



Strengthening Tribal Nations and Insular Communities

Let's put our minds together to improve our schools because our children deserve a world class education. That means returning control of Indian education to tribal nations, with additional resources and support, so Tribes can reform schools and direct their children's education here in Indian Country.

*President Barack Obama
June 13, 2014*

The United States has a unique Nation-to-Nation relationship with each of the 566 federally recognized Tribes and strongly supports tribal self-determination and Federal treaty and trust responsibilities to American Indians and Alaska Natives. The U.S. also supports affiliated insular areas including the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. In addition, Interior administers and oversees Federal assistance to the three Freely Associated States: the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

The Department of the Interior's programs maintain strong and meaningful relationships with Native and insular communities, strengthen government-to-government relationships with federally recognized Tribes, promote efficient and effective governance, and support nation-building and self-determination. These programs deliver community services, restore tribal homelands, fulfill commitments related to water and other resource rights, execute fiduciary trust responsibilities, support the stewardship of energy and other natural resources, create economic opportunity, expand access to education, and assist in supporting community resilience in the face of a changing climate.

The 2016 President's budget supports an all-of-government approach to addressing Federal responsibilities and tribal needs. Coordination of this work across the Federal government is being carried out through the White House Council on Native American Affairs, established by Executive Order on June 26, 2013, by President Obama and chaired by the Secretary of the Interior. The budget provides significant increases across a wide range

of Federal programs that serve Tribes—education, social services, justice, health, infrastructure, climate resilience, and stewardship of land, water, and other natural resources—and supports improved access to Federal programs and resources, particularly focused on youth. The Department and the Bureau of Indian Affairs play an important role in carrying out the Federal trust responsibility and in serving Tribes. The budget capitalizes on the role of BIA as a broad ranging provider of Federal services by proposing to create a one-stop shop approach for facilitating tribal access to Federal funds and programs across the U.S. government. For insular communities, the 2016 budget provides additional resources to address climate resilience and empower insular communities by improving quality of life, creating economic opportunity, and promoting efficient and effective governance.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NATIVE YOUTH

The 2016 budget includes key investments to support the launch of Generation Indigenous, an initiative focused on addressing barriers to success for Native American youth. This initiative takes an integrative, comprehensive, and culturally-appropriate approach to help improve lives and opportunities for Native American youth. Multiple Federal agencies, including the Departments of the Interior, Education, Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, Labor, and Justice, are working collaboratively with Tribes to implement education reforms and address issues facing youth.

In today's global economy, a high quality education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity—it is a prerequisite to success. President Obama set out a

vision for a 21st century education system, grounded in both high academic standards and tribal values and traditions. The Interior budget proposes a \$1.0 billion investment in Indian education to support a comprehensive transformation of the Bureau of Indian Education. This multi-year process will transform BIE into an organization that serves as a capacity builder and service provider to support Tribes in educating their youth and which delivers a world-class and culturally-appropriate education across Indian Country. The budget invests in improving educational opportunities and quality from the earliest years through college. The budget request supports this transformation with increased investments totaling \$94.0 million to improve opportunities and outcomes in the classroom; provide improved instructional services and teacher quality; promote enhanced language and cultural programs; enhance broadband and digital access; and provide funds to Tribes to incentivize creative solutions to school transformations. The budget also includes an increase of \$59.0 million to replace the Little Singer Community and Cove Day schools in Arizona and repair and rebuild other BIE schools. To foster public private-partnerships that will support improving student experiences at BIE funded schools, the 2016 budget proposes appropriations language enabling the Secretary to activate the National Foundation for American Indian Education. The proposed bill language will initiate a foundation focused on fundraising to create opportunities for Indian students in and out of the classroom.

Budget increases across other Federal agencies through the Generation Indigenous initiative will support educational outcomes and provide wrap-around services to help address barriers and provide opportunities for youth, including behavioral and mental health, and substance abuse services. The Department of Education will expand support for Native Youth Community Projects from \$3.0 million to \$50.0 million in 2016 to support comprehensive community-driven strategies to improve college and career readiness of Native American youth. These new investments will build on current efforts to better coordinate and demonstrate results from across the Federal government to serve Native American youth.

The BIA also requests an additional \$3.0 million to support youth participation in natural resources programs that focus on the protection, enhancement, and conservation of natural resources through science, education, and cultural learning. Tribal youth will benefit from the mentoring and

positive role models provided by tribal personnel who work on-the-ground to manage and protect tribal trust resources. Programs aimed at tribal youth will pay future dividends by opening future job opportunities, instilling respect for resources, and developing an appreciation of the importance of natural resources to tribal cultures and livelihoods. The request will support approximately 60 new tribal youth projects and training programs throughout Indian Country and supplement existing training programs within the forestry, water, and agriculture programs. In addition, the BIE budget includes a \$4.6 million increase for scholarships for post-secondary education, with a focus on recipients seeking degrees in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Making advanced education opportunities available for tribal members is a high priority for Tribes, who see education as the path to economic development and a better quality of life for their communities through an educated and skilled tribal member workforce.



SUPPORTING INDIAN FAMILIES AND PROTECTING INDIAN COUNTRY

Supporting Indian families and ensuring public safety are top priorities for the President and tribal leaders. As part of the President's commitment to protect and promote the development of prosperous tribal communities, BIA will continue the Tiwahe initiative. The initiative promotes a comprehensive and integrated approach to supporting family stability and strengthening tribal communities by addressing interrelated issues associated with child welfare, domestic violence, substance abuse, poverty, and incarceration. Tiwahe means family in the Lakota language. The Tiwahe initiative directly supports the Generation Indigenous initiative, which is focused on addressing barriers to success for Native youth, by leveraging BIA programs in concert

with other Federal programs that support family and community stability and cultural awareness.

Child abuse and neglect are serious and persistent problems among Indian populations in the United States. The impact of child maltreatment in many Indian communities has been devastating. It has disrupted extended family support networks and broken up families through placements outside the community. Children living in poverty are far more likely to be exposed to violence and psychological trauma, both at home and in the surrounding community. Many Indian communities face high rates of poverty, substance abuse, suicide, and violent crime. The U.S. Census Bureau recently reported that between the years 2007-2011, 23.9 percent of the American Indian and Alaska Native population lived in poverty—a figure that exceeded the national poverty rate of 14.3 percent.

Solutions lie in addressing the interrelated problems of poverty, violence, and substance abuse faced by many communities through a comprehensive, culturally-appropriate approach to help improve the lives and opportunities of Indian families. This requires coordination of social service programs, taking steps to maintain family cohesiveness, preparing family wage earners for work opportunities, and providing rehabilitative alternatives to incarceration for family members with substance abuse issues. The proposed increase of \$6.0 million for social services programs will support the Tiwaha initiative by providing culturally-appropriate services with the goal of empowering individuals and families

through health promotion, family stability, and strengthening tribal communities as a whole. The budget also includes \$4.0 million for Law Enforcement Special Initiatives and \$5.0 million for tribal courts to implement a comprehensive strategy for providing alternatives to incarceration and increases in treatment opportunities across Indian Country. The BIA will work with the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services to provide comprehensive suicide prevention training to police officers and work with tribal courts to identify and make mental health services and support more widely available.

To promote public safety and community resilience in Indian communities, the 2016 law enforcement budget builds on recent successes in reducing violent crime and expands efforts to lower repeat incarceration in Indian Country, which is a Department priority goal. In 2016, a pilot program to lower rates of repeat incarceration will be expanded from three sites to five, with the goal of reducing recidivism by a total of three percent within these communities by September 30, 2017. To achieve this goal, BIA will implement comprehensive alternatives to incarceration strategies that seek to address underlying causes of repeat offenses—including substance abuse and social service needs—by utilizing alternative courts, increased treatment opportunities, probation programs, and interagency and intergovernmental partnerships with tribal, Federal, and State stakeholders.

The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act expands the jurisdiction of tribal law enforcement and justice systems to domestic violence altercations in Indian Country. The BIA Office of Justice Services is providing technical assistance to Tribes to change tribal legal codes to reflect provisions contained in the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act that provide stronger protections and safety for vulnerable populations. The BIA is also implementing training for direct service law enforcement program staff in the areas of law enforcement, social services, victim services, and courts and is making this training available to Tribes operating these programs under self-determination contracts and compacts.

TRIBAL NATION-BUILDING

Programs run by Tribes through contracts with the Federal government support tribal nation-building and self-determination. The 2016 President's budget request for contract support costs is \$277.0 million, an increase of \$26.0 million above the 2015 enacted level.

PRIORITY GOAL SAFER AND MORE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES IN INDIAN COUNTRY

GOAL: Reduce repeat incarceration in Indian communities.

METRIC: By September 30, 2015, reduce rates of repeat incarceration in three target tribal communities by three percent through a comprehensive "alternatives to incarceration" strategy that seeks to address underlying causes of repeat offenses, including substance abuse and social services needs through tribal and Federal partnerships.

The Department is proposing to extend this goal to five communities by the end of 2017.

Based on the most recent analysis, the requested amount will fully fund estimated 2016 contract support costs. The budget also includes—for the first time—a new proposal to fully fund BIA and Indian Health Service contract support costs as mandatory funding, beginning in 2017. The BIA and IHS will continue to work together with Tribes and consult on policies to address long-term programmatic and funding goals to advance tribal self-determination.

Tribal leaders and communities need access to quality data and information as they make decisions concerning their communities, economic development, and land and resource management. The ability to access and analyze data to support such decisions is critical to understanding the benefits and impacts of policy and program decisions. The collection and analysis of data by the Federal government is also critical to ensuring that Federal agencies and programs are delivering effective services to Tribes to meet tribal needs and deliver on Federal responsibilities. The budget includes a total increase of \$12.0 million to help address long-standing concerns Tribes have expressed with the quality of data in Indian Country. This funding will enable Interior to work with Tribes to improve Federal data quality and availability, work with the U.S. Census Bureau to address data gaps for Indian Country, and create an Office of Indian Affairs Policy, Program Evaluation, and Data to support effective, data-driven, tribal policy making and program implementation.

To deliver on an all-of-government approach to delivering programs and funding to Indian Country, the BIA budget proposes an increase of \$4.0 million to establish a One-Stop Tribal Support Center to make it easier for Tribes to find and use the hundreds of services available to Tribes across the Federal government. The One-Stop Tribal Support Center will include an online portal and services to support Tribes in accessing Federal programs and resources at the regional and local levels. The Center will make it easier for Tribes to find services and receive consistent information any time of day and reduce costs by eliminating duplication of outreach efforts and services by Federal government agencies. Initially, the Center will focus on programs that serve Native American youth, in support of the Generation Indigenous initiative and to pilot this new approach to serving needs in Indian Country.

The BIA budget includes \$4.5 million to establish an Indian Energy Service Center to facilitate

energy development in Indian Country. It is imperative that tribal needs to permit energy development on reservation lands are met expeditiously. Income from energy is one of the larger sources of revenue generated from trust lands, with royalty income climbing to \$1.1 billion in 2014. Delays in energy development can result in delayed profits to Indian mineral rights owners. The Indian Energy Service Center will expedite the leasing, permitting, and reporting for conventional and renewable energy on Indian lands, and—importantly—provide resources to ensure development occurs safely, protects the environment, and manages risks appropriately by technical assistance to support assessment of the social and environmental impacts of energy development. The Center will be composed of staff from BIA, the Office of Natural Resources Revenue, Bureau of Land Management, and Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians—all of which have responsibilities related to tribal energy development. Working with the Department of Energy's Tribal Energy Program, the Center will provide a full suite of energy development-related services to Tribes nationwide and meet the workload requirements of current demands for services. The Center will coordinate and enhance BIA's ability to process leases, BLM's responsibility for Applications for Permit to Drill approval and monitoring, and the ONRR responsibilities for royalty accounting, and will institute streamlined processes, standardized procedures, and best practices for all types of energy at various locations and bureaus.

SUSTAINABLE STEWARDSHIP OF TRUST RESOURCES

The BIA's trust programs assist Tribes in the management, development, and protection of Indian trust land and natural resources on 55 million surface acres and 57 million acres of subsurface mineral estates. These programs assist tribal landowners in optimizing the sustainable stewardship and use of resources, providing benefits such as revenue, jobs, and the protection of cultural, spiritual, and traditional resources.

Taking land into trust is one of the most important functions Interior undertakes on behalf of Tribes. Homelands are essential to the health, safety, social, cultural, and economic welfare of tribal governments. The Administration set an ambitious goal of placing more than 500,000 acres of land into trust by the end of 2016. To that end, BIA processed more than 1,835 land-into-trust applications, accepting more than 281,755 acres in trust on behalf of

Tribes since 2009. In 2014, Interior acquired 41,685 acres of land in trust on behalf of Tribes and individuals and approved 290 fee-to-trust applications. The BIA intends to meet or exceed the 500,000 acre goal in 2016.

In December 2014, BIA announced a final rule that will allow the Department to accept land into trust for federally recognized Alaska Tribes. Previously, Interior regulations allowed tribal nations in the continental United States to seek to place lands into trust, but did not allow the same for federally recognized Alaska Tribes. Taking land into trust for a tribal nation makes the land eligible for certain Federal programs that can further tribal sovereignty and economic development related to agriculture, energy, infrastructure, and health and housing programs. The new rule confirms the Secretary's pre-existing statutory authority to consider applications to take land into trust in Alaska and also confirms this authority will now be exercised.

The BIA has taken several steps to support Indians in the stewardship and utilization of their lands. The budget includes a total increase of \$6.9 million for Trust Real Estate Services activities to bolster the stewardship of trust resources. The expanded capacity will address the probate backlog, land title and records processing, geospatial support needs, and database management. To foster utilization of tribal lands, BIA published a proposed new rule on June 17, 2014, to update BIA regulations—which were last revised more than 30 years ago—that govern rights-of-way across Indian land. The revised regulations will result in faster timelines for BIA approval and ensure seamless consistency with recently promulgated BIA leasing regulations. In addition, the proposed regulations will make the process more efficient and transparent, increase flexibility in compensation and valuations, and support landowner decisions on land use.

LAND BUY-BACK PROGRAM

In 2014, the Land Buy-Back Program continued to implement the land consolidation portion of the Individual Indian Money Account Litigation Settlement. In the Settlement, \$1.9 billion was set aside to consolidate fractionated ownership of land interests in Indian Country. Since December 2013, the Land Buy-Back Program has made more than \$750 million in purchase offers to nearly 46,000 owners of fractionated interests. The program paid more than \$300 million to landowners and restored the equivalent of more than 500,000 acres of land

to tribal governments. Currently, buy-back activities are scheduled to be implemented in 42 tribal communities—locations that represent 83 percent of all outstanding fractional interests—through the middle of 2017. The Land Buy-Back Program plans to increase the number of locations in the years ahead.

Under the terms of the Settlement, the Department of the Interior has until November 2022, to expend the funding to acquire, at fair market value, fractional interests in trust or restricted land from willing sellers. Fractionation has been identified as a key impediment to economic development and is a significant factor in the complexity and cost of managing Indian trust lands. Lands acquired through the program will remain in trust or restricted status and are immediately consolidated for beneficial use by tribal communities, including energy development, farming, and cultural preservation. The program is focusing on the most fractionated locations and using a detailed mass appraisal method, where feasible, to achieve the most cost-effective acquisition of fractional interests.

Program sales are already making a significant difference for individuals, families, and tribal communities. For example, the Oglala Sioux Tribe of the Pine Ridge Reservation recently announced the Tribe is embarking on a \$9.0 million housing program, aided by recent acquisition of land through the Land Buy-Back Program.

SUPPORTING CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN INDIAN COUNTRY

Tribes throughout the U.S. are already experiencing the impacts of a changing climate including drought, intensifying wildfires, changes in plants and animals important to subsistence and cultural practices, impacts to treaty and trust resources, and coastal erosion and sea level rise. In November 2014, the State, Local, and Tribal Leaders Task Force—established under Executive Order 13653, Preparing the United States for the Impacts of Climate Change—formally released recommendations to the White House. These recommendations called on the Federal government to partner with Tribes from across the U.S. in planning, preparing, and responding to the impacts of climate change.

Responding to these recommendations, which included input from hundreds of tribal leaders, the budget provides a total of \$50.4 million, a \$40.4 million increase over 2015, across nine BIA trust resource programs to support tribal communities

in preparing for and responding to the impacts of climate change. Funds will provide support for Tribes to develop and access science, tools, training, and planning; and to implement actions that build resilience into resource management, infrastructure, and community development activities. Funding will also support Alaska Native Villages in the arctic and other critically vulnerable communities in evaluating options for the long-term resilience of their communities.

Tribal lands, particularly in the West and Alaska, are by their geography and location on the frontline of climate change, yet many of these communities face immense challenges in planning and responding to the far-reaching impacts of climate change on infrastructure, economic development, food security, natural and cultural resources, and local culture. Some communities are already experiencing increasingly devastating storms, droughts, floods, sea-level rise, and threats to subsistence resources. Strengthening access to information and resources, including technical and financial assistance to address the combined and cumulative effects, are among the highest priorities for supporting climate change adaptation and resilience. Examples of projects that may be funded include training, studies, scenario planning, natural resource and infrastructure projects, public awareness and outreach efforts, capacity building, and other projects. Criteria for tribal funding will be developed and prioritized in consultation with the Tribes and the interagency White House Council on Native American Affairs subgroup on environment and climate change.

INDIAN WATER RIGHTS

The 2016 budget request for Indian water settlements continues to demonstrate the Administration's strong commitment to resolve tribal water rights claims and ensure Tribes have access to use and manage water to meet domestic, economic, cultural, and ecological needs. Many of the projects supported in these agreements bring clean and potable water to tribal communities, while other projects repair crumbling irrigation and water delivery infrastructure on which tribal economies depend. These investments not only improve the health and well-being of tribal members and preserve existing economies but, over the long-term, also bring the potential for jobs and economic development.

The 2016 budget request for technical and legal support and for tribal water rights settlements totals \$244.4 million, an increase of \$73.0 million

over 2015. This includes a total of \$40.8 million for Interior-wide technical and legal support and \$203.7 million for settlement implementation. Of the request for settlement implementation, \$136.0 million is funded in the Bureau of Reclamation and \$67.7 million in BIA. In 2016, Interior will complete the funding requirements for the Taos Pueblo Indian Water Rights Settlement Act.

To strengthen the Department's capacity to meet its trust responsibilities and more effectively partner with Tribes on water issues, the 2016 budget includes a \$16.9 million increase across the budgets of BIA, Reclamation, BLM, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey. This funding will support a more robust, coordinated, Interior-wide approach to working with and supporting Tribes in resolving water rights claims and supporting sustainable stewardship of tribal water resources. Funds will strengthen the engagement, management, and analytical capabilities of the Secretary's Indian Water Rights Office; increase coordination and expertise among bureaus and offices that work on these issues; and increase support to Tribes.

EMPOWERING INSULAR COMMUNITIES AND IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE

Interior works with insular governments to improve quality of life in the Territories and Freely Associated States by providing technical assistance and pairing access to financial resources for capital improvements and public services with robust oversight. The 2016 budget requests additional funding to increase the grant management staff needed to improve oversight of funding.

Over the past few years, island leaders have reaffirmed that climate change remains the single greatest threat to their livelihoods, economies, security, and well-being. A \$7.0 million increase is requested to address needs in the insular areas related to sea level rise by supporting development of infrastructure and community resilience initiatives. The Office of Insular Affairs will work with insular governments to identify the most efficient and effective projects for collaboration with Interior bureaus, the Pacific Island Climate Change Cooperative, and other Federal and local partners.

Insular communities face unique economic development challenges due to their geographic isolation, finite resources, and dependence on imported oil for energy needs. To assist the islands in meeting

these challenges, the OIA is working to strengthen the foundations for economic development by addressing energy needs through building sustainable energy strategies that are not reliant on oil. With sustainable energy plans completed for each of the Territories, the 2016 budget requests a total of \$4.4 million to test these strategies through sustainable energy pilot projects. Expected areas of emphasis include power transmission and consumer efficiency, geothermal test drilling, solar installations, test wind turbines, and grid integration studies.

The request includes an increase of \$3.9 million to improve health and safety conditions in insular school facilities. The Insular Assessment of Buildings

and Classrooms initiative represents a partnership between OIA and the four U.S. Territories of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and the Virgin Islands to improve the physical condition of K-12 public schools. The OIA and the insular areas will establish a five-year timeframe to substantially remove the deferred maintenance backlog, establishing priority lists and strategies for addressing and correcting health and safety-related deferred maintenance issues as a first step. A critical step is resolving school site deficiencies—such as site drainage, pavement conditions, and fencing—with particular emphasis on those problems related to health and safety.

2014 WHITE HOUSE TRIBAL NATIONS CONFERENCE

The White House convened the sixth Tribal Nations Conference hosted by President Obama in Washington, D.C. in December 2014. Leaders from more than 300 federally recognized Tribes attended the conference. This conference affords tribal leaders an opportunity to hear from the President himself and speak directly with officials at the highest levels of the Federal government about Indian Country issues. In addition to the President and Secretary Jewell, Chair of the White House Council on Native American Affairs, leaders from other Federal agencies and members of Congress met with tribal leaders to discuss efforts to help Indian Country move forward.

This year's conference built on the President's visit in June of 2014 to the Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation, where he reaffirmed his commitment to education. The President announced the launch of Generation Indigenous, a Native youth initiative focused on addressing barriers that stand between Native youth and opportunities for them to succeed. The initiative takes a comprehensive, culturally-appropriate approach to help improve the lives and opportunities for Native youth. The White House recently released a new Native Youth Report^{1/} that explores the challenges facing Native youth and makes recommendations for a path forward.

For the first time in these conferences, the voices of Native youth were represented by 36 White House Youth Ambassadors and on December 8, 2014, the Departments of the Interior and Education hosted a Student Voices session held at the White House. Fifteen current and former foster care youth representing American Indian and Alaska Native Nations from across the United States shared stories of survival before entering foster care and how they wanted to remain connected to their Tribes when placed in foster homes far from their tribal communities. The clear message is that when children are taken away from their homes and culture, they are taken away from their identity and lose their drive to achieve. Secretaries Sally Jewell and Arne Duncan discussed how schools, in partnership with Tribes, can make schools a safe and trusted alternative to the turmoil these students often encounter outside the school environment. With 566 federally recognized Tribes—each with its own history, language, and customs—no one curriculum plan or program can adequately provide the needed emotional, cultural, and academic support for all Native youth. Fortunately, numerous Tribes and tribal organizations have expressed a readiness to partner with the Federal government to improve the situation.



Photo credit: Paul Wood, U.S. Department of Education

The President concluded his remarks at the Tribal Nations Conference by stating:

Your Nations have made extraordinary contributions to this Country. Your children represent the best of this Country and its future. Together, we can make sure that every Native young person is treated like a valuable member not only of your Nation, but of the American family, and that every Native young person gets an equal shot at the American Dream.

^{1/} To read the complete Native Youth Report go to http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/20141129nativeyouthreport_final.pdf.