



Building Prosperous & Resilient Tribal Nations

Executive Office of the President

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“While we cannot undo the pain and tragedy of the past, we can set out together to forge a brighter future of progress and hope across Indian Country and the entire American landscape.”
-President Obama, November 2015



President Obama during his trip to Alaska. September 2015.



Executive Summary

Since taking office, President Obama has set a course toward building a stronger nation-to-nation relationship with tribal nations and supporting tribal self-determination and prosperity. The President's Budget proposals have strongly supported tribal nations as well as Federal treaty and trust responsibilities to Native Americans through a wide range of direct services and funding for programs administered by tribes.

As the President looks ahead to hosting his eighth and final Tribal Nations Conference on September 26, 2016, this progress report builds on conversations and recommendations from the 2015 Tribal Nations Conference and outlines the Administration's work in Indian Country in 2015.

In 2015, the Administration continued to restore tribal homelands through the Land Buy-Back Program for tribal nations and by taking land into trust. Since 2013, nearly 400,000 total acres have been taken into trust as part of President Obama's goal of placing half-a-million acres into trust for tribes during his Administration. The Administration also took action to update and strengthen rules that govern tribal sovereignty over tribal homelands. These regulations support economic growth by creating more efficient and effective land management systems.

Under the President's leadership, the federal government has continued paving the way for a stronger nation-to-nation relationship with tribes by resolving longstanding disputes, including a milestone \$940 million proposed settlement to resolve disputed contract support costs and a \$186 million tribal trust settlement with the Chickasaw and Choctaw nations. Since October 2010, the Administration has resolved breach of trust claims with tribes totaling approximately \$2.8 billion, in addition to the \$3.4 billion *Cobell* Settlement resolving individual American Indian trust mismanagement claims.

President Obama visited the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma in July 2015 to discuss the federal government's efforts to expand broadband access and narrow the digital divide. As one of the first Promise Zones designees, the Choctaw Nation has partnered with the federal government to jumpstart its economic development and community revitalization. In September 2015, the

President traveled to Alaska to meet with Alaska Native communities and to reaffirm his support for tribal climate resilience and the protection of natural resources. The Administration continues to strive to increase federal-tribal collaborations and develop tools to prepare for and address the impacts of climate change.

The Administration remains committed to expanding and improving opportunities for Native youth, particularly through the Generation Indigenous (Gen-I) initiative. Gen-I seeks to remove the barriers that stand between young people and opportunity, taking a comprehensive and culturally appropriate approach to ensuring all young Native people can reach their full potential. In July 2015, more than 1,000 Native youth gathered in Washington, D.C., for the inaugural White House Tribal Youth Gathering and were joined by First Lady Michelle Obama, Cabinet members, and members of Congress. This gathering focused on access to quality education, as well as youth initiatives on leadership, community and cultural engagement, and technology.

Throughout 2015, the Administration continued major initiatives supporting more resilient and prosperous tribal nations. The historic progress in the relationship between the federal government and tribes will continue into President Obama's final year in office with a new charge – to ensure the accomplishments of this Administration achieved in collaboration with Indian Country grow and endure for many years to come.



Expanding and Improving Opportunities for Native Youth

The President announced the Generation Indigenous (Gen-I) initiative in December of 2014 as a way to improve the lives of Native youth through new investments and increased engagement. This initiative takes a comprehensive, culturally-appropriate approach to ensure that all young Native people can reach their full potential. Highlights of Gen-I activities over the past year are outlined in this section.



President Obama speaking with Native youth while hosting the 2015 Tribal Nations Conference.

White House Tribal Youth Gathering

In July 2015, tribal youth participated in the first-ever White House Tribal Youth Gathering, where over 1,000 young Native leaders (ages 14-24) from across the country gathered in a day-long convening to discuss an array of concerns in their tribal communities and across the Nation. The objective of the convening was to give these young people the opportunity to share with federal officials and each other the challenges they see in their own communities and, importantly, to talk about solutions – some of which a number of youth leaders had implemented in their own communities already. The event featured remarks from the First Lady, Cabinet officials, and members of Congress.

National Intertribal Youth Summit

Beginning with a grant award in 2013, DOJ launched the National Intertribal Youth Leadership Development Initiative, known as Today's Native Leaders (TNL), which consists of youth gatherings, opportunities, and services to develop leadership skills among cohorts of tribal youth. Tribal youth also participated in the first-ever White House Tribal Youth Gathering.

Over 1,000 young Native leaders gathered at the White House Tribal Youth Gathering.

FEMA Corps Program

Acting on a commitment announced at the 2014 Tribal Nations Conference, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) increased recruitment efforts in Indian Country for the

Tribal applications for the FEMA Corps program increased 400% in the year 2015.

FEMA Corps program (18 – 24 year olds) and saw a 400 percent increase in American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) applicants. FEMA Corps expanded their recruitment through greater outreach tribal conferences, promotional materials, and youth outreach. FEMA Corps is a 10 month program that provides training, experience, and educational opportunities that will prepare hundreds of young AI/ANs and other youth for careers in emergency management and related fields.

The Tribal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program

The Tribal Home Vesting (THV) Program, administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), was launched in 2010 as part of the Affordable Care Act. The THV Program uses culturally responsive strategies to support pregnant women, expectant fathers, and parents and caregivers on providing healthy, supportive, and enriching home environments for their young children. This unprecedented expansion of culturally responsive services for AI/AN

families and children has served more than 1,500 families with nearly 20,000 home visits, across 25 tribal and American Indian or Alaska Native programs. In 2012, HHS also launched a partnership with tribes called the Tribal Early Learning Initiative, which aims to support tribes in improving, growing, and sustaining their early childhood systems so that all young children in their communities arrive at school ready to excel.

The Department of Education and the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education (WHIAIANE)

The Department of Education has supported several programs and grant opportunities targeted to tribes and tribal communities, including the State-Tribal Education Partnership Program (STEP) and the Native American and Alaska Native Children in School Program. The President requested funding for STEP through his fiscal year 2012 budget request to Congress to establish a pilot program of competitive grants to tribal educational agencies (TEAs) to increase their role in the education of American Indian and Alaska Native students. Owing to the success of the program, Congress provided additional funding for STEP in 2015.

WHIAIANE, which is housed in the Department of Education, has worked to establish a dialogue with Native communities as well. In 2014, WHIAIANE held nine Native Student Environment Listening Sessions in seven states from New York to California to Alaska; drawing more than 1,000 participants, discussing issues ranging from bullying, student discipline, and potentially harmful Native imagery and symbolism, to the impact of these school climate issues. In October 2015, the Department of Education released the Student Environment Listening Sessions Final Report which identifies common issues and concerns shared by teachers, parents, community members, and students, and provides participants' recommendations for how federal, tribal, state, and local governments should address them.

In addition to these new developments, longstanding commitments to improving Indian education have continued. One such example of this is the 2015 National Native Language Revitalization Summit, co-hosted by the Department of Education. The Summit is an annual gathering of tribal leaders and federal officials discussing language revitalization efforts meant to improve the quality and cultural competency of instruction for Native students in the classroom.

Additionally, in response to the President's Generation Indigenous Initiative, established in 2014, the Department of Education launched the Native Youth Community Partnership (NYCP) grants. NYCP supports tribally designed solutions that can improve college- and career-readiness for Native youth. To support these efforts, the FY 2016 budget requested a total of

\$68 million for Special Programs for Indian Children, a \$50 million increase from the 2015 level. Of this request, \$52.9 million was requested for new and continuing NYCP grants. The Administration's support of investment in these programs amounts to the largest proposed increase for Special Programs for Indian Children since its inception.

Strengthening education for every student lies at the heart of our nation's fundamental promise, which is that with hard work and determination, all of our people—especially our traditionally underserved and most vulnerable—can achieve their fullest potential and make of their lives what they will. We owe no less to our Native children and with collective will and dedication, we will see the day when all Native American and Alaska Native children can access the world-class education they deserve.

Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) Reform

Launched after President Obama's historic visit to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in 2014, the Generation Indigenous initiative reflects the Administration's commitment to ensuring that Native youth can reach their full potential. This commitment includes reforming the BIE from a relic of the past – an outdated system that existed when the federal government directly operated boarding schools for Native children – into a modern education service provider, one that meets the demands of a new reality in an era in which tribal wisdom – and tribal sovereignty – is respected.

After numerous meetings with tribal leaders, educators, school boards, parents and students, the American Indian Education Study Group issued recommendations that became the basis of the BIE Blueprint for Reform that DOI issued on June 13, 2014. The document outlines urgent challenges within the existing structure of the BIE. As a result, the agency is taking a new approach to the education of Native students. For example, BIE is creating Education Resource Centers (ERC) with the purpose of supporting tribally controlled schools with technical assistance and support, as well as providing Tribes who wish to move towards tribal control for BIE-operated schools with the assistance they need to do so. This approach supports tribal self-determination by facilitating tribal control over the education of Native children, while ensuring that Tribes and the schools continue to receive support from the BIE, which is part of the federal trust responsibility.

Exposure to qualified and well-trained teachers is critical to providing young people a high-quality education and improving student performance. Another area of focus within BIE reform is improving teacher quality; BIE is doing this with expanded professional development opportunities for teachers and instructional leaders as well as overhauling the process of

recruiting educators with the goal of attracting, hiring, and retaining well-qualified educators. To do this, BIE is working with nationally recognized experts to deliver instructional support and services to schools to accelerate reforms, including the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and The New Teacher Project (TNTP). NBPTS will help teachers achieve advanced certifications to improve their effectiveness, and TNTP will help Tribally Controlled Schools effectively recruit and retain quality teachers.

The Department of the Interior is also focused on improving the physical infrastructure of BIE schools. The development of a five-year plan is underway that will help to identify needed repairs and replacements, ensure timely health and safety inspections, and allow for prioritization of work.

Bridging the Digital Divide in a Technology Economy

In an effort to improve access to technology for BIE students, BIE entered into a partnership with Microsoft and Verizon that led to the installation of wireless data service in 10 BIE-operated and tribally-controlled school dormitories. Students residing in the dormitories also received wireless tablet devices that include educational applications and two years of free cellular service.

Additionally, SBA partnered with the American Indian Chamber of Commerce to put on a “hack tank” in Summer 2015. This event took place in California and brought Native youth together to use technology to solve problems within their communities.

Recruiting Tribal Colleges to Address Environmental Issues

The Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Tribal ecoAmbassadors Program matched TCUs with EPA scientists to address environmental problems prioritized by participating TCUs’ tribal communities. In 2015, the Tribal ecoAmbassadors Program awarded grants to STEM-based projects on six TCU campuses across the nation.

Washington Internships for Native Students Program

The Social Security Administration serves as one of the leading federal agencies that offer opportunities to American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students through the Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS) program, which offers qualified students full scholarships funded by American University and sponsoring organizations. In 2015, SSA offered 23 paid internships to students participating in the program. Over the past three years, SSA has hosted 81 WINS students.

Federal Leadership Travels to Indian Country for Native Youth

After President Obama's trip to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, the President challenged his Cabinet to understand the unique issues Native youth face in their communities through the Cabinet Native Youth Listening Tour.

- In February 2015, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell kicked off the tour with the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community and the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona.
- In March 2015, then-Office of Personnel Management Director Katherine Archuleta met with students at the Haskell Indian Nations University in Kansas to discuss federal service.
- In May 2015, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy spent two days visiting the Lummi and Swinomish reservations in Washington and met with Tribal ecoAmbassadors at the Northwest Indian College.
- Also in May 2015, then-Secretary of Education Arne Duncan visited with Native youth at the Denver Indian Center in Colorado.
- In June 2015, then-Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack visited with Native youth at Native American Lifelines in Baltimore, Maryland to discuss nutritional food and cultural education as well as school lunch programs.
- In August 2015, Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker met with youth from the Bay Mills Indian Community in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to discuss economic development opportunities.
- Also in August 2015, Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Burwell visited the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the Blackfoot Nation in Montana and learned about tribal health programs and social services for youth.
- In August 2015 as well, Deputy Attorney General Sally Quillian Yates and Acting Associate Attorney General Stuart F. Delery visited Ignacio High School on the Southern Ute reservation in Ignacio, Colorado to discuss education, substance abuse, violent crime, and cultural sensitivity.
- In September 2015, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack visited the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota as part of the Promise Zone initiative where he heard from youth leadership at Ogala Lakota College.
- Also in September 2015, Secretary of State John Kerry and Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell met with Alaskan Native youth counted among the Arctic Youth Ambassadors as part of an outreach and education program for the U.S. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

- In October 2015, Secretary of Labor Tom Perez visited with students to discuss job training and economic opportunity at the Wyoming Indian High School on the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming.

Cultural Heritage Native Youth Program

In response to Generation Indigenous, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) established its Native Youth Program and adopted a strategic plan to ensure its posterity. The program included launching a Facebook page – “Preservation Indigenous-Native Youth” – to introduce Native youth to historic preservation and provide a venue for exchanging preservation information and celebrating tribal culture. Other actions included hosting roundtable discussions with youth about historic preservation at the Suquamish Tribe’s House of Awakened Culture and the annual UNITY conference as well as organizing a day-long gathering in New England with visits to the Mohegan Tribe’s archaeology field school site, a sacred site, and a roundtable discussion.



Advancing the Nation-to-Nation Relationship: Treaty and Trust Responsibilities

Strong nation-to-nation relationships between the United States and Tribal governments are important to furthering self-determination across Indian Country. The Federal trust responsibility can only be upheld when achieved in concert with tribal governments, with meaningful consultation and a deep understanding of the needs and concerns of Native peoples across the federal government. Federal agencies are working to formalize consultation policies and advisory committees in order to further these goals.



Secretary Jewell announcing a historic Trust settlement with the Chickasaw and Choctaw nations that reaffirms tribal sovereignty. October 2015. (Photo by Choctaw Nation)

Implementing the Indian Child Welfare Act

In December 2014, the Attorney General announced that the Department of Justice (DOJ) would focus additional resources on promoting compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA). The Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, and the Interior have also convened a workgroup that facilitates interagency collaboration on ICWA implementation and compliance issues. In February 2015, the Department of the Interior (DOI) issued updated Guidelines for state agencies and courts that provide standard procedures and best practices to be used in Indian child-welfare proceedings in state courts. Following the release of the updated Guidelines, DOI published proposed regulations implementing ICWA. The purpose of the proposed regulations is to improve ICWA implementation by state courts and child welfare agencies. DOJ and DOI also successfully defended a challenge to these Guidelines in federal district court.

Tribal Treaty Rights

After an extensive national tribal consultation effort in 2015, EPA issued the *EPA Policy on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes: Guidance for Discussing Tribal Treaty Rights (Guidance)*. The Guidance is designed to enhance EPA's consultation efforts in situations where tribal treaty rights relating to natural resources may exist in a specific geographic area that is the focus of a proposed EPA action. The Guidance follows EPA's December 2014 memorandum, which commemorated the 30th anniversary of the 1984 EPA Indian Policy and provided a clear policy statement regarding the role of tribal treaty rights in the context of EPA activities.

Treasury Department Consultation Policy

The Department of Treasury's (Treasury) final Tribal Consultation Policy was released on September 23, 2015. In response to written comments and other feedback received via tribal consultation, the final policy reflects several changes from an interim policy that was released during the 2014 White House Tribal Nations Conference. The Treasury Tribal Consultation Policy was developed in response to repeated requests from tribal leaders for a documented commitment to tribal consultation.

Treasury Tribal Advisory Committee

The Treasury Department Tribal Advisory Committee (TTAC) was established in February 2015 in accord with the Tribal General Welfare Exclusion Act of 2014 (TGWEA). The TTAC will advise the Secretary of the Treasury on matters relating to the taxation of Indians, training and education for Internal Revenue Service (IRS) field agents who administer and enforce federal

tax laws, and training and technical assistance for tribal financial officers regarding implementation of the TGWEA. The TTAC will contribute substantially to the development of clear guidelines and norms on the general welfare doctrine and related federal tax matters as they affect tribal governments.

Improving Consultation in Federal Project Planning

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) published *Recommendations for Improving Tribal-Federal Consultation*, an outcome of regional tribal summits held between 2011 and 2014. The recommendations focus on building relationships as the most effective way to provide a strong voice for tribes in the review process for federal projects. The ACHP also adopted a plan to obtain support for the participation of Tribal and State Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs/SHPOs) in the process, designed to address their chronic funding shortages. The plan encourages federal agencies, in particular, to be creative in finding ways to support the engagement of THPOs in required consultation processes.

American Indian and Alaska Native Voting Rights

In May 2015, DOJ formally proposed legislation that would require states or localities whose territory includes part or all of an Indian reservation, an Alaska Native village, or other tribal lands to locate at least one polling place in a venue selected by the tribal government. This proposal followed formal consultation with Indian tribes and recognizes that American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities have faced significant obstacles that have prevented them from enjoying equal access to polling places and equal opportunities to cast a ballot. In addition to suffering from a long history of discrimination, the distance many AI/AN citizens must travel to reach a polling place presents a substantial and ongoing barrier to full voter participation.

The Department of Justice formally proposed legislation that would require states or localities whose territory includes part or all of an Indian reservation, an Alaska Native village, or other tribal lands to locate at least one polling place in a venue selected by the tribal government.

Updates to Federal Acknowledgment of Indian Tribes

On July 1, 2015, DOI finalized reforms to the regulatory process by which DOI officially recognizes Indian tribes (25 CFR 83). On July 30, 2015, DOI also finalized a new rule establishing procedures for the new administrative hearings on federal acknowledgment (43 CFR 4, subpart

K). The updated rules promote a more transparent, timely, and consistent process that is flexible enough to account for the unique histories of tribal communities, while maintaining the rigor and integrity of the criteria that have been in place for nearly 40 years. The updated rules implement DOI's authority to recognize those tribes that have maintained their identity and self-governance in the face of significant and longstanding challenges.



Increasing Public Safety in Indian Country

The Obama Administration recognizes that tribal officials and law enforcement officers are oftentimes the best equipped to enforce public safety priorities within their own communities. The passage of the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010, extending felony prosecution authority to tribes, and the Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, recognizing jurisdiction over non-Indians for certain offenses, have expanded tribal responsibilities in public safety and justice programs. The Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 enhances tribes' authority to prosecute and punish criminals and enhances cooperation among tribal, federal, and state officials in key areas such as law enforcement training, interoperability, and access to criminal justice information. These policies are a cornerstone of the federal government's commitment to work with Indian Country to ensure public safety needs are met for every citizen.



Attorney General Loretta Lynch speaking about working with tribal law enforcement to make Indian Country a safer place to live. July 2015. (Photo by DOI)

Improving Federal Response to Sexual Assault

In October 2015, Attorney General Lynch approved recommendations for steps that the DOJ could take to help improve the response of federal agencies to sexual assault in tribal nations. Implementation of these recommendations is underway, focusing on institutionalizing sustainable, culturally relevant, evidence-based practices to meet the needs of tribal victims of sexual assault.

Supporting Tribes' Criminal Jurisdiction over Non-Indian Offenders in Domestic Violence Cases

The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA 2013) recognized the inherent power of tribes to exercise “special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction” (SDVCJ) over non-Indians who commit acts of violence against their Indian spouses, intimate partners, or dating partners, or who violate protection orders in Indian Country. This historic provision took effect on March 7, 2015, although certain tribes began exercising this jurisdiction in 2014 pursuant to a DOJ pilot project implemented under the Act. DOJ also established an Intertribal Technical-Assistance Working Group on Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction (ITWG) to enable tribes to exchange views, information, and advice about how best to exercise SDVCJ. Forty-five tribes have joined the ITWG, which held its fifth meeting in November 2015.

Congress appropriated \$2.5 million for grants authorized by the 2013 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act to support tribes' implementation of Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction.

Responding to Human Trafficking among American Indian and Alaska Natives

In January 2015, HHS issued an Information Memorandum (IM) titled, “Recognizing and Responding to Human Trafficking among American Indian, Alaska Native (AI/AN) and Pacific Islander Communities.” This IM went to all Administration for Native American (ANA) grantees as a resource to help project staff understand the issue and respond appropriately should they encounter a victim or survivor of human trafficking. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) recognizes that American Indian, Alaska Native, and other Native youth are especially vulnerable to trafficking. ANA, along with the Office on Trafficking in Persons and the Family and Youth Service Bureau (FYSB), is leading a work group of experts to explore ways to make the Student Engagement Toolkit appropriate to use at Tribal Colleges and Universities and to explore how to adapt it for high school and middle school audiences.

Informational Memorandums, scenario based trainings, and capacity building seminars are helping combat human trafficking in Indian country.

Organizations and entities serving AI/AN victims of trafficking are also eligible to apply for funding through the ANA Social and Economic Development Strategies and the ACF Domestic Victims of Trafficking Demonstration grant opportunities.

HHS provided numerous training and technical assistance opportunities to strengthen responses to human trafficking in American Indian and Alaskan Native communities. Family Violence Prevention & Services grantees hosted webinars and workshops covering interventions in, research on, and analysis of historical roots of trafficking in Native American communities; trauma-informed approaches for addressing sex trafficking of Native women; targeting of Native youth by sex traffickers; and foster care and the sex trafficking of Native youth.

On September 2, 2015, the Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center staff, in collaboration with HHS' Indian Health Service, delivered a virtual webinar to the directors of Urban Indian Health Programs on the topic of human trafficking. The purpose of the webinar was to increase medical practitioners' capacity to identify and respond to survivors of human trafficking. Participants included medical practitioners and case managers that work with urban Indian populations.

HHS Family Violence Prevention & Services grantee convened a listening session with 76 advocates representing state domestic violence coalitions to review training needs, policy changes, and funding streams that can have a positive impact in addressing domestic trafficking including that of Native and Tribal women and girls.

In FY 2015, FYSB's Family Violence Prevention & Services (FVPS) program provided training and technical assistance on human trafficking primarily through three of its culturally-specific special issue resources centers. Some examples of this work include the Trafficking: Sex Trafficking of Native Women Webinar, Sex Trafficking of Native Women Webinar Series, Women are Sacred Conference, Trafficking: Listening Session for Regional Tribal Domestic Violence Shelter Directors and Staff, Foster Care and Sex Trafficking of Native Youth workshop, Sex Trafficking of Native Women and Children Institute, and Tribal Peer to Peer Sex Trafficking and AIDS/HIV/IPV Training Session.

The Blue Campaign

In July 2010, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) launched the Blue Campaign, the unified voice for DHS' efforts to combat human trafficking. DHS is collaborating with law enforcement, government, non-governmental, and private organizations to protect the basic right of freedom and to bring those to exploit human lives to justice. As part of the Blue Campaign, DHS coordinated with the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Indian Police Academy to produce a scenario-based training video depicting sex trafficking on tribal land. The film was vetted through subject matter experts provided by the BIA.

Helping Tribal Members Successfully Return to Their Communities after Incarceration

The Department of Justice is committed to collaborating with federal, state, local, and tribal leaders to help tribal members successfully transition from incarceration back to their communities. For example, in July 2015, a historic reentry Memorandum of Agreement was signed by the United States Attorney's Offices for North Dakota and South Dakota, the BIA Office of Justice Services (Standing Rock Agency), the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and corrections and probation partners from North Dakota and South Dakota. The goal of the agreement and the resulting working group, is to help returning tribal members reconnect with their culture and spirituality through community-based and culturally-specific resources. In 2015, DOJ also developed and provided training on reentry-specific guidelines and tools, such as multi-day workshops across the country and a reentry webinar specifically for Alaska Natives. Tribal liaisons from United States Attorneys' Offices throughout Indian Country also work continually with tribes in their districts to address reentry issues and to establish relationships with other agencies and entities to support the provision of reentry services. Finally, through grant making, DOJ supports tribal efforts to provide reentry services for justice-involved youth, such as mentoring and counseling.

Increasing Tribal Access to National Crime Information Databases

DOJ launched an initial phase of the Tribal Access Program for National Crime Information (TAP) to provide tribes access to national crime information databases for both civil and criminal purposes. Ten tribes were selected for the initial User Feedback Phase of the program, and are currently testing the technology and

Partnerships and collaborations with tribal governments have increased access to databases, investigations training, emergency training and much more, all of which are making Indian Country a safer place to live.

both entering and accessing data. TAP will allow tribes to more effectively serve and protect their communities by ensuring the exchange of critical data. TAP will also provide specialized training and assistance for participating tribes.

Expansion of Interagency Indian Country Training

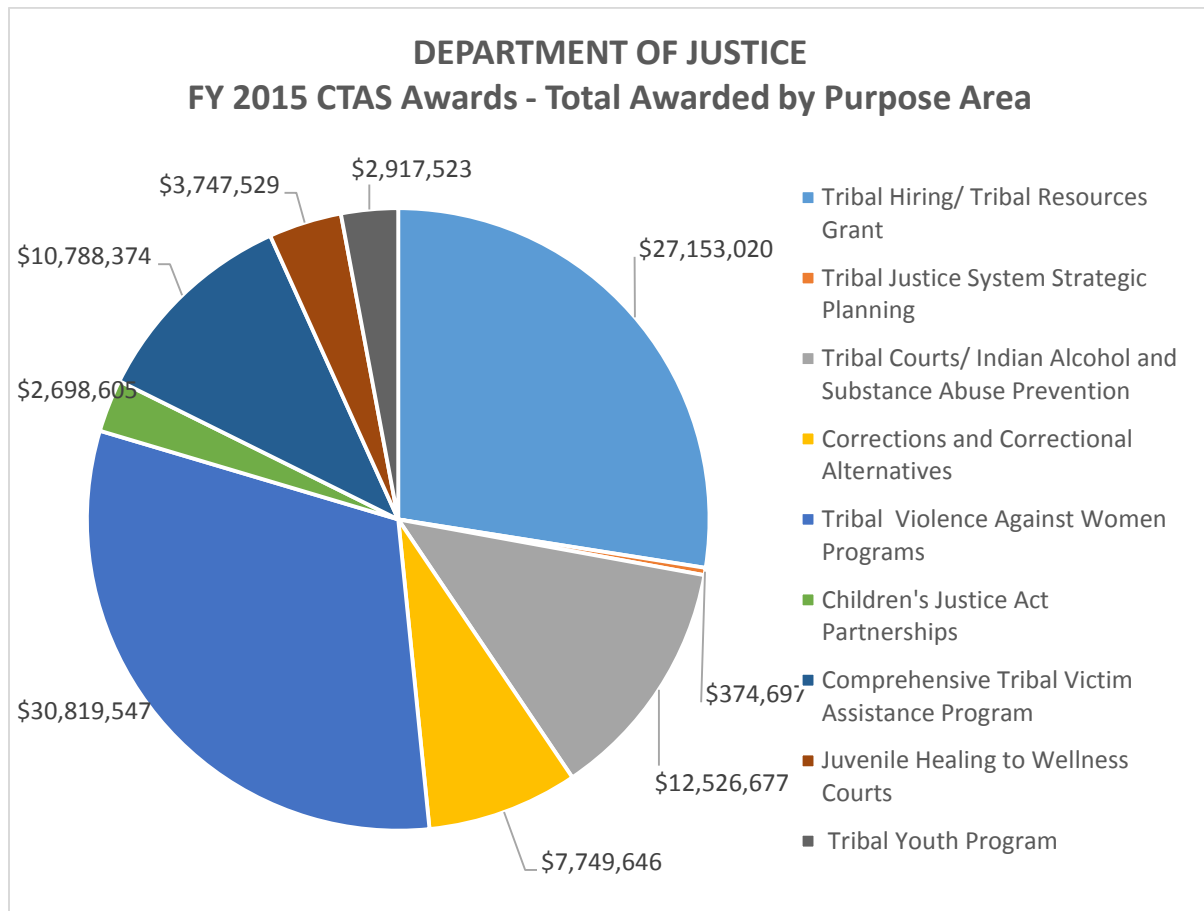
The Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Indian Country Crimes Unit has partnered with the DOI-BIA and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Artesia, New Mexico, to develop a training program for Special Agents/Criminal Investigators new to working in Indian Country. The multi-week course features small group, hands-on instruction. The course will be taught by FLETC, FBI and BIA instructors, and will focus on enhancing investigative skills relevant to criminal investigations common in Indian Country.

FBI Victim Assistance in Indian Country

The FBI maintains the largest cadre of federal victim specialists and child forensic interviewers assigned to Indian Country. The FBI Office for Victim Assistance routinely administers victim assistance funding to meet emergency needs of Native American victims and their families. The FBI Victim Assistance Rapid Deployment Team, which has responded to more than 15 mass casualty crimes across the country, is also prepared to respond to an active shooter or other act of mass violence that may impact tribal victims.

FY 2015 Streamlined Grant Awards for Tribal Communities

In September 2015, DOJ announced 206 Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation (CTAS) awards, totaling more than \$97 million, to 116 separate American Indian tribes, Alaska Native villages, tribal consortia and tribal designees to enrich law enforcement practices, victim services and sustain crime prevention and intervention efforts. Over the past six years, the DOJ has awarded over 1400 CTAS grants totaling more than \$620 million.



Training for Tribal Criminal Justice Professionals

In 2010, DOJ launched the National Indian Country Training Initiative (NICTI). NICTI-hosted training has reached every United States Attorneys’ Offices with Indian Country responsibility and over 200 tribal, federal, and state agencies. Importantly, DOJ covers the costs of travel and lodging for tribal attendees so that tribal criminal justice and social service professionals receive cutting-edge training from national experts at no cost to the student or tribe. NICTI partnered

with BIA's Office of Justice Services (OJS) to develop a National Criminal Jurisdiction in Indian Country (CJIC) Training Calendar. Successful completion of a CJIC course is necessary for tribal and local law enforcement officers who are not recent graduates of the BIA's police training program to get a Special Law Enforcement Commission (SLEC). An SLEC allows those officers to enforce federal criminal statutes and federal hunting and fishing regulations in Indian Country. In FY 2015, there were 17 CJIC classes hosted by NICTI and various Offices of U.S. Attorneys around the country with a total of 514 students in attendance.

Training Tribal Governments in Disaster Management

FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) continued to deliver culturally appropriate emergency management training to meet the unique needs of Indian Country through its Tribal Curriculum. In 2015, EMI conducted 45 courses covering its Tribal Curriculum and issued 637 certificates of completion to participants. Of the 637 participants that received certificates of completion, 530 were representatives of tribal governments. The Tribal Curriculum courses were conducted throughout Indian Country and at EMI's campus in Emmitsburg, MD.

Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program

The President's FY16 budget proposal includes \$10 million for the Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program (THSGP) to enhance the ability of tribal nations to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from potential terrorist attacks and other hazards. THSGP plays an important role in the implementation of the National Preparedness System by supporting the building, sustainment, and delivery of core capabilities essential to achieving the National Preparedness Goal of a secure and resilient Nation. Delivering core capabilities requires the combined effort of the whole community, rather than the exclusive effort of any single organization or level of government. THSGP's allowable costs support efforts to build and sustain core capabilities across the prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery mission areas.

Training for Emergencies

To better prepare Indian Country, FEMA provided three on-site exercises in Indian Country: Sheltering in Place Exercise for the United South and Eastern Tribes; Multi-Agency in Disaster at the National Congress of American Indians; and Operation Safe Delivery (Oil Spill) with the Blackfeet Tribe. This gives tribes the option to attend exercises at large tribal association conferences.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

In Fall 2015, FEMA published the Damage Assessment Operating Manual (PDA Manual) for 60-day comment and tribal consultation. This document will be part of a greater effort to provide a user-friendly, streamlined post-disaster damage assessment process that builds on the existing knowledge and expertise of tribal, state, and local leaders to identify damage after a natural or man-made disaster. The PDA Manual will be the first FEMA damage assessment document to take into account the perspectives and unique abilities of state, local, tribal, territorial, and federal stakeholders.



Improving Nutrition, Healthcare, and Wellness

As the Administration has taken an overall approach to helping the American people improve their health and wellness, it has taken specific notice of the challenges Native people face in receiving quality healthcare. By confronting larger issues of historical trauma, healthcare inefficiency, and chronic underfunding, the Obama Administration is focused on providing quality and culturally-competent healthcare to all Native people.



Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Matthews Burwell visited the Flathead Reservation in Montana to discuss HHS programs (Photo: HHS)

Federal Employee Health Benefits for Tribal Employees

As a result of the Affordable Care Act, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) administered and promoted enrollment of tribal employees in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program. In 2015, more than 16,000 tribal employees, through 79 participating tribal employers in 20 states, enrolled in FEHB health insurance plans.

IHS Successfully Implements Data Sharing Capabilities with the VA

On October 1, 2015, the Indian Health Service Resource and Patient Management System (RPMS) DIRECT Messaging system and the IHS Personal Health Record officially went live. The implementation also included capabilities to share data with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). VA and IHS are the first federal agencies to receive accreditation by DirectTrust, enabling the two agencies to use the health data exchange platform.

In 2015, health initiatives increased healthcare efficiency through new data sharing technologies, created new funding for Native youth behavioral health services, and updated policies that will allow for more federal healthcare assistance.



Arctic Council Chair Leona Aglukkaq of Canada Passes a Ceremonial Gavel to Secretary Kerry. (Photo from U.S. State Department, 2015)

HHS Arctic Council Activities

The primary forum through which the United States engages in Arctic-wide diplomacy and cooperation is the Arctic Council. Indigenous peoples have a significant presence in the Arctic Council, including through organizational representation as “Permanent Participants,” under governmental representations, and as major stakeholders in most of the topics covered under the Arctic Council. Permanent Participants have full consultation rights in connection with Council’s negotiations and decisions. During the current U.S. chairmanship (2015-2017), HHS, working closely with the State Department, is implementing two projects related to the goal of improving health, economic, and living conditions in the Arctic – especially indigenous – communities:

1. The first project seeks to reduce the incidence of suicide among indigenous groups. This initiative seeks to create a common, science-based system of metrics to track suicidal behaviors and key correlates, interventions, and outcomes across Arctic States.
2. The second initiative is designed to improve access to safe and affordable running water and sewage services in remote Arctic areas. Remote Arctic communities experience barriers to accessing clean water supplies and sanitation facilities, resulting in outbreaks of preventable diseases. In this collaborative project, the State of Alaska, the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Arctic Investigations Program seek to identify and foster research activities that will inform technological and policy advancements to overcome these barriers.

Support for Improved Tribal Behavioral Health with a Focus on Native Youth

In FY 2015, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) awarded \$12,496,994 in new annual funding to behavioral health services for Native youth. The funds were used to promote prevention, treatment, and recovery from mental and substance use

SAMHSA awarded nearly \$12.5 million to Native youth programs to improve behavioral health.

disorders. The funding was supported through the following programs: Circles of Care, Garrett Lee Smith State/Tribal Youth Suicide Prevention, Partnerships for Success State and Tribal Initiative, and SAMHSA Adult Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts and Juvenile Treatment Drug Courts.

The Tribal Behavioral Health Grant (TBHG) program was established in FY 2014 to prevent and reduce suicidal behavior and substance abuse and promote mental health among AI/AN youth through age 24. The program allows tribal entities maximum flexibility to plan and implement programs that best meet their community's needs. In FY 2015, SAMHSA provided \$3,856,056 for TBHG continuation awards.

Reducing Systemic Homelessness

A robust interagency effort is underway to combat systemic homelessness among Native Americans. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) commits the participating agencies to improving access to housing and services through Administrative action, improve data collection, elevate awareness of the crisis of homelessness among Native Americans, and

continually engage with tribal leaders and experts. The participating agencies include The Departments of Interior (DOI), Labor (DOL), Veterans Affairs (VA), Health and Human Services (HHS), Education (ED), Agriculture (USDA), and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH).

The inter-agency team gathered information from a variety of sources on the issues facing Native American communities (both on and off reservations) when dealing with and preventing homelessness. This work included convening policy group meetings, hosting listening sessions at National Congress of American Indians gatherings, holding discussions with leaders in the Native American homelessness social service community, and producing a report on strategies to end Native American Homelessness presented at the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness full meeting in October 2015.

HUD and VA Partner to Provide Tribal Housing and Urban Development – Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (Tribal HUD-VASH)

Approximately 2.6 percent of the standard HUD-VASH program serves Native American or Alaska Native Veterans who are living outside of tribal trust lands. HUD and VA are collaboratively implementing a Tribal HUD-VASH demonstration program targeting Native American Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and live on or near tribal trust land. This program provides approximately 500 units of tenant and projected based rental assistance to 26 tribes, selected based on a needs formula using VA and Census Bureau data. Each tribe will be in receipt of HUD funding to support Tribal HUD-VASH participants and their families in safe and decent housing, while VA will provide for case management and supportive services to assist the Veteran to sustain in that housing. The Tribal HUD-VASH demonstration program is designed to provide the same opportunities for homeless and at risk of homelessness Native American Veterans living in tribal communities where the standard HUD-VASH program is not able to operate.

HUD's Contributions to Decent Affordable Housing and Thriving Communities

For decades, HUD has provided tribes and tribally designated housing entities with block grant funding to invest in decent, affordable housing and community development projects. In FY 2015, approximately \$716 million of this funding was invested in Indian Country. Tribal self-determination drives the block grants, which has resulted in an array of innovative projects and housing assistance solutions that have improved American Indian and Alaska Native communities. In FY 2015, tribes used HUD funding to acquire or construct 23 community buildings and more than 900 affordable homes. Another 4,400 affordable homes were

substantially rehabilitated. Indian communities each year have critical infrastructure installed or modernized. HUD also administers a loan guarantee program for market-rate home mortgages in Indian Country; this program issued almost 4,200 guarantees in FY 2015 to tribes and tribal members for loans totaling more than \$738 million. Although the need for affordable housing is still great in most of Indian Country, tribes have effectively used HUD's programs to benefit many of their members who are housing insecure.

Coordinated federal support and partnership with tribal communities

Over the last 7 years, the Administration has worked with high-poverty tribal communities to expand access to opportunity and advance locally-defined goals by creating jobs; increasing economic activity; improving educational outcomes; increasing access to affordable housing; reducing violent crime; and achieving other locally-defined priorities. Through the cornerstone initiative in this model, by 2015 the Administration designated a total of 13 Promise Zones, including 2 tribal Promise Zones: the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the Pine Ridge Reservation of the Oglala Sioux in South Dakota. Each of these Promise Zones received a 10-year commitment from 15 federal agencies to partner with local leaders to streamline resources across agencies and deliver comprehensive support, which includes preferential access to certain federal grant programs, a dedicated staff person embedded in the community to work with local leaders, and five Americorps VISTA members each year. The designation is prompting a new kind of partnership between federal and local partners and yielding results. For example, the designation helped the Choctaw Nation secure access to New Markets Tax Credits for an environmentally sustainable steel manufacturing facility that will support approximately 300 jobs in the region.

Tribal communities like Northern Cheyenne Nation in Montana have benefitted from the Department of Education's Promise Neighborhoods grants to improve educational opportunities and developmental outcomes of children and youth, by building local capacity and implementing cradle to career solutions.



Reaching Historic Settlements

President Obama is committed to ensuring that the relationship between the United States and tribal governments is truly a nation-to-nation relationship. The historic settlements reached by the Administration with tribal governments are a critical piece in restoring trust among governments and reaffirming both tribal sovereignty and self-determination.



Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell signs a historic Water Rights Settlement with the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe in February 2015 (Photo: DOI)

Ramah Settlement

DOJ and DOI reached a \$940 million proposed settlement agreement with a nationwide class of tribes and tribal organizations to resolve a 25-year-old legal dispute related to contract support costs (a case known as *Ramah Navajo*) on September 17, 2015. The settlement resolved claims that the government failed to appropriate sufficient funds to pay the tribes' contract support costs when it contracted and compacted with tribes and tribal organizations to operate BIA programs like law enforcement, forest management, fire suppression, road maintenance, housing, education, and other support programs. In addition to settling claims for past contract support costs, the Administration has committed to fully funding current contract support costs in the President's Budget.

In 2015, the DOI and the DOJ reached a \$940 million proposed settlement that will benefit Native American Tribes.

Chickasaw-Choctaw Settlement

On October 6, 2015, DOI announced the settlement of *Chickasaw Nation and The Choctaw Nation v. The Department of the Interior*. The \$186 million agreement is one of the largest tribal trust settlements to date and ended litigation that began in 2005. This historic agreement resolves several long-standing disputes regarding the U.S. government accounting and management of funds and natural resources it holds in trust for the tribes – with some of the claims dating back more than 100 years.

Indian Water Rights Settlements

In 2015, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) provided approximately \$185 million in appropriated funding and approximately \$36 million in revenue funding toward the implementation of Indian water rights settlements and the development of water supply infrastructure serving the needs of Indian tribes in 17 western states. Water supply infrastructure projects included irrigation and rural water projects, studies and assessments, planning, as well as engineering and design services. These projects will assist tribes in the development, protection, and management of their water and related resources. Reclamation also worked on drought relief projects in tribal communities severely affected by historic reduction in water supplies. The drought relief projects included funding for infrastructure improvements and planning and study efforts benefiting 26 tribes in Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Utah. Also in 2015, BIA provided approximately \$35 million in appropriated funding to implement authorized water rights settlements



Promoting Clean Energy, Protecting Natural Resources, and Combating Climate Change

Tribes find themselves on the frontlines of a changing climate. The impacts of climate change test their ability to protect and preserve their ancestral homelands and cultural practices. The Obama Administration is committed to helping tribes work towards climate resilience and sustainable natural resource management. The federal government is moving to empower tribes to address natural resource management issues through data sharing, grants for clean energy, and increased access to federal resources, among other programs.



President Obama seeing the effects of climate change on Bear Glacier in Alaska. (Official White House Photo by Chuck Kennedy)

U.S. Department of Energy Releases Tribal Climate Vulnerabilities Report

The Tribal Energy Systems Vulnerabilities Report was developed in response to President Obama's Climate Action Plan outlining executive actions to prepare for the impacts of climate change, Executive Order 13653 directing federal agencies to help communities strengthen their resilience to extreme weather and prepare for climate change, and the State, Local, and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resiliency recommendations for supporting communities' climate preparedness and resiliency efforts. It is intended to serve as an authoritative resource to assist tribal leaders, federal, state, and local governments, regulators and utility commissions, and energy asset owners and operators to strengthen tribal energy systems in the face of climate change.

Columbia Basin Fish Accords

Tribal, state, and federal partners completed the eighth year of accomplishments under the historic Columbia Basin Fish Accords. The Accords, signed in 2008, provide \$100 million over 10 years for tribes and states to provide tangible survival benefits for salmon recovery, restoring river and estuary habitat, building and managing hatcheries, and improving passage at federal dams.

The first Accords were signed in May 2008 at a ceremony at Columbia Falls State Park, site of the ancient petroglyph She Who Watches, representing a female tribal chief who watches over the people and the river. Partners included the Corps of Engineers, Bonneville Power Administration, the Bureau of Reclamation, the States of Idaho and Montana, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission, the Yakama Nation, and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation.

The State of Washington, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and the Kalispel Tribe of Indians signed in subsequent years. Today, three northwest states and seven tribal partners are collaborating with the federal agencies under the Columbia Basin Fish Accords.

The Accords are designed to supplement NOAA Fisheries' Biological Opinion for operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System for ESA-listed salmon and steelhead and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. They provide firm commitments to hydro, habitat, and hatchery actions, and greater clarity about biological benefits and secure funding for 10 years. Since the 2008 celebration, the Accords partners have opened up hundreds of miles of new spawning habitat and protected or improved more than 200,000 acres of fish and wildlife habitat.

U.S. Department of Energy Increases Technical Support and Financial Resources

Tribal lands comprise nearly two percent of U.S. land, but contain about five percent of all the country's renewable energy resources. With more than nine million megawatts of potential installed renewable energy capacity on tribal lands, tribal communities are well positioned to capitalize on their energy resources for local economic growth.

DOE operates several technical assistance and financial assistance programs to support energy development on tribal lands, including the Strategic Technical Assistance Response Team (START) Program and on-request technical assistance. START in Alaska and the Lower 48 made significant progress in the ten tribal communities in 2015 and over 30 communities since its inception. In 2015, over 50 technical assistance requests were completed or are in process. This assistance included assistance to 16 villages to obtain power cost equalization subsidies, strategic energy planning workshops for over 240 people, and 13 requests specific to clean energy technology and resources.

DOE added a new \$6 million investment in tribal energy grants in 2015, representing more than 4.4 MW of new renewable energy generation and saving the tribes over \$1.4 million in electricity costs, fuel, and transportation expenses annually.

In 2015 new technologies, partnerships, and funding were introduced to combat the effects of climate change and protect natural resources. Web-based mapping tools, water supply infrastructure projects, and the use of historic maps are just a few of the many programs introduced.

U.S. Forest Service Partners with Tribes to Address Climate Change

The U.S. Forest Service expanded assistance to tribal communities as they prepare for and recover from the impacts of climate change through the Tribal Flagship Adaptation Partnership program. Each Forest Service Region/Station/Area is developing at least one flagship partnership with a tribe to demonstrate the potential for tribal climate resilience. An example of this partnership is the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership (WKRP). WKRP is a diverse partnership including the Karuk Tribe, the Forest Service, the Mid Klamath Watershed Council, the Salmon River Restoration Council, and Fire Safe Councils. WKRP institutes collaborative fire management incorporating traditional tribal land

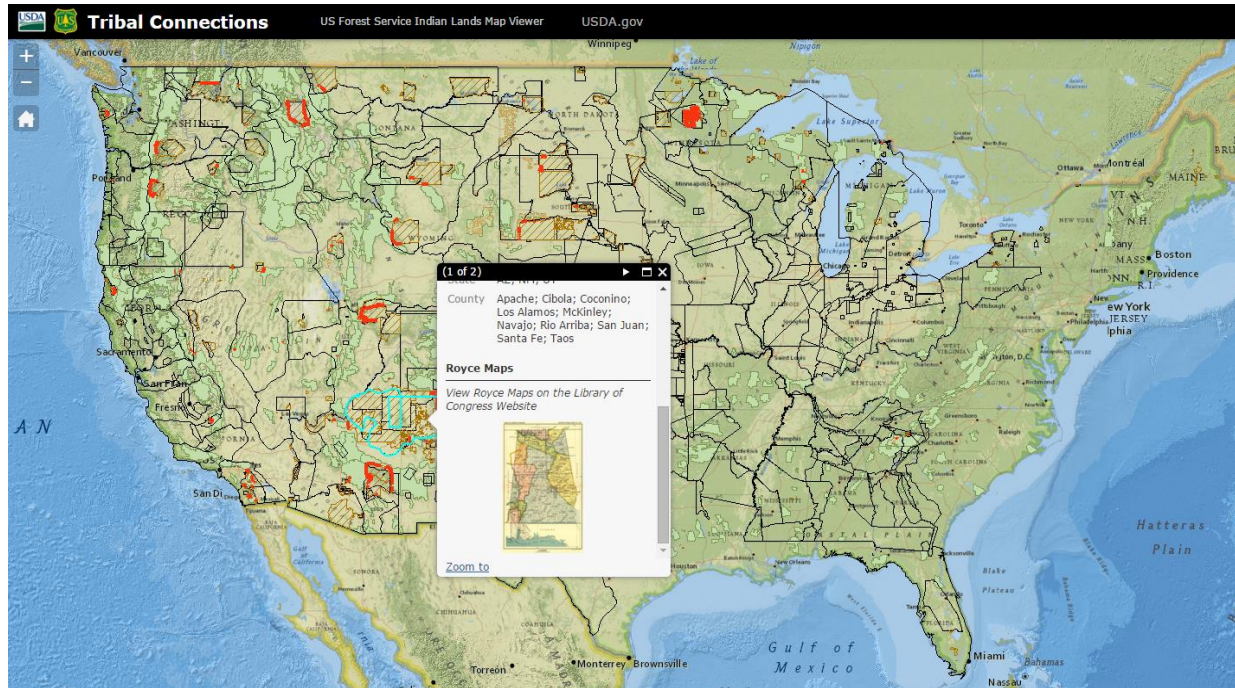
practices and stewardship as well as mentoring and educating the next generation of conservation stewards.

Local Environmental Observers (LEO) Network

EPA supported the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium to make the LEO Network mobile. Founded in 2012, this web-based mapping tool is used by environmental observers across the state to post observations about climate change impacts. LEO connects communities with technical experts and resources needed for adaptation and provides real-time assessment and response. In 2015, LEO launched a mobile app that allows observers to share photos and details of their observations from the field. LEO provides a platform for local experts to document observations about unusual environmental events in their communities. Participants apply local and traditional knowledge, western science, and modern technology to record and share observations as well as raise awareness about the conditions in the circumpolar north. Through the work of the Arctic Council, LEO has been expanded beyond Alaska to include communities around the Arctic Circle and into the Lower 48.

GIS Mapping Tool Displaying National Forest and Tribal Lands

In 2015, the U.S. Forest Service released the first generation of Tribal Connections – a web-based Interactive Geographic Information System (GIS) map service. This reference tool will help Forest Service employees, tribes, and the public better understand historical treaties and the role they play in making current land management decisions. This innovative map service allows users to display any or all of three coverages: (1) National Forest System Lands, (2) Tribal Trust Lands, and (3) Lands Ceded by Tribes through Treaties. Future iterations will include refinements in the coverages and perhaps other jurisdictional boundaries. The ceded element layer utilizes the historic Royce maps that were published in 1896-97.



USDA's Tribal Connections map

Tribal Nations Landing Page on the Climate Resilience Toolkit

The Environment, Climate Change, and Natural Resources Subgroup of the White House Council on Native American Affairs (WHCNA) created the Tribal Nations landing page on the Climate Resilience Toolkit that serves as a public facing educational tool to highlight tribal sovereignty and resilience partnership opportunities and a tribal facing tool to direct tribal practitioners to high quality, tribal focused digital tools, resources, information, and communities of practice sites within the participating agency's web offerings. <https://toolkit.climate.gov/topics/tribal-nations>.

USDA Provides Natural Resources Leadership to Tribal College and University (TCU) Students



2015 Safeguarding Natural Heritage Dine College Summer Youth Students weeding a corn field as a part of learning about Navajo traditional farming. (Photo by Leslie Wheelock, Director of the USDA's Office of Tribal Relations)

In 2015, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) joined forces with Navajo Technical University, Diné College and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute to provide ten-week paid internships at APHIS facilities for six students. APHIS also provided financial assistance to three TCUs to cohost Safeguarding Natural Heritage Program, a two-week summer enrichment program for students ages 14-17. The program exposed students to hands-on natural resource workshops and seminars as well as USDA career opportunities. Financial

assistance was also provided to the Navajo Technical University Veterinary Technology Program to enhance curriculum and expand opportunities for students.

Community-Based Climate Mitigation Strategies

USDA partnered with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) and tapped into the TCU/VISTA Program to implement community-based climate mitigation strategies. In 2015, NRCS funded AIHEC to support a range of enrichment and intervention strategies by TCUs designed to support American Indian farmers, ranchers and communities in strengthening their agricultural, financial, and natural resource management practices. An important component of the project is for TCU students and faculty to provide support to their tribal government agencies involved in resource assessment and climate change vulnerability analysis. Four TCUs were identified to work with local farmers, ranchers and communities, which included assisting them in accessing USDA resources made available through the 2014

In 2015, USDA partnered with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium and tapped into the TCU/VISTA Program to implement community-based climate mitigation strategies.

Farm Bill. Five additional TCUs were recruited to carry out community-based climate mitigation projects.

This work inspired a project in which AIHEC is partnering with TCU/VISTA volunteers to facilitate tribal community stakeholder involvement in climate change adaptive response work. K-12 and college students, farmers, ranchers and other local stakeholders will help identify and address local climate change response priorities. The projects are supported with technical assistance from national climate change resources including the USDA Climate Hubs. AIHEC hopes to eventually expand the project to include all 37 TCUs.

Webinars on Renewable Energy

In partnership with DOE Office of Indian Energy (IE), the Western Area Power Administration (Western) continues to lead the development of an annual renewable webinar series for American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal Governments. Now in its 4th year, the FY 2015 monthly series Knowledge to Energy: The Path to Projects included 11 tribal specific energy webinars. The series reached approximately 1,896 tribal representatives and interested stakeholders. Planning and implementation of the 2016 webinar series is fully underway and includes the following key topics to support tribal energy self-determination:

- Energy Planning
- Exploring Your Energy Markets
- Transmission
- Understanding the Energy Policy and Regulatory Environment
- Tribal Business Structures for Financing Projects
- Lifecycle
- Project Development
- Project Regulatory Considerations
- Strategic Partnerships
- Assessing Capital
- Energy and Economic Success Studies

Technical Assistance

Also in collaboration with DOE IE, the Western Area Power Administration conducted five tribal prefeasibility transmission and utility formation studies in FY 2015. Prefeasibility transmission studies support potential renewable energy projects on tribal lands. These studies help Tribes determine the probable size, interconnection, and feasibility of proposed Tribal renewable

projects. Studies can also assist in the search for potential off-takers and financing of proposed renewable projects. Tribal Utility formation studies help tribes evaluate their market options and help them consider various legal and technical considerations associated with forming a tribal utility. Several of the studies resulted in tribes moving forward with the next level of effort to develop renewable energy projects or form an electric utility.

In collaboration with EPA, Western presented information on its Renewable Resource Program at four EPA Clean Power Plan – Environmental Justice workshops, three in the Southwest and one in Arlington, Virginia. Presentations provide local and national environmental justice communities with information to assist them engage with the Clean Power Plan process and develop successful renewable energy and energy efficiency projects.



Sustaining Economic Development

The Obama Administration has taken specific steps to ensure that there are quality and valuable opportunities for employment in Indian Country. By working with tribes and tribal colleges, this Administration has worked to ensure that Indian Country has the skills and access to career pathways to be competitive in a technologically advanced global economy.



Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack discusses plans for the Thunder Valley development on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation as part of the President's Promise Zone initiative (Photo: Tim Potts, USDA)



and recent graduates, including students from 11 TCUs. OPM is using social media and webinars at TCUs to share information and recruit students for the Pathways Program.

OPM is also working with agencies to ensure that they implement their agency-specific Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plans to address the underrepresentation of Native Americans in the federal workforce.

Improving Awareness of Employment Rights for Native Americans

In December 2014, OFCCP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Council for Tribal Employment Rights (CTER), a nonprofit organization that represents the interests of over 300 tribal nations and Alaska Native Villages that are covered by employment rights ordinances. The MOU fosters cooperation and a mutually beneficial working relationship between OFCCP and CTER. One focus of the MOU was to ensure contractors and subcontractors performing work on multi-million dollar federal construction projects are aware of Indian reservations near the location where the federal construction work is being performed. Currently, INAERP assists in establishing linkages between the contractors and TEROs to ensure Indian Americans and

Jobs Development

OPM is focusing on building partnerships to drive recruitment strategies and provide more opportunities for mentorship and leadership, including for Native youth. In 2015, OPM provided in-person workshops on how to find and apply for Federal jobs, Pathways Programs for interns and recent graduates, and other hiring programs for 12 TCUs. Additionally, OPM provided briefings to five universities with high representations of Native American students. In addition, to foster connections between Indian Country and the federal government, OPM participated in the Society of American Indian Government Employees conference and provided information on the Pathways Programs for interns

Alaska Native job seekers are aware of the job opportunities available at these federal construction projects. In part because of this awareness, more than 150 Indian and Native Americans hired into construction jobs for multi-million dollar federal construction projects.

Offering Technical and Financial Assistance

The Treasury Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund's Native American Community Assistance (NACA) Program awarded \$19.6 million in financial and technical assistance to 43 organizations, including seven new NACA Program awardees. This was a significant increase compared to the \$12.2 million in awards to 33 CDFIs serving native communities in 2014.

In addition, USDA's StrikeForce Initiative is providing special, targeted assistance through the USDA to counties that have high poverty levels. This includes implementing disaster relief to tribal farmers and ranchers, expanding access to rural credit, establishing innovative public-private conservation partnerships, developing new markets for rural-made products, and investing in infrastructure, housing, and community facilities to help improve quality of life.

In 2015, USDA invested \$306.3 million dollars that directly impacted and funded infrastructure improvements.

Funding Infrastructure Improvements

In FY 2015, USDA Rural Development (RD) invested \$306.3 million dollars that directly impacted American Indians and Alaska Natives. This included \$55.5 million for Water and Waste infrastructure improvements, \$23.4 million for Tribal business and cooperative development and another \$144.4 million to help American Indians and Alaska Natives purchase homes. RD also extended its first loan upgrade service for approximately 50% of its customers on the Mescalero Apache Reservation to very high speed fiber-to-the-home broadband internet service.

Additionally, USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service provided funding through the Market Access Program (MAP) to help communities share the costs of overseas marketing and promotional activities that help build commercial export markets for U.S. agricultural products and commodities.

Improving Transportation in Indian Country

In 2015, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) transferred more than \$162 million of Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) funding to more than 88 tribal governments and consortiums, totaling 131 tribes. In addition, FHWA provided \$8.6 million in safety grants to 82 tribes for 94 separate planning, engineering, emergency response, or education/ outreach safety projects and activities. Finally, in 2015, FHWA provided \$8.6 million for the design or rehabilitation/replacement of 29 deficient bridges in Indian Country.

The Federal Transit Administration's Tribal Transit Program (TTP) consists of two components: a \$25 million formula program and \$5 million discretionary program. The Tribal Transit Program makes funds available to federally recognized Indian tribes and Alaskan Native villages, groups, or communities to maintain or implement public transportation programs on and around Indian reservations in rural areas. These funds support a number of areas including: operating costs to enable tribes to continue transit services; capital to enable tribal investment in new or replacement equipment; and funding for tribal transit planning activities for public transportation services on and around Indian reservations. The TTP projects link tribal citizens to employment, food, healthcare, school, social services, recreation/leisure and other key community connections.

Promoting Native American Small Business Creation, Development and Growth

In 2015, SBA approved \$149 million in loan guarantees to Native enterprises, a 45% increase over 2014 approvals of \$103 million. \$10.3 billion in contracts were awarded to Native American small businesses through SBA's 8(a) Program. In addition SBA counseled over 16,000 Native American Businesses across the country.

SBA provided \$700,000 in grant funding for projects promoting the success and long-term survival of Native American firms eligible for assistance under the 7(j) program which provides specialized management and technical assistance to underserved markets and small business owners. SBA also funded 20 Native American Entrepreneurial Empowerment Workshops. These workshops provide aspiring Native entrepreneurs with the knowledge and resources to successfully launch their businesses as well as support the growth of established Native-owned enterprises.

SBA's new lending matchmaking service, LINC, is important for Native American small business owners given the distance between many reservations and financial institutions. LINC provides some upfront assurance that a loan is likely to take place, encouraging more individuals to travel to banks.

SBA funded eight Native American Growth Accelerators in 2015. These are business incubators designed to help startup firms quickly launch, scale up and turn a profit. Accelerators provide a physical infrastructure where budding entrepreneurs can work and plan. They offer mentoring, networking, business plan assistance, and possibly even access to investment capital.

Under the new initiative “Startup in a Day”, SBA awarded funding to help tribes build a technological platform designed to make it easier for entrepreneurs to start businesses in their communities.

Increasing Knowledge and Access to the Clean Energy Economy

The National Tribal Energy Summit: “A Path to Economic Sovereignty” was held September 23-25, 2015, in Washington, D.C. The summit focused on energy policy priorities important to American Indian Tribes and brought together representatives from hundreds of tribal and state governments, federal agencies, tribal corporations, private industry, utilities, and academia to explore energy development and security issues identified by tribes and the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Indian Country Energy and Infrastructure Working Group.

DOE engages in tribal consultation with American Indian and Alaska Native governments and communities on energy development, sustainability, and cleanup activities related to DOE facilities. To enhance government-to-government relations, DOE sponsored five Tribal and Environmental Justice Training sessions that support positive and productive tribal government and community relations. The sessions build credibility and trust through an understanding of federal Indian law and policies, tribal government and community protocols, tribal community and cultural communication skills, and best practices for tribal sensitivities. Through this training, DOE will be positioned to work effectively with tribal governments and communities.

The training promotes the principles underlying DOE Order 144.1, American Indian Tribal Government Interactions and Policy, the Department’s Environmental Justice Five-Year Implementation Plan, and Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations. In addition, the training is sponsored by the Office of Human Capital, the Environmental Justice Program, the Office of Sustainable Environmental Stewardship, and Tribal and Intergovernmental Affairs. A total of 240 federal and contractor personnel completed the trainings held at both DOE headquarters and field offices from September 2015 through April 2016. The sponsoring offices will schedule additional training sessions throughout the year.



Enhancing Land Management and Ownership

The Obama Administration is working to bring lands into trust and return management to tribal governments. These efforts are critical to reaffirming tribal sovereignty. Reducing fractionated interests also helps tribal governments govern their lands effectively and spurs economic and agricultural development.



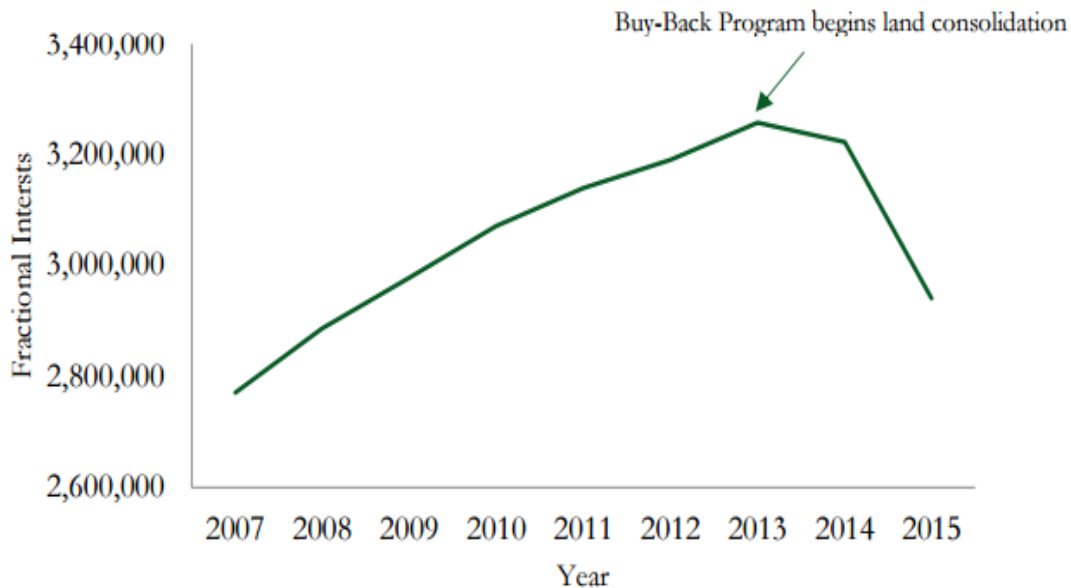
The Department of the Interior hosted a listening session in Albuquerque, NM for the Land Buy-Back Program (Photo: DOI)

Restoring Tribal Homelands through the Land Buy-Back Program

The Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations (Program) made significant gains with the amount of acreage consolidated, payments to landowners and overall economic impact during the past year. Created as part of the *Cobell* Settlement, the Program has \$1.9 billion available to reduce fractionation by purchasing fractional interests (also known as “undivided interests”) in trust or restricted land from willing sellers at fair market value. Fractionation refers to divided ownership of Indian lands and is the result of land parcels (allotments) passing to numerous heirs over generations. The land itself is not physically divided; rather, the heirs own undivided interests in the allotment.

In FY 2015 alone, the Program paid nearly \$550 million to landowners and consolidated more than 1.1 million equivalent acres of land. According to DOI’s Office of Policy Analysis, cumulative Program payments to landowners as of September 2015 have contributed an estimated \$752 million to gross domestic product (GDP), \$1.4 billion in output of goods and services, and supported about 9,000 jobs nationwide as a result of the influx of funds into specific areas and associated spending.

Total fractional interests 2007-2015 for Program-eligible locations



(Chart from the Department of Interior: 2015 Buy-Back Program Status Report)



Respecting Cultural Rights

The Obama Administration recognizes that protecting heritage and traditions is critical for tribal nations to maintain their identities and cultures. Preserving indigenous culture and practices also identifies the important cultural and historical contributions of tribes to our histories. As such, the Administration has worked to help protect important cultural and ancestral sites and traditions.



President Obama designated the Basin and Range National Monument in Nevada in July 2015, protecting ancient Native American archaeological sites (BLM)

Inter-Agency Sacred Sites Memorandum of Understanding

The Department of Defense, DOI, DOE, and USDA and the ACHP, signatories to the Interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Sacred Sites, completed the following MOU deliverables in 2015:

1. A comprehensive confidentiality statement that offers guidance to federal agencies about protecting sensitive sacred sites information from public disclosure.
2. An informational paper for the public, industry, academia and state/local governments that provides an introduction to sacred sites and why it is important for the public to help protect these places.
3. A comprehensive introductory training for federal employees regarding sacred sites, legal obligations, and best practices. The signatories are currently working with DOJ to make this training available to tribes and the general public, online and free of charge. All of these materials were created in coordination with a broad group of subject matter experts from Indian Country, the Federal Government, academia, and advocacy groups.
4. A policy review containing a comprehensive review of applicable laws and policies that impact the area of sacred sites.

New NAGPRA Regulations

A milestone in signifying the Administration's respect for the cultural rights of tribal nations, DOI issued a final rule implementing section 3(b) of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) on November 5, 2015. The final rule provides procedures for the disposition of unclaimed human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony excavated or discovered on, and removed from, federal lands after November 16, 1990.

Promoting Native Language

In September 2015, Native language program staff, researchers, and federal representatives convened to discuss challenges and paths to success in teaching Native languages. HHS's Administration for Native Americans (ANA) used this gathering as an opportunity to receive feedback on the Native Language Coordination Initiative. This initiative will help support communities seeking to integrate Native American languages in learning settings from preschool to higher education and will offer an additional \$3.5 million, if funded.



Improving Federal Services to Indian Country

The Federal Government continues to take steps to help tribal communities gain awareness of and access to available resources. For example, through a comprehensive resource like Native One Stop, users can find relevant resource information for services across the federal government. So far, 17 federal agencies have updated the website with information regarding over 162 programs including grants, loans, technical assistance, and more.



Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julián Castro discusses providing important services to Indian Country (Photo: DOI)

Native One Stop

American Indians and Alaska Natives can now access one centralized website, Native One Stop (www.nativeonestop.gov), for a wide range of cross-government resources and programs. Native One Stop plays a critical role in inter-agency collaboration for Indian Country by providing a single government website where more than 5 million Native Americans and others can learn about government resources, application processes for programs, and related program information. Native One Stop currently provides access to over 150 resources from 17 federal agencies and will continue to grow.

Social Security Administration (SSA) Tribal Outreach

SSA continues to strengthen relationships with tribes through ongoing communication, education, and outreach activities, as defined in Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments. The national American Indian and Alaska Native Consultation and Education Workgroup was established to assist SSA to strengthen its relationship with Indian tribes through ongoing communication, education, and outreach activities. In support of the agency's continued outreach to tribes, SSA established beneficial relationships by meeting with 34 tribes in eight states and creating an outreach guide with information on services addressed specifically to tribal governments. SSA continued to expand video service delivery to better serve tribal members who live long distances from an SSA field office. Since implementation, SSA has seen an increase in the number of claims filed, a reduction in missed appointments, and improved service to rural and tribal areas.

Distribution of Funds in Trust

The Final Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) guidance on per capita distributions to members of Indian tribes from funds held in trust by the Secretary of the Interior was released in September 2015. This guidance was developed in response to requests from tribal nations following extended consultation with tribal leaders, and in consultation with DOI. The guidance concludes that per capita payments to tribal members from such trust accounts generally are not subject to taxation.