

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services 600 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck ND 58505

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Human Services and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Sign Agreement to Cooperate on Providing Child Support Services

BISMARCK, N.D. – North Dakota and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe have signed an agreement to cooperate and share resources and expertise to ensure that children and parents receive necessary child support services. Dave Archambault II, Standing Rock Chairman, and Maggie Anderson, Executive Director of the North Dakota Department of Human Services, signed for their respective governments.

“The agreement cements our commitment to children residing in the state and on Standing Rock and it helps us produce solutions that will ensure that these children receive the involvement and resources of both their parents emotionally and financially,” said Jerl Thompson, tribal child support director.

Anderson said, “This is a significant partnership and the Department of Human Services is pleased to work together to serve children and families.”

As sovereign nations, Tribes have the authority to govern members and provide government services. Within Tribal territory, the authority of state and local governments is limited, so states have been limited in their ability to provide child support enforcement services on Tribal lands. Federal funding is available to Tribes for child support activities, creating an opportunity for Tribes to provide those services to members.

In 2011, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe submitted and received a federal start-up grant and the tribal child support program became fully operational in January 2013 with 10 full-time staff. The Tribe’s child support program currently serves about 300 children and 235 parents and expects to assume responsibility of additional cases handled currently by the state program. Both entities will also work together on other cases.

“This effort started over two years ago with open dialogue and a shared interest in supporting children and families,” said Jim Fleming, state child support director. “We serve children best by working together because children should not have to go without support or services because of jurisdictional issues.”

According to Thompson, Tribal staff travel to each of the eight districts on the Standing Rock Reservation to conduct outreach and education about the tribal child support program. The program’s office is located in Ft. Yates.

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Standing Rock Sioux Tribe representatives Dave Archambault II, Chairman; and Jerl Thompson, Tribal IV-D Director attended the signing along with Brad Hawk, Indian Health Systems Administrator for the North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission. North Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS) officials attending included Maggie Anderson, Executive Director; and Jim Fleming, Child Support Director; and numerous staff members from the Tribal child support program.

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