



Preparing for Winter: Utility Disconnection and Energy Assistance

As winter approaches, high home heating and electric bills begin to worry families. Many low and middle-income people cannot afford to pay all of their bills during the winter months. Because people are on a budget, they decide which bills need to be paid and stop paying other bills. To make ends meet, basic needs such as groceries and medical care are sacrificed. It is difficult to prepare for these months. But your family's health and safety depends on making sure that your home has enough heat.

Most utility companies will allow you to enter into payment plans to avoid disconnection, especially in the winter months. Contact the utility company that supplies your main source of heat to see if you qualify for one of its payment plans or energy programs. Although state law discourages utility shut off from November 1 through May 1, utility companies can shut off your gas or electricity even during the winter.

This article deals with common questions people have about utility disconnection. The second half of the article discusses energy assistance programs. Call your utility company if you have other questions or to see if you qualify for assistance. If you think your consumer rights have been violated, contact a lawyer or Statewide Legal Services for more information.

How to Avoid Disconnection Throughout the Year

If you are having trouble paying your utility bills, contact your

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We Want to Hear From You!

If you have comments, articles or ideas on how this Newsletter can be helpful to you, please let us know.

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The articles in this paper are meant to give information, NOT to give legal advice. No one should interpret any law without the help of an attorney who has been told all the facts.

Proposed Changes to Tribal Federal Recognition: What do They Mean for Connecticut?

In June of 2013 the Bureau of Indian Affairs ("BIA") released a discussion draft with proposed changes to the federal recognition process. If adopted, these changes could have a significant impact on the status of several tribes in Connecticut, opening doors for federal recognition. There have been some critics of the proposed changes, including several tribes and the State of Connecticut. On February 24, 2014 Governor Dannel Malloy wrote to President Barack Obama, asking him to block some of the most significant proposed changes to the federal recognition process. As part of his letter the governor highlighted concerns surrounding land claims and tribal gaming.

This article examines some of the most significant proposed changes to the federal recognition process, their potential impact in Connecticut, and Governor Malloy's concerns outlined in his letter to President Obama.

Significant Proposed Changes to the Federal Recognition Process

The proposed changes to the federal recognition process reflect significant shifts in policy. The most notable of these changes include:

- The reference date for federal recognition criteria is changed from "historical times" to 1934.
- An expedited favorable finding for recognition will be made if:
 1. The tribe meets a base set of mandatory criteria; and
 2. The tribe has either:
 - a. A state recognized reservation from at least 1934 to the present; or
 - b. Land held in trust for the tribe by the United States at any point since 1934.
- Previously denied tribes can refile a petition for federal recognition if changes to the policy would more likely than not result in a reversal of the previous decision.
- Removes the Interior Board of Indian Appeals (IBIA) review of acknowledgement decisions.
- Facts required to meet acknowledgement criteria are now to be viewed in the light most favorable to the tribe.

These changes could streamline processes for tribes hoping to gain federal recognition. In particular, any tribe that has maintained a state-recognized reservation since at least 1934, which was previously denied federal recognition, may be able to refile and gain federal recognition under the proposed changes. Tribes seeking recognition would also benefit from facts being construed in their favor, and the lower burden of only producing documents to verify mandatory criteria from 1934 to the present, instead of from "historical times." In whole, the proposed changes represent a movement away from the hurdles and barriers that have historically prevented many tribes from obtaining federal recognition.

How the Proposed Changes would Affect Connecticut Tribes

The proposed changes to the federal recognition process have the potential to open new doors to tribal communities in Connecticut seeking federal recognition. Making a state-recognized reservation maintained since 1934 a way to access expedited favorable review may affect up to four tribal

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utility company immediately. Don't wait for a disconnection notice. You may be able to make a payment arrangement that works with your budget. Public utility companies must try to make "reasonable" payment arrangements with you before shutting off your service. Payments are based on your financial situation.

When you call your utility company, be ready to explain your finances. Know what you can afford to pay. If you cannot reach an agreement, contact Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA). PURA and its Consumer Assistance Division (CAD) will work with you and your utility company to arrange affordable payments. Note: your primary source of heat cannot be disconnected if you have given proof to your utility company that you have a serious medical condition. A doctor must certify your condition.

Disconnection During "Winter Months"

For purposes of utility shut-off, the "winter months" are from November 1 through May 1. There are laws in place to protect you from disconnection during these months.

The Hardship Rule

If you cannot afford to pay your gas or electric bill during the winter, contact your utility company immediately. You may qualify for "hardship" status. "Hardship cases" include:

- Customers receiving local, state, or federal public assistance
- Customers whose only income is Social Security, Veteran's Benefits, or Unemployment Compensation
- Customers who are seriously ill or in a life-threatening situation
- Customers who have a household member who is seriously ill
- Customers who are unemployed and the head of household, AND the household income is less than 300% of the federal poverty level
- Customers whose income is below 125% of the federal poverty level
- Customers who would have to deprive themselves or their children of food and basic necessities if they paid the utility bill

In most cases, your electric and gas companies cannot shut off or refuse to reinstate your service if you qualify for hardship status (see the next section for an important exception). You will still need to set up a payment plan. Hardship status does not mean you do not have to pay your bill. It means your service cannot be disconnected during the winter months.

Exception to the Hardship Rule

Your gas company can refuse to turn your service back on this winter if your service was kept on last winter because you qualified for hardship status, but was shut off in the non-winter months (May 2nd through October 31st) because you did not follow your payment plan.

Your gas company can refuse to turn your service on if you have not paid at least one of the following:

- 20% of the balance you owed on the date of shut off,
- One hundred dollars, or
- The minimum payments due under your payment agreement

Electric and gas companies cannot shut off your service or refuse to turn it back on if you do not have the money to pay your entire account AND if lack of service would create a life-threatening situation for you or a household member.

If You Do Not Qualify For Hardship, Winter Disconnection Is Possible

If you do not qualify for hardship status or have not followed the terms of a payment plan, your service can be shut off in the

winter. Winter shut off is possible if:

- You do not make and follow the terms of a payment plan
- You do not pay your overdue account
- Your service is not authorized
- You lied about your identity or used fraud to get utility service
- You used utility equipment in a way that harmed the utility company or someone else's service. The utility company must give you a chance to fix what you are doing.
- You have violated rules of the utility company
- You do not allow meter reading, installation, inspection, or repair of utility equipment
- It is hazardous for the utility company to access its equipment at your home
- You negligently or intentionally damaged utility property and did not pay for repairs

What The Utility Company Must Do Before Disconnecting Your Service

Before your services can be shut off, the utility company must notify you and try to make reasonable payment arrangements. NO notice is required if your service is creating a hazard. The written notice must state:

- The reasons for disconnection
- How much you owe on your account
- What you can do to avoid disconnection
- That you are entitled to utility service if a doctor certifies that you or someone in the house is seriously ill.
- An explanation of your rights
- The disconnection date
- How you can restore your service if it is shut off
- Any reconnection charges

Your utility service cannot be shut off until 13 days after the notice was sent. If you were sent a shut off notice, but the utility company did not shut off your service within 120 days, it must mail you another notice before shutting off your service.

What If My Utility Company and I Cannot Agree On A Payment Plan?

There is a process that you and your utility company must go through if you cannot agree to a reasonable payment plan or do not agree about your hardship status. Your utility company must follow these steps before shutting off your service.

Step 1: Review Officer. Your utility company must refer you to a "review officer." The review officer will try to come up with a reasonable payment plan for you. If he or she cannot, the review officer must decide if you qualify for hardship.

Step 2: Right to Appeal. If you disagree with the review officer's decision, he or she must send you a written report. The report must include the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority's (PURA) phone number and explain your right to appeal the decision.

Step 3: Informal Investigation. Within 5 days of receiving the review officer's report, you can appeal the decision to PURA's Consumer Assistance Division (CAD) and request an informal investigation.

Step 4: Formal Complaint. Either you or your utility company can appeal the CAD's informal investigation decision by filing a formal complaint with PURA. PURA schedules a hearing.

Step 5: Hearing. 20 days after the hearing, the hearing officer will issue a final order. The final order may set up a payment plan or decide if your utility service can be shut off.

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Your utility cannot be shut off while you are in the complaint, investigation, hearing, and appeal process. You must continue to pay your utility bill during this process.

Utility Companies Are Not Allowed to Do The Following:

There are laws and regulations that utility companies must follow. For your protection, your utility company cannot:

- Shut off your service without notice
- Shut off your service before trying to enter into a payment plan with you
- Terminate or refuse to turn your service back on from November 1st to May 1st if you qualify for hardship status (but see the exception discussed above)
- Shut off your utility service on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday, state or federal holiday, or day before a state or federal holiday.
- Shut off your service when the utility's business offices are closed or one hour before they close
- Shut off your service if you or anyone in your home is seriously ill or has a life threatening condition (you must have a doctor certify the illness)
- Refuse to turn utility service back on if you or someone in the home becomes seriously ill (you must have a doctor certify the illness)
- Shut off your service during the complaint, investigation, hearing, or appeal process
- Shut off service because you did not pay for merchandise bought from the company
- Shut off or deny utility service because you have not paid an "estimated" bill – unless you have refused to allow the utility company to read the meter
- Shut off or deny service for overdue payments of a previous tenant

ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Energy assistance programs help low-income households pay for heat and weatherization. The following is a list of some common Energy Assistance Programs in Connecticut. Contact your utility company to see if it offers other programs or ways to help you with energy costs.

Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP)

CEAP is available to low-income households and households with elderly or disabled persons or children under six. Eligible households can get help to pay for their main source of heat. This includes heating oil, natural gas, electricity, propane, kerosene, coal, or wood. The amount you receive is a fixed amount paid to your utility company. The 2012-2013 CEAP season began on November 15, 2012.

Crisis Assistance Program

This program helps low-income households that have used their CEAP Basic Benefits but still cannot heat their home. The Crisis Assistance Program is a one-time payment of \$400 available to families in crisis who heat with deliverable fuel. To qualify, your household:

- Must heat with a deliverable fuel (propane, fuel oil, kerosene, pellets, wood, coal)
- Must be in crisis. Your inability to heat your home is causing a life-threatening situation.
- Must be without heat or within one week of being without heat
- Must have already used its CEAP benefits
- Must have an income of up to 150% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or be a "vulnerable household." A vulnerable household has an income of up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines and a household member who is elderly,

disabled, or under six years old.

Safety Net Services

This program helps households that have used their CEAP Basic Benefits and Crisis Assistance Benefits, but are still in a life-threatening situation. To qualify, you must heat with a deliverable fuel. After you apply, a Department of Social Services case manager will interview you and ask questions about your finances. If the case manager decides that your household cannot afford fuel, he or she will try to find you shelter or, in some cases, may authorize emergency fuel delivery. You may receive up to \$400 per fuel delivery in Safety Net Benefits.

Operation Fuel Bank

Fuel banks provide emergency assistance to low-income households that do not qualify for state or federal energy assistance. The maximum household payment is \$250 for the heating season. The fuel bank makes payments directly to your heating company. Apply in person and bring proof of your income and your most recent heating bill. Contact PURA at (800) 382-4586 for the phone number of the regional fuel bank closest to you.

Connecticut Weatherization Assistance Program

The Weatherization Assistance Program helps low-income households reduce fuel use and energy costs with home improvements. The program is run by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and works through local Community Action Agencies. To be eligible for weatherization assistance, you must be a low-income household. Priority is given to "vulnerable households." Vulnerable households are households with elderly or disabled persons, or children. To qualify:

- You must meet income requirements
- Your home cannot have been weatherized under this program since September 30, 1994
- Your home cannot be for sale or put up for sale within 6 months of completing the work
- Your home cannot be in foreclosure or loan mediation
- If you are a renter, your landlord may be asked for a contribution of 20% of the cost of materials, up to \$500 per unit

You can apply for Weatherization Assistance when you apply for CEAP. If you do not qualify for Weatherization Assistance, find out if your utility company provides weatherization services.

SUMMARY

If you are having trouble paying your gas or electric bills, contact your utility company immediately. Utility companies have financial assistance and energy programs available. Call to find out how your utility company can work with you and your budget. When it comes to making payment arrangements, do not agree to payments that you cannot afford. If you cannot resolve your issue with your utility company, contact the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority Consumer Assistance and Information Division. For more information about Energy Assistance Programs contact the Department of Social Services or the 2-1-1 Infoline.

Helpful Phone Numbers:

PURA Consumer Assistance Division: (800) 382-4586
 Department of Social Services: (800) 842-1508
 Infoline: 2-1-1
 Statewide Legal Services: (800) 453-3320, or (860) 344-0380

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communities in Connecticut. The Eastern Pequot Indians, the Schaghticoke Tribal Nation, and the Golden Hill Paugussett, who have been denied federal recognition, and the Schaghticoke Indian Tribe, whose petition is still pending, have all maintained state-recognized reservations since at least 1934. Under the proposed changes all of these tribes may qualify for expedited favorable review in federal recognition proceedings. The three previously-denied tribes would likely be able to file a new petition for federal recognition and qualify for both a rehearing and for expedited favorable review. Thus, the proposed changes could potentially result in as many as four new federally recognized tribes in the state of Connecticut.

Governor Malloy's Response

The state of Connecticut submitted a number of documents opposing the proposed changes to the federal recognition process during the open public commentary period. On February 24, 2014 Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy wrote a letter to President Obama urging the president to block the proposed changes. In his letter Governor Malloy highlighted concerns surrounding land claims, new casinos, and loss of tax base. Governor Malloy also claimed that the proposed changes would disproportionately affect Connecticut. The governor stated "Connecticut is the only state for which this regulation would result, automatically, in the reversal of a prior decision." (emphasis in the original).

In a document accompanying his letter, Governor Malloy specifically asked the President to remove the favorable expedited finding provision and the provision allowing groups that have previously been denied recognition to reapply. The Governor argued that the new expedited favorable finding criteria created a proxy for political and social continuity when they were actually absent. The Governor stated that the current

review process has already found three of the potentially affected Connecticut tribes to lack the actual political and social continuity required for federal recognition, making the proposed expedited favorable review changes inconsistent with previous factual findings. Finally, the Governor argued that the new criteria collapses the federal recognition process into one based solely on descent, which is contrary to the principles of tribal acknowledgement.

The concerns highlighted by the governor are both economic and political. Particularly, the state is worried that tribes will raise expensive land claim suits, which the governor stated often end in substantial monetary and land settlements. For these reasons, Connecticut is likely to continue to pursue further changes to the discussion draft.

Conclusion

The proposed changes to the federal recognition policy may have a significant impact in Connecticut. If the changes in the discussion draft are adopted, as many as four tribes may be federally recognized in the state. Connecticut's proposed amendments to the discussion draft would block most of these changes from taking place. These changes are being discussed in hearings across the country, and are truly a work in progress. If you have any questions about the federal recognition process see the listed materials and contact a lawyer for assistance.

Other Resources

The Proposed Changes Discussion Draft and Public Comments: <http://www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/AS-IA/ORM/83revise/index.htm>

The Office of Federal Acknowledgment (OFA): <http://www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/AS-IA/OFA/>

National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) page on Federal Recognition: <http://www.ncai.org/policy-issues/tribal-governance/federal-recognition>

Native American Rights Fund- Tribal Recognition: <http://www.narf.org/nill/resources/recog.htm>



Dannel P. Malloy
GOVERNOR
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

February 24, 2014

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to bring to your attention an issue of grave concern to the State of Connecticut, and to ask for your help.

Last June, the Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs issued a Discussion Draft proposing revisions to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) process for federal acknowledgment of Indian tribes (25 CFR Part 83). The draft, as proposed, would have a unique and devastating impact in Connecticut.

Under the Discussion Draft's "expedited favorable finding" process, the existence of a state reservation since 1934 would be irrefutable evidence that a group satisfies the core criteria for federal acknowledgement, such as continuous existence as a social community and the continuous exercise of political influence since 1789. The Discussion Draft would allow groups that have previously been denied federal tribal status the ability to re-apply and to seek an expedited favorable finding.

The problem with this proposal is simple: Connecticut has maintained reservations since 1934 for three groups that have already been denied federal acknowledgment precisely because they did not satisfy the core acknowledgement criteria. In other words, after thorough evidentiary processes, involving thousands of pages of evidence, extensive expert testimony, and intensive participation of petitioners, the State, and other interested parties, the Department of the Interior concluded that the existence of a state reservation in Connecticut could *not* be taken as a proxy for the core acknowledgement criteria. The Department's decisions to deny federal acknowledgment to all three petitioners have been upheld by the courts.

Connecticut maintains reservations simply because there are living descendants of the groups for which the reservations were first established. Using state reservations as a proxy for community and political authority thus collapses the acknowledgment decision into one based entirely on descent, a result that is contrary to the fundamental principles of tribal acknowledgment.

Other than the Connecticut petitioners, there are few if any groups in the United States that could meet the requirements proposed for an expedited favorable finding. And to my knowledge, there is no other state in which a reservation has been maintained since 1934 for a group that has already been denied acknowledgment. Accordingly, *only in Connecticut would the BIA's proposal result in the automatic reversal of past decisions.*

For Connecticut, the consequences would be devastating. The petitioning groups have filed or threatened land claims to vast areas of fully developed land in Connecticut. Such claims can cloud the title to real property in the claimed area, causing significant economic hardship to Connecticut residents. All of the petitioning groups have expressed interest in developing casinos and pursuing land claim lawsuits if they obtain federal acknowledgement. Federal reservations and trust lands would be created, exempt from state and local regulatory control, resulting in the loss of tax base, the need for increased services from local governments, and extraordinary new demands on the infrastructure of the State.

Accompanying this letter is a fuller explanation of the issue. However, let me stress that, while there are problematic aspects of the Discussion Draft affecting many states, only minor changes are needed to eliminate the unique and unfair bias against Connecticut by (a) eliminating the use of state reservations as a proxy for established criteria and (b) eliminating the ability of previously denied groups to re-apply for an expedited favorable finding. The overall proposal and its application to other states and tribal petitioners need not be affected.

Therefore, I ask for your help in incorporating our proposed changes into any notice of proposed rulemaking based on the Discussion Draft. These concerns have already been raised by me, the State's entire Congressional delegation, Connecticut's Attorney General, and numerous other parties through the public comment process on the Discussion Draft. I am available any time to further discuss Connecticut's concerns with you and your staff. I look forward to following up on this letter and to reaching a satisfactory conclusion for my State and the BIA.

Sincerely,

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

The Indian Child Welfare Act: An Overview

In 1978, U.S. Congress passed the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). The ICWA was a response to Indian children being taken from their Indian families and tribes by non-tribal agencies. Indian children were placed in non-tribal foster care, boarding homes and schools, and adopted to non-Indian families. Indian children, families, and tribes suffered culturally, emotionally, and physically from these placements.

The Indian Child Welfare Act states, “there is no resource that is more vital to the continued existence and integrity of Indian tribes than their children.” The ICWA sets federal standards to protect Indian children’s rights and to promote tribal stability. Its intent is to:

- 1) Protect the best interests of the Indian child,
- 2) Promote the role of Indian culture in the Indian child’s life, and
- 3) Foster the stability of Indian tribes and families.

The ICWA gives Indian parents, guardians, and federally recognized tribes certain rights in Indian child custody cases. It requires that Indian children, as much as possible, be placed with relatives or tribal families if they are removed from their homes. However, the ICWA only applies to children who are from federally recognized tribes or are eligible for membership in a federally recognized tribe.

This article answers some questions that tribes and tribal members have about Indian child custody cases. It is intended as an overview. It is not a complete explanation of the ICWA. If your tribe learns that an enrolled Indian child or child eligible for membership in the tribe is involved in a child custody case, the tribe has legal rights. If you are a parent or legal custodian of an Indian child and are involved in a termination of parental rights, foster care, or adoption case, contact a lawyer for information about ICWA protections.

Note: When “tribe”, “Indian child”, or “Indian tribe” is used in this article, it refers to federally recognized tribes and tribal members.

Who Does the ICWA Apply To?

The ICWA only applies to Indian children who are members of, or are eligible for membership in a federally recognized tribe. The ICWA defines an Indian child as:

- An unmarried person under 18 who is either, a) a member of an Indian tribe, or b) eligible for membership in an Indian tribe and is the biological child of a member of an Indian tribe.
- Tribes determine if the Indian child is eligible for membership according to their rules
- If the Indian child is a member of, or eligible for

membership in more than one federally recognized tribe, the Indian child’s tribe is the one the child has “more significant contacts” with.

The ICWA defines an Indian tribe as:

- A tribe recognized by the federal government as eligible for services provided to Indians
- Children who are members of Canadian tribes are not protected by the ICWA
- In Connecticut, the ICWA applies to the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Indian Tribes.

When Does the ICWA Apply?

The ICWA applies to Indian child custody cases in state court that involve:

- Neglect issues
- Foster care placement
- Termination of parental rights
- Pre-adoptive and adoption placements
- The ICWA **does not apply** to:
 - Custody arrangements during divorce cases
 - Custody disputes or proceedings between parents
 - Most juvenile delinquency cases

What Are My Rights As A Parent or Custodian Under the ICWA?

There are important protections for parents and custodians of Indian children under the ICWA. Three of them are explained below.

1) Right to Notice:

When an Indian child is part of an involuntary child custody case, the person removing the child or terminating parental rights must notify the parent or custodian and the tribe (or tribes).

An involuntary proceeding means an agency or person is trying to remove the child from his or her home without the parent or guardian’s consent. This may happen when there are concerns about the child’s safety or well-being.

2) Withdrawal of Consent:

If a parent or custodian voluntarily consents to foster care placement or termination of parental rights, the parent or custodian may be able to withdraw that consent.

- Voluntary means the parent or custodian allows the child to be removed from the home.
- Voluntary consent is only valid if it is in writing and recorded in front of a judge. The court must explain the consequences of consenting to child placement. The parent or custodian must fully understand what they are agreeing to.
- Consent given before the birth of an Indian child is invalid. Consent given within 10 days after birth of an Indian child is invalid.
- If a parent or custodian voluntarily consents to foster care placement, he or she can withdraw consent at any time.
- If a parent voluntarily consents to termination of parental rights or adoption, he or she can withdraw consent before the final court order of termination or adoption.
- After a final court order in a termination of parental rights case, the court can invalidate the order if consent was given due to fraud or duress (i.e. threats, pressure, or coercion).
- In an adoption case, the court can only invalidate a final court order if consent was given due to fraud or duress AND the adoption has been in effect less than two years.

3) Right to a Lawyer:

If the parent or custodian cannot afford an attorney, the court must provide one.



Pine Tree Legal Assistance is a non-profit organization that gives free legal help to poor people with civil (non-criminal) legal problems in Maine.

Pine Tree operates a special Native American Unit from its Bangor, Maine office. This unit is staffed by attorneys and paralegals in offices located throughout Maine. In the Native unit we help clients with many civil legal issues related to their Native American status.

Pine Tree attorneys are not licensed to practice law in Connecticut. However, the Native American Unit may be able to give information and help to low-income Native Americans in Connecticut with federal legal problems, such as questions about the Indian Child Welfare Act and the Jay Treaty. Pine Tree can also refer cases to lawyers in Connecticut. The telephone number for Pine Tree Legal’s Native American Unit is 1-800-879-7463.

ICWA

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What Are The Tribe's Rights Under the ICWA?

The tribe has four very important rights under the ICWA:

- Right to notice
- Exclusive Jurisdiction
- Right to have a case transferred to tribal court
- Right to intervene

1) Right to Notice:

Notice must be given to all federally recognized tribes that the Indian child is a member of, or is eligible for membership in during involuntary child custody proceedings.

Many courts have said that Indian tribes have rights in voluntary proceedings as well.

2) Exclusive Jurisdiction of the Tribal Court:

Exclusive Jurisdiction means the tribal court has the authority to decide the matter. Tribal courts have exclusive jurisdiction over Indian child custody cases when:

- The child lives on or is domiciled on the reservation; or
- The child is a ward of the tribal court.

Domicile is the place a person considers their permanent home. It is the place where a person has been present and intends to return and remain. For ICWA purposes, the child's domicile is the same as the parent's. If the child is born to unmarried parents, the child takes the mother's domicile. It is possible for an Indian child to live off-reservation, but still be "domiciled" there. For example: the child might be away at school, but the parents (or single mother) live on or are domiciled on the reservation. In that case, the child is domiciled on the reservation and protected by the ICWA.

3) Right to Transfer a Case to Tribal Court:

If an Indian child is a member of or eligible for membership in a federally recognized tribe, but is not living on or domiciled on the reservation, the tribe and the State share jurisdiction. This is called concurrent jurisdiction. If the child custody case is started in state court, the tribe or the Indian parents can request that it be moved to tribal court. The case should be moved to tribal court unless:

- Either parent objects to the transfer,
- The tribe does not want the case transferred to tribal court, or
- There is other good cause
- Good cause includes cases where:
- The tribe does not have a court
- Transfer to tribal court would cause undue hardship to the parties or witnesses
- The child is over 12 years old and objects to the transfer
- The child is over 5 years old and has had minimal contact with the tribe

4) Tribal Intervention

An Indian child's tribe has the right to "intervene" (participate) in an Indian child custody case that is in state court. The court must allow the tribe to participate. Intervention is important because it allows the tribe to look out for its child members and protect the interests of the tribe.

Where Will My Indian Child Be Placed?

According to the ICWA, there are certain people that Indian children must be placed with if they are removed from their homes. The child's tribe can change this preference order.

1) Foster Care Placement Preference (in order):

- With a member of the child's extended family;
- In a foster home licensed by, approved of, or specified by the Indian child's tribe;
- In an Indian foster home licensed or approved by a non-

Indian licensing authority; or

- In an institution for children that the tribe approves of or one that is run by an Indian organization.
- The child must be placed in "the least restrictive setting" which:
- Most closely matches a family situation,
- Is within a reasonable distance to his or her home, and
- Where his or her special needs can be met

2) Adoption Placement Preference (in order):

- With a member of the child's extended family;
- With other members of the Indian child's tribe; or
- With other Indian families; or
- With a non-Indian family, if no other eligible candidates have sought to adopt the child

Other Protections Under the ICWA

- Active Efforts to Prevent the Breakup of the Family:
 - The person or agency involved in foster care placement or termination of parental rights must try to prevent the breakup of the Indian family.
 - Note: This does not apply when an adoption is voluntarily initiated by a non-Indian parent that has sole custody of the child.
 - Sometimes, state or federal law gives more protection to the parent, custodian, or Indian child than the ICWA. The most protective law must be applied.
- Evidence and Expert Witness Requirements:
 - Foster care placement can only be ordered if there is "clear and convincing" evidence that removing the child is necessary. An expert with specialized and substantial knowledge of Native culture and families must testify.
 - Termination of parental rights can only be ordered with evidence "beyond a reasonable doubt" that the child will suffer "serious emotional or physical damage" if he or she stays in the home. Evidence must include an expert witness.
 - Note: After the "Baby Veronica" decision, this heightened protection does not apply where the Indian parent never had custody of the child.
- When an Indian Child Turns 18:
 - If a family adopts an Indian child, once that child turns 18, he or she can apply to the court for information about his or her biological parents and tribe.
- Federal Grants for Family Services Programs:
 - The U.S. government makes grants available to tribes and tribal organizations to run child and family service programs on or near reservations.

The ICWA and Non-federally Recognized Tribes in Connecticut

The ICWA protections **do not apply** to child custody cases involving non-federally recognized tribes or children from non-federally recognized tribes. Connecticut Family Law rules apply to child custody cases involving Indian children from non-federally recognized tribes. The increased protections, higher burden of proof, and notice requirements of the ICWA do not apply to children from state-recognized tribes.

Connecticut Courts and The ICWA:

Connecticut Courts have not ruled on many cases involving the ICWA. But, in 1993 the Superior Court of Connecticut would not terminate the parental rights of an enrolled Indian mother. The case was called *In re Jessica T.* The Court discussed three parts of the ICWA:

- 1) The beyond a reasonable doubt standard of proof

ICWA

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- The Superior Court decided that the agency trying to terminate parental rights could not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the Indian child would suffer serious emotional or physical harm if returned to her mother.
- 2) Qualifications of an “expert witness” for ICWA cases
 - The Court decided that for a witness to be an “expert witness” in an ICWA case, he or she must have specialized knowledge of Native American families, child rearing practices, or the meaning and intent of the ICWA.
 - 3) Remedial services and rehabilitative programs
 - The Court decided that because the mother and child did not have the chance to meet with counselors educated in Indian culture, the agency did not provide “remedial services and rehabilitation programs” required by the ICWA.
 - However, after the “Baby Veronica” case remedial services may not need to be provided if the Indian parent never had custody of the child.

Impact of the “Baby Veronica” Decision on the ICWA

The 2013 Supreme Court “Baby Veronica” decision was the second Supreme Court case to ever address the ICWA. The Court’s decision changed the ICWA in three important ways:

- 1) The requirements of evidence were weakened
 - The ICWA section preventing involuntary termination of parental rights without a heightened showing that serious harm to Indian child is likely to result from parent's continued custody of the child does not apply to a situation where the Indian parent never had custody of child.
- 2) Remedial services and programs requirements were weakened
 - No remedial efforts need to be made when the Indian parent never had custody of the child.
- 3) Adoption by non-Indian families was made easier
 - A non-Indian family may adopt an Indian child when no other preferred people have sought adoption.

Conclusion

The ICWA provides special protections and rights for Indian children, their families and federally recognized tribes. These protections are in place to help support Indian families and communities, and encourage tribal stability. State family law controls child custody or child protection cases involving children from non-federally recognized tribes. If you feel that your ICWA rights as a parent, child, Indian custodian, or tribe, have been violated, or if you have ICWA related questions, contact a lawyer for assistance.

Resources:

- The Native American Right’s Fund: “A Practical Guide to the Indian Child Welfare Act”
- <http://narf.org/icwa/index.htm>

Renters’ Rights and Responsibilities

As a tenant, you have certain legal rights and responsibilities even if they are not written into your lease. This article answers some common questions that arise in landlord/tenant relationships and during the eviction process. Please use this information as a starting point. It does not cover all of your rights and responsibilities, nor is it a substitute for legal assistance.

It is important to realize that slightly different laws control some rental agreements, such as mobile home and single-family rentals. If you have questions about your lease or your tenancy, or if you are having issues with your landlord, more information is available at Statewide Legal Services’ website (<http://www.slsct.org/>). If you need more immediate assistance, contact an attorney or Statewide Legal Services directly.

Your Lease

Most tenants have a written lease with their landlord. An oral lease is also legally binding. Make sure you read your lease carefully and ask your landlord any questions you have before signing your lease. Some of the details that should be included in your lease:

- The amount of rent
- The date the rent is due
- Who is responsible for paying utilities
- Who is responsible for snow plowing, garbage pick-up, lawn care, and other services
- The amount of your security deposit and any other deposits (i.e. pet deposits)
- The landlord’s policy on pets

If your lease does not specify how long your tenancy will continue (for example, a one year lease or a month-to-month lease) Connecticut law assumes your tenancy is on a month-to-month basis. However, if you pay rent weekly, Connecticut law assumes your tenancy is on a weekly basis.

Security Deposits

Many landlords require tenants to pay a security deposit plus the first month’s rent. By law, your landlord cannot ask for a security deposit that is more than two months’ rent. If you are over 62 years old, the security deposit cannot be more than one month’s rent. Your landlord keeps your security deposit until you move out. It is money your landlord can use to repair damages other than normal wear and tear that you caused. The security deposit can also be used for overdue rent payments.

If part of your security deposit is needed for repairs, your landlord must return the unused part to you with a list of the damages and the cost of repair. If you did not cause any damage to the rental unit, and you are current on your rent, your entire security deposit plus interest should be returned to you within 30 days of moving out. It is helpful if you and your landlord walk through your rental unit before you move in so you can take notes or photographs of its condition.

Tenant’s Responsibilities

A tenant has responsibilities to his or her landlord and the rental premises. These include:

- Paying rent on time
- Keeping the apartment or area you occupy clean and safe
- Removing all ashes, garbage and other waste in a clean and safe way
- Keeping appliances and plumbing fixtures clean

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- Using electrical, plumbing, sanitary, heating, ventilating, air conditioning and any other systems and appliances in a reasonable manner
- Not willfully or negligently destroying, damaging, or removing any part of the premises
- Keeping noise and other disturbances to a minimum. Do not disturb your neighbors' peaceful enjoyment of the premises. Do not create a nuisance. Do not put other tenants health or safety in jeopardy.
- Repairing or replacing any damage that you or your guests or household members cause
- Notifying the landlord if something needs repair
- Landlord's Responsibilities

Under state law, your landlord has responsibilities regarding the safety of your rental unit. These responsibilities serve as minimum protections for you. You and your landlord may agree to other responsibilities, but make sure they are written into your lease. Your landlord must:

- Comply with building and housing codes that affect a tenant's health and safety
- Do whatever is necessary (including making repairs) to keep your premises in "fit and habitable condition"
- If you or one of your guests creates the condition, it is your responsibility to fix it.
- Keep common areas clean and safe
- Keep electric, plumbing, sanitary, heating, and ventilating systems in good working order
- Keep appliances that are supplied by the landlord in good working order
- Supply you with running water and "reasonable amounts" of hot water at all times
- Supply you with reasonable heat
- **Note:** It may be written in your lease that you are responsible for paying for your own utilities, including heat and hot water. If that is the case, the landlord is not responsible for making sure you have adequate heat and hot water. In those situations, the landlord is only responsible for making sure that your heating and plumbing systems are in good working order.

Tenant's Remedies

If your landlord fails to substantially follow the terms of your lease (called "material noncompliance"), in particular if his failure to do something affects your health or safety, notify your landlord in writing. In your letter, include the current date and the date the issue started. Be specific about what is wrong with your rental unit and how the problem violates your lease or the law. Keep a copy of the letter for yourself.

Your landlord has 15 days to fix the problem. If your landlord does not fix the problem within 15 days of receiving your letter, you may be able to end your rental agreement. Before you do so, contact an attorney about your legal rights.

There are certain essential services your landlord is required to supply unless you, as the tenant, have taken responsibility for the services. These include heat, running water, hot water, electricity, and gas. If your landlord is required to supply an essential service, and does not, you must send a written notice to your landlord. Because these services are essential, you may have additional options available. These options may include:

- Finding substitute housing
- Repairing the issue yourself and deducting the cost of repairs. Keep all receipts!
- Ending your rental agreement

- For these options to be available, you must be a tenant in a month-to-month lease or longer.

Contact an attorney before you use any of the above options to make sure you are within your rights as a tenant. Remember, you must notify your landlord before you use any of the above remedies. Oral notice to your landlord is fine; however it is difficult to prove. We recommend that you send your notice in writing. Be specific about dates and issues, and keep a copy for yourself.

Landlord Access to Your Rental Unit and Lockouts

Your landlord cannot enter your rental unit without your permission unless:

- There is an emergency,
- Your landlord has a court order to enter, or
- You have abandoned or moved out of your rental unit

You are expected to allow your landlord to enter if he or she gives you reasonable notice and wants to enter at a reasonable time and for reasonable reasons. Reasonable reasons include making repairs, inspections, or showing your rental unit to new renters or buyers. It is a good idea to notify your landlord if you will be away from your home for an extended period so he or she does not think you have abandoned your rental unit.

It is against the law for your landlord to change your locks, lock you out of your home, or keep your belongings without a legal eviction (see information below). If your landlord locks you out, call the police. Do not try to get back into your home before you call the police and report the issue. The police will try to contact your landlord so you can get back into your home. If your landlord does not allow you back in, you can file a formal complaint with the police.

Foreclosure

If the rental building you are living in is being foreclosed, contact an attorney for assistance. When a building is being foreclosed, it means the owner has not paid the mortgage or taxes. You cannot be forced out of your rental unit or evicted during a foreclosure as long as you pay your rent and follow the terms of your lease. You can be evicted after the foreclosure. If the new owner of your rental unit wants to evict you, you have at least 90 days after the foreclosure before you can be evicted.

Reasons You Can Be Evicted

When you have a rental agreement or lease with your landlord, he or she can evict you before your lease expires if:

- You have not paid your rent on time
- If you pay rent on a monthly basis, you have a grace period of 9 days before your rent is legally late. For example, if your rent is due on the 1st of the month, you must pay it by the 10th of the month.
- If your rent is due every week, you must pay rent within 4 days of your due date.
- If you pay your rent after the grace period and your landlord accepts the late payment, your landlord cannot end your rental agreement for failure to pay rent.
- You have violated your lease
- Your lease has expired and you have not renewed your lease or moved out
- Your conduct creates a serious nuisance to other tenants
- Your conduct materially affects the health and safety of other tenants or the premises
- You have failed to follow rules and regulations in the rental agreement

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You cannot be evicted from your rental unit without a court judgment. If you receive an eviction notice, it is very important that you read it carefully, follow the instructions, and send back all necessary paperwork.

The Eviction Process

Below is a summary of the eviction process. It is important that you understand your rights and the process before you go to court. There are important deadlines that you must follow, so read all notices carefully. Contact an attorney or Statewide Legal Services for assistance.

The two ways you might first learn that your landlord is trying to evict you are: a warning letter from your landlord or an official Notice to Quit.

1) A warning letter (called a "Kapa Notice") is a letter from your landlord telling you that you have broken your lease or violated your rental agreement. If your landlord is trying to evict you for some reason OTHER than non-payment of rent, your landlord must give you a written warning or notice. The notice must explain how you broke your lease or violated your rental agreement and give you 15 days to fix the problem.

2) A Notice to Quit is an official court document served on you by a state marshal or uninvolved third party. A Notice to Quit is the beginning of the legal eviction process. It must be served to you and all tenants and occupants of the dwelling. Even if you receive a "Kapa Notice" from your landlord, you must also receive a Notice to Quit.

Step One: The Notice to Quit.

A Notice to Quit is the legal way your landlord begins the eviction process. It should contain the following information:

- Your name
- Your landlord's name
- Your address
- The date your landlord wants you to be moved out and off the premises
- The reasons for the eviction

The Notice to Quit must be served on you at least 3 days before your rental agreement ends OR at least 3 days before the date your landlord wants you moved out by. If you do not move out by the date on the Notice to Quit, you can be issued a Summons and Complaint.

Step Two: The Summons and Complaint.

The Summons and Complaint are the official documents telling you that your landlord is taking you to court (the Summons) and explaining why you are being evicted (the Complaint). A state marshal must serve you and all tenants and occupants of the dwelling with copies of the Summons and Complaint.

There will be a Return Date on the Summons. It is VERY important that you pay attention to the Return Date. The Return Date tells you when to file your response to the eviction notice with the court. You must file your response no later than 2 days after the Return Date on the Summons.

Step Three: Your Answer and Appearance

Your response to the Summons and Complaint has two parts: an Answer and an Appearance. Answer and Appearance forms are available from the court clerk or on-line at www.jud.ct.gov (look for the "Forms" link). You only have 2 days AFTER the Return Date to file your Answer and Appearance with the court. Your Answer is your chance to say you disagree with the eviction and tell your side of the story.

Make copies of your Answer and Appearance for yourself and your landlord. Mail your landlord's copy to him or to his lawyer if he has one. Mail or bring the original Answer and Appearance to the court address on the Summons within 2 days of the Return Date.

Step Four: Housing Court

If you mailed or dropped off your Answer and Appearance on time (within 2 days of the Return Date), you will get a notice to be in court for a hearing. Make sure you arrive to court on time. Bring any papers and documents that help you tell your side of the story (leases, signed agreements, receipts, photos, etc.). You can also bring witnesses. If you do not show up to court, you will lose the case by "default".

Before your hearing, you can make an agreement with your landlord. It is a good idea for you to have spoken to a lawyer or have one with you before you make any agreements. If you do not have a lawyer, you can get the assistance of a court Housing Mediator on the day of your hearing. Housing Mediators can help you and your landlord reach a fair agreement. Do not feel pressured into making an agreement.

If you and your landlord do not come to an agreement, the judge will hear your case. This will be your chance to speak to the judge and present evidence.

Step Five: The Judgment

If you win your case, you can stay in your home. If you lose your case or do not show up to court, a judgment will be issued against you. If a judgment is issued against you, you will have to leave your home within 5 days of the judgment. The date of judgment, Sundays, and legal holidays are not counted in this 5-day period.

If you were evicted for not paying your rent or for staying in your rental unit longer than your lease allowed ("lapse of time") you can request a Stay of Execution. You must request the Stay of Execution within 5 days of the judgment. If you were evicted for not paying rent and can afford to pay the back rent, you must pay it all to the court within that 5 days. If you were evicted for lapse of time, you need to fill out the Stay of Execution request within 5 days of the judgment. After you apply for the Stay of Execution, you will be scheduled for a hearing. At the hearing, the judge will decide how much longer you can stay in your home.

SUMMARY

When you enter into a rental agreement, it is important that you read your lease and understand your rights and responsibilities. You must notify your landlord about any problems you are having with your rental unit so he or she can try to fix them. If the problem continues, speak to an attorney to find out about your legal rights. If you find yourself in an eviction process, contact an attorney. Make sure you understand the notices and court forms you receive. File your paperwork on time and attend all of your court dates.

Contact Information:

Statewide Legal Services
website:

(800) 453-3320, or (860) 344-0380.
<http://www.slsc.org/>

Native Americans and Taxes

The United States limits the power to tax to three bodies: the federal, state, and tribal governments. Each state's power to tax is only limited by the rules of the Constitution. One of the strictest limitations placed focuses on taxation of state and federally recognized tribes and tribal members. Tribal sovereignty prohibits and limits a state's right to impose certain taxes on tribes and tribal members. Although federally recognized tribes are exempt from a greater number of taxes than state tribes, states negotiate with tribal leaders to determine what taxes state tribes and tribal members have to pay. For example, many state constitutions follow the federal government's decision to not tax Indian lands, even though states are legally allowed to tax tribes that are not federally recognized.

The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that a state government does not have the power to tax reservation land. Also, states are limited in their ability to tax Indian tribes or tribal members living inside Indian country. Examples of tax exemptions for state-recognized tribes and their members living in Indian country include:

- Federal income taxes for income made on trust lands (held for Indian tribes by the United States).
- State income taxes when the income comes from a resource that is protected by a treaty (such as fish and timber) and the resource is located on reservation land.
- Real property taxes on tribal land
- State sales taxes paid by Indians in transactions made on an Indian reservation
- Motor vehicle excise taxes and registration fees for motor vehicles that are housed on a reservation.

These tax exemptions only apply to members of a state (or federal) recognized tribe; they do not apply to nonmember Indians or non-Indians who enter Indian country. Connecticut state legislature did not offer a single, clear definition of who is an "indigenous Indian," but the definition presumably includes members of the five recognized tribes in the state: (1) Golden Hill Paugussett, (2) Mashantucket Pequot, (3) Mohegan, (4) Paucatuck Eastern Pequot, and (5) Schaghticoke.

The Connecticut legislature uses location as a key factor in determining if a tribe or tribal member is eligible for a tax exemption. Tax exemptions are granted depending on the activity's relation to the reservation. For example, Connecticut will give a state-recognized tribe a grant that serves to excuse the tribe from having to pay property taxes on reservation land. State taxation of Indians is prohibited on fee lands within reservation boundaries, trust lands of Indians and tribes located outside reservations, and independent communities. If an activity clearly takes place outside of Indian country, then tribes and Indians will not be exempt from state taxes. In Indian country, when the activity is based either on Indian property or is an Indian country-based activity, states are not allowed to tax Indians. If an activity occurs both inside

and outside Indian country (such as use of a highway), the state may instill a tax that is proportionate to the amount the activity occurs inside and outside the boundaries of Indian country.

Income taxes of Indians are also determined by location of the work. If a tribal member lives and works in federally-recognized Indian country, then a state cannot impose income tax. If a tribal member works in Indian country and lives outside, then the state can tax the individual.

Outside of Indian country, Indians are subject to all nondiscriminatory state taxes, including fees on personal property and excise taxes. Also, tribal property that is located outside of Indian country will most likely be subject to state taxation.

Only Congress has the authority to impose a new tax on individuals, tribes and activities that reside or occur within the boundaries of Indian Country.

The above information is a general, but not complete, introduction to taxes. For more information, see the below resources.

Helpful Resources

<http://www.bia.gov/FAQs/>

<http://www.narf.org/pubs/misc/faqs.html>

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/rpt/2007-R-0475.htm>

LEGAL RESOURCES

Civil Legal Matters:

Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut:

- Free civil (not criminal) legal assistance to low-income individuals. Individuals must income-qualify for legal services.
- Services include: Family law, public benefits, housing matters, consumer issues, and work and unemployment issues
- Statewide Legal Services advocates may refer you to another free legal services provider for help with your issue.
- Contact information:
 - <http://www.slsct.org/>
 - (800) 453-3320, or (860) 344-0380 (from Middletown and Hartford)

Greater Hartford Legal Aid:

- Assists low income people with civil legal matters
- Helps low-income people represent themselves in civil legal matters.
- Takes referrals from Statewide Legal Services of CT (see above). Call Statewide Legal Services to see if you income-qualify.
- Services include: Family law and domestic violence, employment, disability, homelessness and housing issues, elder law, and government benefits
- Promotes rights of individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Greater Hartford Legal Aid is part of the AIDS Legal Network.
- Contact information:

<http://www.ghla.org/>

- (860) 541-5000
- (888) 380-3646 for the AIDS Legal Network

New Haven Legal Assistance Association:

- Free legal services to low-income people in New Haven and the Lower Naugatuck Valley
- Services include: Family law, child protection, consumer, housing, workers rights, criminal defense, and immigration issues
- Takes referrals from Statewide Legal Services of CT (see above). Call Statewide Legal Services to see if you income-qualify.
- Call New Haven Legal Assistance directly if you are an undocumented individual in need of legal services.
- Contact information:
 - <http://www.nhlegal.org/>
 - (203) 946-4811

Connecticut Legal Services

- A private, non-profit civil law firm dedicated to helping low-income families and individuals obtain justice.
- Contact information:
 - www.connlegalservices.org/ContactCLS.htm

Children's Legal Matters:

The Center for Children's Advocacy:

- Legal representation for abused and neglected children.
- Advocates for children's legal rights and helps young people find the services they need for support.
- Contact Information:
 - <http://www.kidscounsel.org/>
 - (860) 570-5327

The Children's Law Center:

- Legal representation to low-income children in very difficult family court cases ("chronic conflict cases")
- Contact Information:
 - <http://www.clcct.org/>
 - (860) 232-9993

Lawyers for Children America:

- Free legal assistance from attorneys protecting the rights of children who have been abused or neglected
- Contact information:
 - www.lawyersforchildrenamerica.org
 - (860) 273-0441

Criminal Legal Matters:

CT Public Defender Services:

- For low-income individuals who cannot afford an attorney for a criminal matter.
- The criminal matter must carry a risk of jail time.
- Also provides representation and guardian ad-litem services to low-income children and parents in child welfare, family, and child support matters.
- Contact information:
 - <http://www.ct.gov/ocpd/site/default.asp>
 - (860) 509- 6400

New Haven Legal Assistance Association:

- Free legal services to low-income people in New Haven and the Lower Naugatuck Valley (see "Civil Legal Matters" above)
- Takes criminal referrals from the Public Defender's Office
- Contact information:
 - <http://www.nhlegal.org/>
 - (203) 946-4811

LEGAL RESOURCES

Specialized Legal Assistance:

AIDS Legal Network for Connecticut:

- Collaboration of legal services organizations in CT
- Legal Services include: Discrimination, family law, advance directives, immigration, and confidentiality assistance for individuals living with HIV/AIDS
- Contact information:
 - <http://www.ghla.org/aln/index.htm>
 - (888) 380-3646, or (860) 541-5000

CT Fair Housing Center:

- Legal housing advice for low-income people
- Services include assistance with: Equal access to housing matters, foreclosure, and housing discrimination
- Contact information:
 - <http://www.ctfairhousing.org/>
 - (888) 247-4401

CT Legal Rights Project:

- Free legal services to low-income adults with psychiatric disabilities.
- Assists with legal matters related to: Inpatient hospital issues, treatment, recovery, civil rights, access to housing, and other issues related to the client's psychiatric disability
- Contact information:
 - <http://www.clrp.org/>
 - (877) 402-2299, or (860) 262-5030

Other Helpful Contact Information:

CT Alliance for Basic Human Needs (CABHN):

- Statewide network of organizations dedicated to issues affecting low-income individuals and communities
- Advocates for, and educates low-income individuals
- Contact Information:
 - <http://www.larcc.org/cabhn>
 - (860) 278 -5688

Connecticut Department of Social Services:

- Assists individuals and families find support services and assistance to maintain a basic standard of living and self-reliance
- Contact Information:
 - <http://www.ct.gov/dss/site/default.asp>
 - (800) 842-1508

Connecticut Indian Council:

- Part of the greater Rhode Island Indian Council, which promotes social, economic, and cultural well-being of Native individuals and communities
- Assists Native individuals with job training, job placement, and tuition assistance
- Contact Information:
 - <http://www.riindiancouncil.org/>
 - (860) 535-1277

Department of Energy and Environmental Protection:

- Responsible for management of Indian affairs in Connecticut including improving buildings, areas, and lands on state reservations and in Indian communities
- Contact Information:
 - <http://www.ct.gov/dep/site/default.asp>
 - (860) 424-3000

Indian Affairs Council, Edward Sarabia, Coordinator:

- Responsible for looking out for the best interests of tribes and tribal lands.
- Responsible for being in contact with and available to tribal communities and advising the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection on Indian affairs.
- Contact Information:
 - (860) 424-3066