



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF
Human Services

1975
2025

50 Years
Oregon APS

Sovereignty and Safety: Tribal Approaches to Adult Protective Services Partnerships

Sept. 29 and 30, 2026 Title VI Meet and Greet
Grand Ronde, Oregon

Welcome

Caroline M. Cruz

Chief Operations Officer (COO)
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

Russ Jones

Adult Protective Services (APD) Administrator
Oregon Department of Human Services
(ODHS), Aging and People with Disabilities
(APD)



Sovereignty and its role in APS



- Tribal Sovereignty is the foundation for decision-making, protection efforts and service delivery.
- Respecting and honoring sovereignty strengthens safety outcomes for Tribal Elders and vulnerable adults.
- It is important to understand Tribal governance structures and collaborate in a meaningful manner.

Culturally rooted approaches to safety



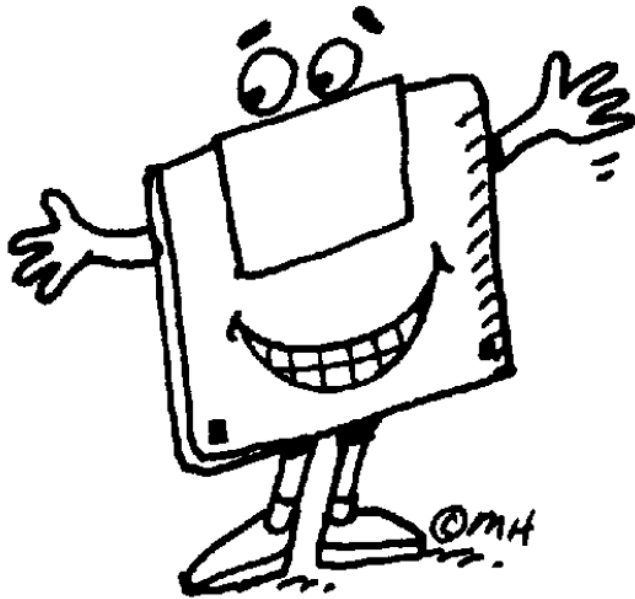
- Traditional values around elder respect, community responsibility and care
- Culturally sensitive services are the foundation of safety and protection
- The important role of extended family and community networks in prevention and support
- Clarifying roles between Tribal programs, APS and Title VI providers
- Identifying shared goals; safety, dignity and well-being of Tribal Elders

Barriers and opportunities related to APS jurisdiction



- Challenges related to jurisdiction, access and historical experiences with state systems
- Opportunities to respect Tribal Sovereignty, improve response times, cultural sensitivity, collaboration and coordination
- The importance of clear communication channels when concerns arise

Advocacy, empowerment and community voice



- Supporting Tribal communities in shaping APS policy and practice
- Ensuring Tribal input is present in statewide planning, procedures and training
- Strengthening advocacy for culturally responsive APS

The results: APS rules

Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) APS Jurisdiction

(10) The Department, in recognition of Tribal Sovereignty, may provide Adult Protective Services as defined in these rules to individuals on land under the authority or control of one of the Nine Federally Recognized Tribes in Oregon, with Tribal authorization.

Protocol for entering Tribal Land



- Contact APD Tribal Affairs Consultant and APS Technical Assistance inbox before going onto Tribal Land
- Confirm appropriate Tribal approval is granted and coordinate the visit(s) with the Tribal designees
- Wear official identification and bring a copy of the confirmation/approval email
- Conduct all interactions with respect, professionalism and cultural awareness
- Tribal Lands are Sovereign Nations, and engagement should reflect respect for Tribal authority and governance
- Limit activities strictly to the approved purpose of the visit

Continued connection building

- **Encouraging**
 - Encourage APS and Title VI attendees to continually improve communication and relationships
- **Inviting**
 - Inviting attendees to share their experiences, challenges and expectations
- **Identifying**
 - Identifying next steps – joint trainings, resource development and regular meetings



Questions or discussion?

- ▼ Federally Recognized Tribe in Oregon
- Indigenous Community (Nez Perce, Umatilla, Warm Springs, and Yakama have a long history of interaction)
- Federally Recognized Tribe in Nevada but crosses Oregon border

Created in collaboration with Shoreline Consulting and Oregon Department of Education

These arrows only represent the Tribal Headquarters location and not all of the tribes' aboriginal/ceded lands.

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Oregon Department of Human Services

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