



## **LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON INDIAN SERVICES**

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### **What is the Commission?**

The Commission on Indian Services (CIS) was created by statute in 1975 to improve services to Indians in Oregon. Its 13 members are appointed jointly by the Senate President and the Speaker of the House to a two-year term. CIS members select their own officers to serve one-year terms of office.

Prior to its establishment, there was no suitable mechanism in state government to consider Indian concerns directly. CIS serves as the main forum in which Indian concerns are considered. It serves as a conduit through which concerns are channeled through the network to the appropriate entity; it serves as a point of access for finding out about state government programs and Indian communities; and it serves as a catalyst for bringing about change where change is needed.

### **Who is the Commission?**

CIS consists of one member from the Oregon Senate, one member from the Oregon House of Representatives and 11 representatives from the following tribal councils and non-reservation areas throughout the state:

Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs:

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation;

Burns Paiute Tribe:

Confederated Tribes of Siletz:

Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde:

Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw:

Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians:

Klamath Tribes:

Coquille Tribe:

Portland Urban Area; and Willamette Valley Area.

### **What does the Commission do?**

CIS recommends methods for the State of Oregon to improve its services to Indians and to improve its relationship with tribes in Oregon and Indian communities. CIS holds regular meetings to learn about the issues which concern Indian people and to discuss how these issues might best be addressed. Often, CIS invites representatives of state or local government to discuss their programs relative to Indian people.

CIS monitors legislation that may affect Indians, both while it is being considered by the Legislature and after it becomes law. CIS also notifies people about legislation in which they are interested and assists in coordinating and presenting testimony on issues of importance to Indians in Oregon. CIS serves as a resource and advisory body to the Executive Branch, the Legislature and state agencies.

CIS functions as an information clearinghouse about state government and Oregon's Indian communities. Toward this end, CIS publishes the biennial **Oregon Directory of American Indian Resources**. The **Directory** lists all tribes and Indian resource organizations in the state, as well as selected state, regional and federal offices. The **Directory** also contains statewide demographic information, a partial list of Oregon laws relating to Indians, and answers to frequently asked questions about tribal sovereignty, Indian ancestry and tribal benefits. As availability allows the **Directory** is provided free of charge. It is also available at State and local Libraries and on the Internet.

Under its enabling statute, ORS 172.100, CIS has the following responsibilities: 1) To compile information about services for Indians; 2) To develop programs to inform Indians about services available to them; 3) To advise public and private agencies about the needs and concerns of the Indian community; 4) To assess programs of state agencies operating for the benefit of Indians and recommend program improvement; and 5) To report biennially to the Governor and the Legislative Assembly on all matters of concerns to Indians in Oregon.

CIS has broad statutory responsibilities concerning the protection of cultural resources in Oregon. Under ORS 390.235 (Historic Materials), CIS is mandated to participate with the State Historic Preservation Office in the archaeological excavation permit process. Under ORS 97.740 (Burial Law), and ORS 358.905 (Archaeological Sites and Objects), CIS is responsible for providing consultation and designating the appropriate tribe if an Indian burial or archaeological object is discovered.

In addition, CIS provides consultation services to other state agencies when their Administrative Rules require them to discharge duties relating to American Indians or cultural resources. Two examples are Children's Services Division in Indian child welfare matters and Water Resources Department in hydro development activities.

### **What does the Commission not do?**

CIS does not provide direct services or determine what services will be available to Indians. Similarly, CIS will not abrogate any agreements between Indians and any level of government, nor will CIS take a position in controversies between tribes or organizations.

### **How can the Commission assist you?**

If you have a concern involving services for American Indians, bring it to the attention of a CIS member or staff. CIS will either refer you to the appropriate entity or initiate an inquiry into the issue. CIS may also offer alternatives for resolving the issue.

If you are interested in legislation that may have potential impact in Indian communities, ask CIS for information about it. Ask to be put on the CIS mailing list and attend CIS meetings held on a regular basis in the State Capitol building.

### **How can you assist the Commission?**

CIS wants to know what problems exist with state agencies, what services should be available and how these services can be improved or established. If you have suggestions of this kind, write or plan to attend a CIS meeting to present your ideas.

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