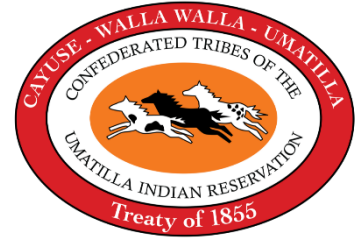


Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

PRESS RELEASE



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May 27, 2026

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CTUIR Again Contracts with LASO for Legal Aid to Tribal Members

MISSION – The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) is again teaming with Legal Aid Services of Oregon (LASO) to provide low-income tribal members legal help in civil cases.

The CTUIR Board of Trustees (BOT) recently approved a contract with the Native American Program of Legal Aid Services of Oregon (NAPOLS), which is a specialized LASO program serving Native tribes, organizations and individuals in Oregon. LASO is a legal services program serving the state's low-income communities.

“The Board of Trustees recognizes that civil legal representation can be quite costly to tribal members, even those earning above federal poverty levels, and has made the decision to again provide funding to assist tribal members with obtaining no cost representation for certain civil matters,” Joe Pitt, CTUIR Office of Legal Counsel lead attorney, said.

The types of civil cases covered include issues such as family law, housing, government benefits, senior law, consumer issues, debtors' rights/bankruptcy, employment, probate issues, criminal expungement and civil rights.

Pitt said LASO generally provides no-cost representation to individuals whose income is 125% or less of federal poverty guidelines. However, the CTUIR's 2026 contract funds no-cost services to individuals whose income is above that threshold.

“It covers the range between 126% and 250% of federal poverty guidelines,” he said. “Normally individuals in this income range would need to seek other options for representation at their own cost.”

However, there are limited costs associated with initiating NAPOLS representation: \$25 for individuals between 126% and 200% of the federal poverty guidelines and \$50 for individuals above 200% of the guidelines.

“There may also be litigation expenses such as court fees, deposition costs, expert witness fees, etc.,” Pitt said. “However, while NAPOLS does not cover these costs, the contract includes mechanisms for these costs to be reimbursed by the CTUIR in certain circumstances.”

In the past, NAPOLS shared its expertise when requested on a case-by-case basis with the attorneys at the LASO Pendleton Regional Office. Under the 2026 contract, NAPOLS will directly intake and review tribal member requests for services and determine which cases are accepted.

To increase service to CTUIR members, NAPOLS may provide a referral to a regional LASO office or one of the two statewide offices – the Farmworker Program or the Low-Income Tax Clinic – depending on the specific legal question. Also, regardless of whether a case is accepted for representation, tribal members will either receive additional self-help legal resources or advice and counsel related to their issues.

NAPOLS handles legal matters in Oregon’s federal courts, tribal courts within Oregon and various federal administrative forums. However, NAPOLS does not take cases in out-of-state courts. CTUIR members who have legal matters in other states could receive a referral to a legal aid service provider in that state.

The CTUIR first contracted with the LASO Pendleton Regional Office to provide similar services from 1998 to 2022. Following a two-year absence, the BOT approved a similar contract with LASO in 2024. However, that contract expanded services to CTUIR members living throughout Oregon, unlike the previous contract which was limited to five counties surrounding the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Tribal members can call the LASO Pendleton Regional Office at 503-224-4086 or the NAPOLS Portland Office at 503-223-9483 for help. For more information, visit <https://lasoregon.org/locations/native-american-program/>

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is comprised of the Cayuse, Walla Walla and Umatilla Tribes, and formed under the Treaty of 1855 at the Walla Walla Valley, 12 Stat. 945. In 1949, the Tribes adopted a constitutional form of government to protect, preserve and enhance the reserved treaty rights guaranteed under federal law.

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