



Cowlitz Tribal Court Tribal Court Spotlight April 2020

TSCC UPDATES

Welcome to the *April 2020 TSCC Updates*. In only two months, our lives and our professions have changed drastically since the release of the February edition. What hasn't changed is the commitment to justice and to building relationships between tribal and state courts. This edition of *Updates* includes a spotlight on the recently opened Cowlitz Tribal Court, a summary of current COVID-19 resources for courts, and Tribal State Court Consortium workgroup updates.

We hope that you and your loved ones are well and safe,

Judges Cindy K. Smith and Lori K. Smith, TSCC Co-Chairs

Tribal Court Spotlight: Cowlitz Tribal Court

Opened just 13 months ago, on March 13, 2019, the Cowlitz Tribal Court is starting off well. With civil and criminal jurisdiction, the court's primary focus is restorative justice and whole person care.

The current civil caseload is approximately 15 open files for traffic infractions. As the court grows and expands into other areas of law, they will expand the focus and framework to best fit the needs of Tribal Members and families.

The courtroom is located in the Public Safety Building on the Cowlitz Reservation, located just west of I-5 near Ridgefield, WA. Currently the building and court area can be used for bi-monthly court hearings and limited meeting space.

Cowlitz Tribal Court regularly partners with Cowlitz Pathways to Healing that serves as a direct contact and resource for victims, court clients and their families.

Cowlitz Tribal Court's judicial officer and court administrator have extensive experience and long term relationships with tribal and state courts in the area.

PERSONNEL

Judge

Christine Pomeroy

Tribal Court Administrator

Christine Duitman

CONTACT INFORMATION

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COVID-19 Resources for Tribal Courts

[National American Indian Court Judges Association](#)

- Sample orders from tribal courts
- Child welfare information
- Domestic violence resources
- Continuity of operations plans

[Tribal Law and Policy Institute](#)

- Healing to Wellness information
- Victims of crimes resources
- Tribal court information

[Center for Court Innovation](#)

- Domestic violence resources
- Drug court resources.

[Turtle Talk COVID-19 Tribal Documents](#)

- Tribal government documents
- Tribal courts documents
- Child welfare resources

AOC & TSCC Website Updates

AOC has a [COVID-19 Response](#) specific webpage with updates and Washington Supreme Court orders.

The [TSCC website](#) now includes links to the resources mentioned above and sample tribal court orders as provided by colleagues at tribal courts.

To receive this update and regular TSCC related news, sign up for the TSCC Interested Parties email listserv by emailing Kathryn Akeah, kathryn.akeah@courts.wa.gov

TSCC Spring Regional Meeting

5/15 In-Person Meeting Cancelled

With the public health emergency and physical distancing measures in place, it was best to cancel the in-person meeting on May 15th at the Temple of Justice and Nisqually Tribal Court. Plans are under way for potential alternative meeting methods, including using an online format.

TSCC Workgroup Progress

DV PO Enforcement

This workgroup has updated the timeline and scope of questions for the first survey regarding the enforcement of tribal court protection orders to recognize the delays in the distribution of the survey and changes in process and hearing methods.

The workgroup hopes to distribute to a number of partners and reach several facets of tribal justices systems including courts, law enforcement and DV programs. This survey will help identify the factors of success and gaps in enforcement of tribal court issued protection orders.

Spring Regional Meeting Planning

This workgroup had to change tactics several times and due to the ongoing public health emergency had to cancel the in-person meeting on May 15th. This group is planning for future online alternatives.

In a recent survey, TSCC Interested Parties were asked, **“Even with the changes and challenges, what are you most inspired by?”**

“The ingenuity that courts and community have used to make things happen.”

“The way we have all come together.”

“The resiliency of the staff and our ability to conduct emergency hearings despite the government closure.”

“How our justice system is working together and communicating so well despite our distancing.”