



INDIAN COUNTRY SNAPSHOT:

Blackfeet Nation

Launched in 1965 as the Blackfeet Nation’s workforce development arm, Blackfeet Manpower became the country’s first certified Native American One-Stop Center in 2007. It did so to consolidate its resources to more effectively address the pressing needs of Blackfeet members on and around Blackfeet’s reservation, which contended with a 70% unemployment rate. Today, Manpower provides a comprehensive set of interconnected education, training, work experience, job placement, family strengthening, and supplemental services “under one roof,”¹ many of which are included in Manpower’s 477 Plan.² Comprising most of its annual budget, Manpower’s blended 477 funds enable it to prioritize “planning and delivering services instead of maintaining individual service budgets”³ and flexibly direct resources to its areas of greatest need. Manpower provides its centralized services at its main campus in Blackfeet’s population hub of Browning and two satellite offices serving Blackfeet’s outlying communities.⁴ Manpower’s “ease of accessing services”⁵ is exemplified in its universal intake application, administered by a single case manager who assesses each client’s job-readiness challenges and then connects that person to the customized, culturally grounded suite of services they need to address them.⁶ Manpower maintains MOUs with several tribal entities to ensure community members’ needs are seamlessly served; for example, Blackfeet’s Child Support Enforcement Program automatically channels its clients to Manpower to determine what workforce development and other related services they require.⁷ The One-Stop Center also provides specialized services – including transitional housing – to members of the armed forces to support their transition from active duty to veteran life, and serves citizens of other Tribal Nations through a TANF service contract with the State of Montana.⁸ Manpower’s staff and partners contribute client data to a shared system that tracks clients’ progress, how its services are performing, and how they can be improved.⁹ To further increase service effectiveness, Manpower recently adopted a universal case management approach where case managers are cross-trained in all services so any one of them can immediately work with any new client, “instead of being connected to a specific case manager based on service need.”¹⁰

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RELATED RESOURCES

[Blackfeet Manpower](#)

[Blackfeet Manpower One-Stop Center 477 Plan](#)

[Blackfeet Manpower State Work Activity Program](#)

[Understanding the Value of Centralized Services: Blackfeet Manpower One-Stop Site Brief](#)

[Montana Conservation Corps: Amskapi Piikuni Partnership](#)

¹ NCAI Partnership for Tribal Governance, *Tribal Workforce Development: A Decision-Framing Toolkit*, National Congress of American Indians, 2018, p. 11 (<https://nca-tero.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Tribal-Workforce-Development-A-Decision-Framing-Toolkit.pdf>, accessed June 10, 2024). These services include “general education development (GED) support; remedial, vocational, post-secondary, and alternative education; job skills and job readiness training; and job placement, community work experience, and community service programs. Staff place clients in jobs around the reservation and within Blackfeet Manpower, such as on the campgrounds that Blackfeet Manpower manages and at the Medicine Bear Shelter for the homeless” (Akanksha Jayanthi and Carly Morrison, *Understanding the Value of Centralized Services: Blackfeet Manpower One-Stop Site Brief*, OPRE Report #2022-242, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC, September 2022, p. 9 (https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/vocs_site_brief_blackfeet_manpower_jan2023.pdf, accessed April 16, 2024)).

² Blackfeet Manpower’s 477 Plan currently includes the following federal funding programs: Child Care Development Fund, Native Employment Works, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult and Youth Programs, Job Placement and Training, General Assistance, Tribal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, and Community Services Block Grant.

³ Jayanthi and Morrison, September 2022, p. 15.

⁴ Some of Manpower’s “services and partner organizations are located off-campus but still within a few blocks of the three main buildings. For example, Medicaid eligibility staff (who are employees of Blackfeet Manpower) are located in an office next to a health clinic” (Ibid., p. 10).

⁵ Ibid., p. 15.

⁶ Blackfeet Manpower is in the process of developing a universal intake application specifically for youth that will route youth clients to age-specific services (Blackfeet Manpower staff, conversation with NCAI, May 7, 2024).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid. Through its State Work Activity Program, Blackfeet Manpower “provides Case Management services to all State TANF clients. We perform an enrollment Intake and negotiate a Family Futures Contract (Employability Plan) for all Adults. We make referrals to other programs for Family Stability activities to assist families in overcoming barriers that may prevent them from achieving stability, working and being financially secure” (State Work Activity Program, Blackfeet Manpower, (<https://blackfeetmanpower.com/swap/>, accessed June 11, 2024)).

⁹ NCAI Partnership for Tribal Governance, 2018, p. 11.

¹⁰ Jayanthi and Morrison, September 2022, p. 11. In addition, “Every summer, Blackfeet Manpower holds all-staff cross-trainings where each service team presents to all staff their services, eligibility process, client flow, and the way they partner with other departments. These mandatory trainings provide insight into all service offerings at Blackfeet Manpower, so case managers know where they might refer their clients. Tribal Council members also attend these trainings” (Ibid., p. 13).