

# Promoting Accessibility in WA SNAP-Ed Contract Funding for Tribal Organizations

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## BACKGROUND

### Washington SNAP-Ed Plans to Contract with a Tribally-Run Organization to Implement a Tribal Needs Assessment

In Federal Fiscal Year 2021-2023 (FFY21-23), WA SNAP-Ed contracted with a native-owned business to assess how SNAP-Ed programming can better support indigenous food sovereignty.

Based on their feedback, DSHS will undergo a competitive procurement in FFY24 through a Request for Application (RFA) for a tribally run organization to complete a Tribal Needs Assessment (TNA) that will inform the competitive search for a Tribal implementing agency (IA) and development of contract language and expectations.<sup>1</sup>

## DEFINITIONS

Request for Application (RFA): a solicitation for applications for funding in a well-defined area often based on legislative requirements and agency policies.<sup>2</sup>

Tribal Needs Assessment (TNA)  
A Tribal Needs Assessment (TNA) informs DSHS how the SNAP-Ed State Plan can better reach and serve Tribal communities in WA [1].

## Project Goals

- Outline considerations and recommendations on contracting with Tribally-run organizations.
- Provide justifications for adapting contract language and expectations to support tribal sovereignty and self-determination.

## METHODS

- > Completed a review of existing resources, executive orders, and SNAP-Ed guidance on contracting with tribal organizations and completing needs assessments.
- > Designed a report to provide recommendations for contracting and completing the TNA.

## FINDINGS

### Barriers for Contracting with Tribal Organizations.<sup>3-7</sup>

<b>Limited outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of awareness of funding opportunities.</li> <li>• Complex language, detail, and length of notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) documents.</li> </ul>
<b>Restrictive grant requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restrictive eligibility requirements of Federal grants.</li> </ul>
<b>Administrative burden and process complexity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited capacity for professional grant writers.</li> <li>• Lack of time or staff.</li> <li>• Limited English proficiency.</li> <li>• Forms with complex language.</li> <li>• Redundant form requirements for multiple applications.</li> <li>• Non-intuitive grant application system.</li> </ul>
<b>Distrust of funding source</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some Tribes may be averse to Federal financial assistance and other grants because of the Federal government oversight these award requirements often entail and the historically strained relationship between Tribes and the Federal government.</li> <li>• Lack of transparency: applicants are not provided feedback on why they didn't receive funding.</li> </ul>

### Recommendations for Contracting with Tribal Organizations.<sup>3-8</sup>

<b>Invest in outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an outreach plan to increase awareness of funding opportunity among tribal organizations.</li> <li>• Adopt a strengths-based approaches and language in the NOFO process.</li> </ul>
<b>Increase grant flexibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove eligibility requirements that are limiting.</li> <li>• Address challenges associated with limited ability to revise awarded projects.</li> <li>• Extend the timeline for updating NOFOs and soliciting applications.</li> <li>• Allow applicants to use storytelling approaches in their applications.</li> </ul>
<b>Simplify the grant process to reduce administrative burden</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamline application timelines.</li> <li>• Reduce form complexity and redundancy.</li> <li>• Adopt common application standards to improve efficiency in grant applications.</li> <li>• Provide a single "one-stop-shop" site that presents program points of contact, educational training materials, application and award timelines, and examples of successful proposals.</li> <li>• Allow users to find resources based on need and sign up for email alerts to grants that make sense for each community.</li> </ul>

<b>Improve transparency and technical assistance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase grants staff support through increased proposal and project implementation support and field visits.</li> <li>• Make feedback on applications accessible.</li> <li>• Create authentic community engagement technical assistance centers that include participatory grantmaking that State and Implementing Agencies can access.</li> <li>• Partner with Tribal Universities to reduce barriers, such as classes geared towards the grant writing process.</li> <li>• Transparency: offer feedback upon request to help unsuccessful applicants improve future grant applications.</li> </ul>
<b>Include participatory grantmaking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application stage: invite community members to review the application to ensure that application materials are written in accessible language and that there is alignment between community and SNAP-Ed goals.</li> <li>• Awarding stage: consider how relationships can be built both with and across all applicants.</li> </ul>

### Justifications for Tribal Sovereignty

➤ **Biden's executive order on Reforming Federal Funding to Better Embrace our Trust Responsibility and Tribal Self-Determination** emphasizes increasing funding accessibility and supporting Tribal sovereignty.<sup>12</sup>

➤ **7 CFR 272.2(b)(1)** requires implementing programs "in a manner that is responsive to the special needs of American Indians on reservations and consult in good faith with Tribal Organizations."<sup>13</sup>

➤ **7 CFR 272.2(e)(7)** "Where applicable, state agencies shall consult (on an ongoing basis) with the Tribal Organization of an Indian reservation about those portions of the State Plan of Operation pertaining to the special needs of the members of the Tribe."<sup>13</sup>

➤ **DSHS Administrative Policy 7.01** defines the department's commitment to consultation with federally recognized tribes of Washington state and collaboration with recognized American Indian organizations (RAIOs) and individual American Indians and Alaska Natives to ensure quality and comprehensive service delivery to all American Indians and Alaska Natives in Washington State.<sup>9</sup>

➤ **The National Academies published a report on equity recommendations for federal agencies.** The recommendations include prioritizing community voice in government work, promoting data equity, and advancing policy and system changes that address barriers to tribal health equity.<sup>14</sup>

➤ **Centering Data Sovereignty, Tribal Values, and Practices for Equity in American Indian and Alaska Native Public Health Systems** provides recommendations for promoting data sovereignty through relationship building, recognizing Tribal data practices, and preventing racial and ethnic misclassification.<sup>15</sup>

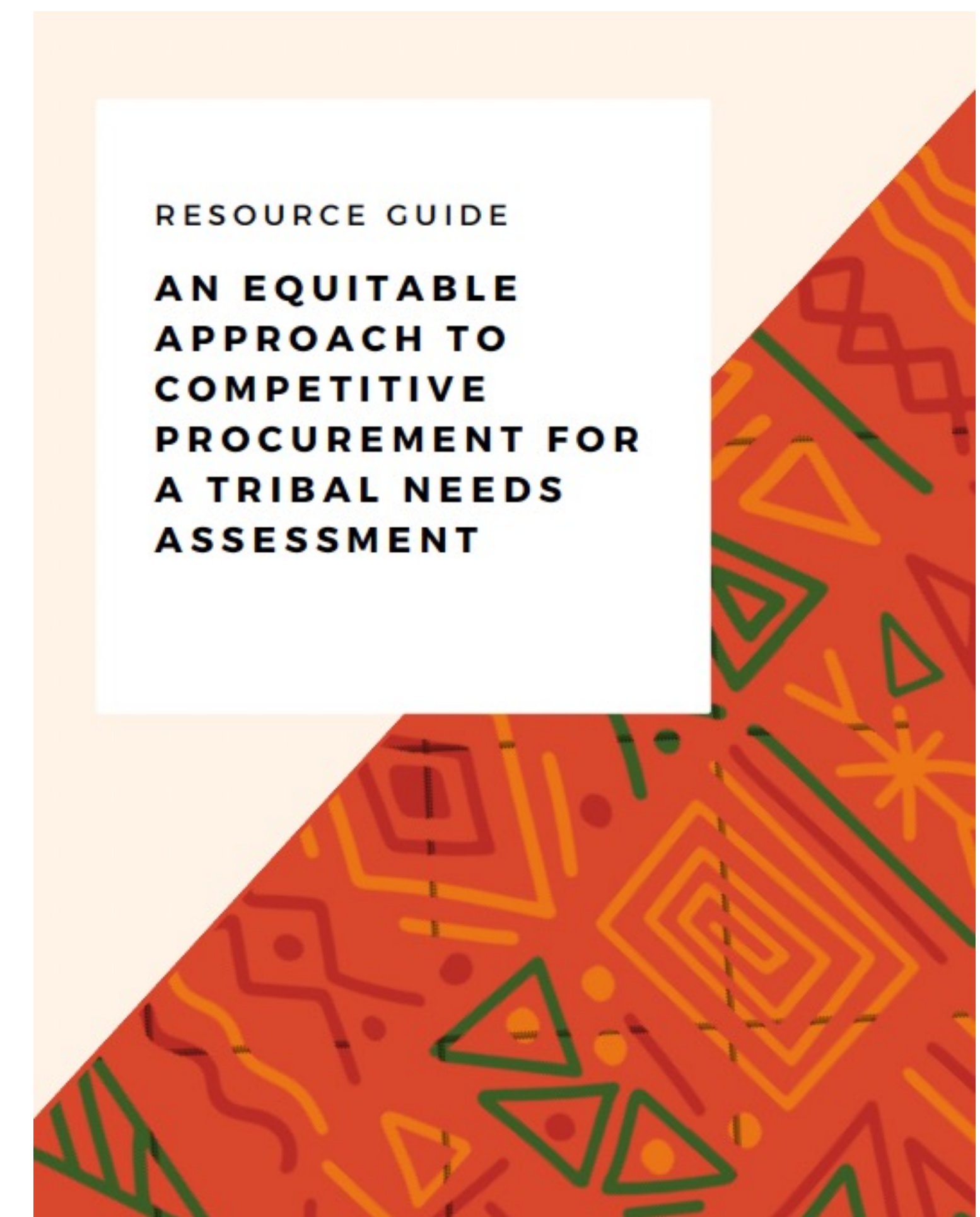


Image: Cover page of Resource Guide

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