



**WASHINGTON**

State Independent Living Council

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## Position on Native Americans and Independent Living

Washington State Independent Living Council  
Romel Mackelprang, Chair  
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### **Position**

It is the position of the State Independent Living Council that independent living resources for Native Americans with disabilities need to be substantially improved. Resources should be directed to increasing participation in society and to ameliorating the disability-related health problems common among Native Americans.

### **Background**

Washington State statistics shows that 23% of Native Americans have a disability (compared to 18% to 20% in the non-Native American population).

Tribal programs have a better success rate with Native Americans versus “State Programs.”

Many Native Americans are unaware of IL services and Centers for Independent Living (and other providers).

Many of the 29 tribal reservations located in Washington State are located in rural areas, and virtually all encounter limited transportation to Centers for Independent Living.

Further, there are many other barriers. These include:

- ◆ Large geographical distances between tribal communities and IL providers

- ◆ Cultural differences between recipients of services and providers of services
- ◆ Lack of funding and outreach for rural communities
- ◆ Lack of knowledge about IL and the services IL can provide

## **Conclusions**

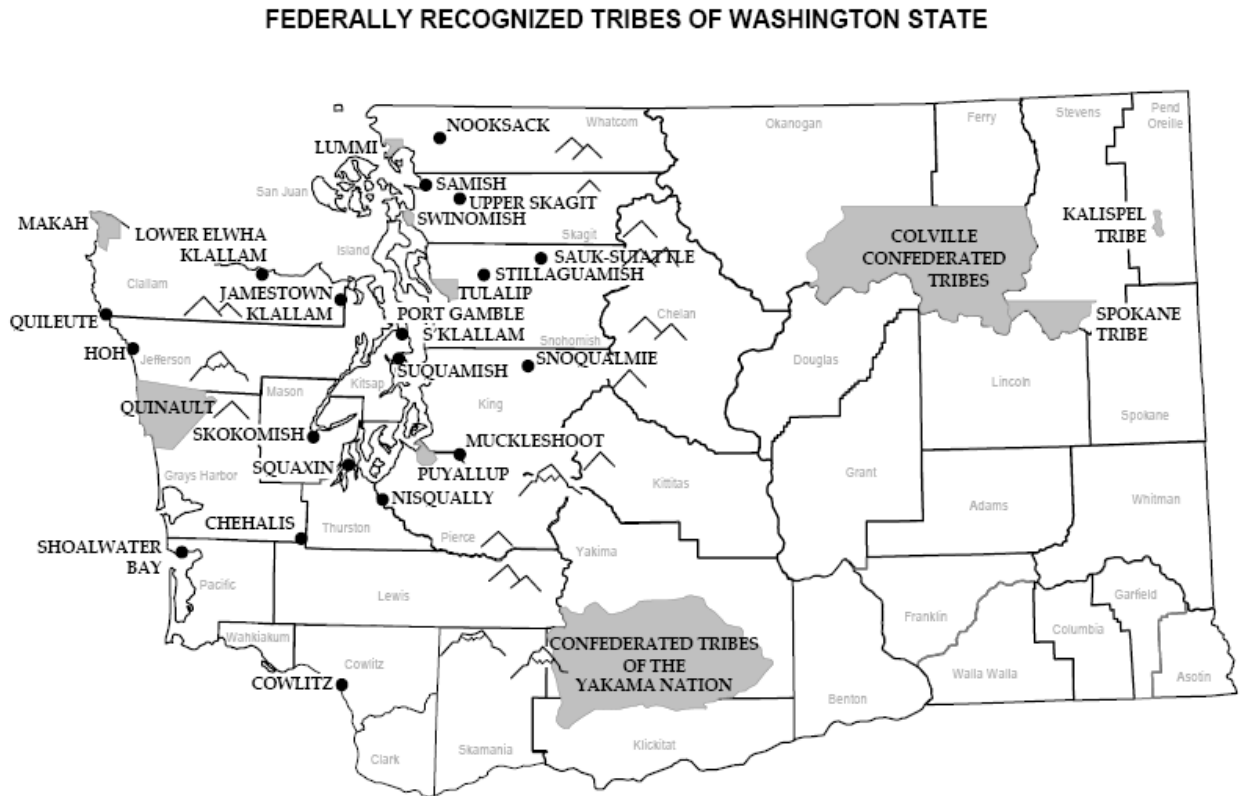
Increasingly, tribal governments and urban organizations are recognizing the impacts disabilities are having in Native American communities. Independent living services are critical to meet the needs of Native Americans with disabilities and their families. Increased resources that are essential to meet these needs include eliminating barriers arising from, a) living in rural and remote locales, b) large distances between tribal communities and IL providers, c) cultural differences between Native Americans and traditional service providers, and d) lack of knowledge about IL and IL services.

To close the gaps between needs and resources, the following steps are needed.

- Coordination among the 29 tribal reservations in Washington State.
- Increased funding for rural independent living resources where reservations are located.
- Independent living resources must be culturally competent; primarily directed by Native Americans.
- Increased resources for existing centers for independent living to accommodate Native Americans in both rural and urban settings.
- Bringing together Centers for Independent Living with tribal governments and with centers serving urban Native Americans to coordinate efforts.
- Planning for new centers for independent living to include attention to the needs of Native Americans.

Appendix A

Washington State Map of Federally Recognized Tribes



Map of Reservations (check back later)

Map of Washington 121 Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Programs (check back later)