tribal matching fund as well. While these funds are derived from tribal resources, mainly gaming, they serve all elders, enrolled and none enrolled. In addition, the people of the General Council passed an action to set aside a special fund just for Yakama elders and youth referred to as the 187 fund. This fund provides many of the AAoA sponsored activities throughout the year including trips to visit other tribal homelands for Elders Dinners; Traditional root and Huckleberry picking; movies; attendance at the Central Washington State fair; vegetable/food vouchers; arts and craft classes; cooking and canning classes and exercise classes including massages.**
3. **The overall policy oversight is the Golden Eagles Advisory Board, (G.E.A.B.). The board which is a requirement of the DSHS funding oversees the AAoA programs annual operations. Sets plans for the Elders throughout the year. Attends to all inquiries made from the elders in the community and represents the Elders in meeting with tribal, state and federal leaders and/or staff. The G.E.A.B. conducts an annual retreat to review and plan for the operations and strategic planning. The board also focuses attention to developing and having insight into formulation of the annual budget process for the contracts as well as tribal budgeting. The board is made up of Elders from the community at large and consists of both tribal and none tribal members. The board is well represented from all aspect of the working and none working communities. Nominations are publically announced and open to any elder who meets the age criteria.**
4. **Elder protective services like many other communities is a major concern for the Yakama Nation. Elder abuse takes place in many forms including physical, mental, emotional, and to some extent spiritual!! The Yakama Nation is working to address these concerns that have been going on since our people have become more reliant on governmental subsidies, tribal/state and federal!! Elders we find are reluctant to report incidents from family members. Some do not realize they are the victims until it is too late. Due to reluctance, embarrassment or fear or all of the above many refuse to report any incidents of abuse. None working/educated youth and adult children continue to take advantage of elders, live in their homes free of rent or monthly expenses including food. It is an epidemic we have referred to in the past as keeping the family unit or circle in place! Although it was a traditional practice and looked upon as a respectful way to live and care of one another, circumstance have changed due to Western Modern Civilization way of life. The issue of mainstreaming into society is taking a toll on our elders. The Yakama Nation sees this as a serious problem that needs to be addressed only if we can get our elders to be a part of the solution! We continue to collaborate with the DSHS to find viable solutions to honor and respect or precious elders. The Yakama Nation within our own Department of Human and Justice Services continues to work on finding solutions to address this utilizing traditional and cultural methods and awareness. As well as through the Tribal Judicial system.**
5. **The Yakama AAoA has two daily meal sites in Toppenish and Wapato, Washington. Forty Five (45) meals are delivered daily to elders within the Yakama Reservation Boundary. Although the Yakama AAoA is a designated program with the state and only serves elders within the reservation boundary, we are responsible for Yakama Tribal Elders on 10.4 million acres of ceded lands in Central Washington which includes the Columbia River. The satellite office located just outside the reservation boundary serves meals four (4) time per week, transports elders to clinic appointments; and participates in the Toppenish AAoA activities.**
6. **ACTION PLAN: The development of an Action Plan provides ideas, suggestion and plans of action by contract or other means to support AAoA in charting a course forward. The goal is for the Agency to promote positive and sustainable growth. The intent of providing this feedback is to offer support the Tribal Council and the Health, Employment, Welfare & Youth Activities Committee, AAoA Staff, Golden Eagles Advisory Board Members and Tribal Administration. The Yakama Nation AAoA will focus on staff development to work to improve meeting contract requirements to best serve Yakama Nation Elders and others residing on Tribal Lands with culturally appropriate services and support.**

**With over 1,200 Senior Citizen eligible tribal members, the Action Plan recognizes the need to solicit and recruit Elders as volunteers following the Yakama Traditional way of Honor, Recognition, Respect and Pride. The Yakama Nation is striving to rebuild the customs of honoring our sacred elders well into their years. And to use that as a means of providing traditional education to our youth and those yet unborn.**