



Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate
LAKE TRAVERSE RESERVATION
SWO Parole Office
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Frequently asked questions regarding the Tribal Parole Pilot

What is the Tribal Parole Pilot?

In May 2014, the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate (SWO) and the State of South Dakota entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement which allowed the SWO to supervise enrolled tribal members on the Lake Traverse Reservation. This agreement was signed by the Tribal Chairman and the Secretary of Corrections. The purpose of the Tribal Pilot is to reduce the number of tribal members return to prison, provide increased compliance with parole conditions and increase safety in the community.

The Pilot has two main components. One of which is the establishment of a tribal parole office. The tribal parole office is staffed by a Director and one field agent, Doug Williams. Both are hired and employed by the Tribe to supervise DOC parolees that are tribal members living in or returning to the area. The other component is the Wellness Team. The team members were selected from medical and mental health, tribal police, tribal courts, child protection, drug and alcohol treatment, housing authorities, tribal probation, veteran's affairs and /or other interested resources that can contribute to the success of this population.

What does the Wellness Team do?

The team assists the parole office with re-entry efforts. The team members make recommendations for specific programming that may be needed as well as helping set up resources and address housing issues. It brings the needed resources to the table as a group to make decisions based on both the parolee's needs and the communities' expectations. The parolee and/or family can request and meet with the wellness team, at the team's discretion, to discuss or address any issues they may have.

The team also assists the parole office with sanctioning and redirection if there is a significant violation or issue. The team can refer to various resources in the state (both on and off the reservation). They can look at alternatives to incarceration, setting up a structured plan to redirect the offender. They utilize Evidence Base Practices such as assessing risk and needs, enhancing the motivation to change, target interventions, positive reinforcement, community support and provide feedback. The team will also utilize culturally based practices with those parolees who have a background/belief in traditional ways.

What is the Tribal Agent's role?

The tribal parole agent manages a caseload of tribal members releasing on parole from a South Dakota State Corrections facility. The agent monitors the day to day activities of the parolee, conducting home and community visits to verify the offender's compliance with release conditions. The agent enforces all special conditions that are set by the Parole Board, Director,

Wellness Team or Tribal Parole Office prior to release. The agent follows up on recommendations handed out by the Wellness Team and reports progress back to them. The tribal parole agent has the same authority off tribal lands as a state parole agent.

What is the referral process?

Parolees can utilize the wellness team during the release planning process by submitting a written correspondence to the case manager that can be forwarded to the field. The process for the Case Manager is the same as with any other release. When the plan is received in the Aberdeen Field Office it will be assigned to a field agent. If the plan is for a tribal member to live in the Roberts, Day or Marshall County area, they will be assigned to the Tribal Parole Agent. The case will be staffed with the Wellness Team prior to final release plan approval. If a need is identified through the assessment process, by prison case management, or the tribal agent, the issue will be brought to the team to look at available options in the community to address the issue.

For further information you can contact:

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