

The Next Door Listening Session: Barrier to Services

Summary Report August 2021

Title: Klickitat County Barriers to Services with Native Community



Summary Report: Although there was discussion about many different things that could be helpful to their communities, a common theme that the tribe members were needing, are reliable transportation, electricity, running water, and the request of job/life skills trainings. Discrimination is a problem for members of the community, especially in some organizations. Sometimes community members are left unserved by their tribal supports and the County. They feel like both sides want them to rely on services from the other entity and they can “fall through the cracks”.

Listening Session Notes:

1. What services do you use in Klickitat County?
 - Domestic Violence is a huge problem and support services are not responsive. We call and nothing gets followed up on. Intertribal doesn't help, not dependable, there are no shows.
 - Drugs are a problem and the kids are being exposed to it. We turn people in regularly to the local police.
 - The Food distribution programs are great, but it could be better if it brought culturally appropriate foods or gave directions for simple recipes.
 - It has made a HUGE difference that The Next Door and One Community Health have been coming out to our sites. “We've never had regular help like this.”
 - Medical and food stamps are helpful
 - The Mt Adams transport gets them to get Covid vaccines.

2. Are there services that you want or need but haven't been able to use in Klickitat County? Can you give examples?
 - Mobile mental and medical health services would be great! We really need those services here.
 - We need services and outreach efforts to come to us. “How do you know what's going on here, if you don't see it? The people here need help, the children here need help.”
 - Community sweat houses can be a part of the solution. Support groups for people getting sober would be very helpful. People want to get clean, but sometimes we call for help and when help finally does come, that window of opportunity has passed and it's too late. Services need to be readily available.
 - We need help with recycling.
 - Someone needs to come remove the old burned out trailers, metal parts, broken boats, etc.
 - We need much better drainage for fish guts at the cleaning stations.
 - It would be helpful to have all resources in camp, like reservations do. Knowing where to go for what is a barrier to get services. Food handler's cards, swimming lessons, CPR,

and water safety, are all trainings that would be helpful for them to have on camp. A mobile medical unit would be a great resource for us.

- We need access to dental and eye care badly.
3. What are some of the barriers that stop you from getting these services?
 - Racism is a barrier to getting services. When people go out to get services, they face discrimination.
 - “They think we’re just dirty drunk Indians. When people are racist, they are blatant about it around here.”
 - No transportation or phones to call and set up appointments is a big barrier. Cars are broken down. Three family members are hospitalized because they couldn’t get to a medical provider before things got bad.
 4. How did you find out about the services that are available? How should organizations let people know about the services that they provide?
 - Letters in the mail, Facebook posts are good ways to share about how to get services.
 - Accessing insurance and knowing who accepts their insurance.
 - Having people who are working directly in the field to do outreach is great. But they should know the tribal members rights, and be culturally sensitive.
 5. What was it like when you first went into get some of these services? Is there anything that could be changed to make this process easier or more welcoming?
 - Staff at some social service office made her feel unwelcomed, and everything she tried was dismissed. The tribe would approve something, and then this office would not. She felt better understood at a different location.
 - It is challenging to navigate services that are specific to Natives and those that are not. “Sometimes it feels like no one wants to help us.”
 6. When you get services, do you feel that your culture is respected by the staff? Are there examples of when you felt respected and welcomed? What did that look like?
 - “Sometimes getting services is like skating up hill.” It is easier to access services in Oregon than in Washington. They have offered me payment plans and flexibility in Oregon, especially at the dentist which is helpful because I don’t have insurance. He also felt welcomed there.
 7. Have you experienced discrimination while asking about or receiving services in Klickitat County? What did that look like?
 - I usually felt welcomed at some places, when accessing services. But at others we felt unwelcomed, and as if they weren’t nice to people of color or to the low-income community.

Quotes from Participants:

“This is our home, but it’s like we have no say.”

“This is our home, but it feels like imprisonment. Law enforcement is always spying on us and I don’t know why. It feels like they are always watching.”

“Sometimes getting services is like skating uphill.”

“How do you know what is going on here, if you don’t see it?”

“When I walked in they looked at me like, ‘Hey you don’t belong here. We don’t serve your kind’”.

“Sometimes it feels like no one wants to help us.”