

Department of the Interior

Departmental Manual

Effective Date: 10/6/03

Series: Organization

Part 110: Office of the Secretary

Chapter 26: Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians

Originating Office: Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians

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26.1 General. The Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians was created by the American Indian Trust Fund Management Reform Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-412). The Office oversees reforms necessary to ensure the fulfillment of the Department of the Interior's (DOI) trust responsibilities to American Indians and Alaska Natives. The Special Trustee manages and directs the staff within the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST) with the assistance of a Principal Deputy Special Trustee. The Principal Deputy Special Trustee acts in the absence of the Special Trustee and discharges the responsibilities of the Office including strategic planning, Activity Based Costing (ABC) and the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). All offices and organizations in OST report through the Principal Deputy Special Trustee to the Special Trustee with the exception of the Office of Trust Review and Audit (see attached organization [chart](#)). The organizations and functions of the OST are described below.

26.2 Office of Trust Review and Audit. The office reports to the Special Trustee. It administers and manages the trust compliance rating system and conducts annual reviews/ratings of Indian trust asset management activities Department-wide. The office works directly with Departmental offices to track findings and provide guidance on best practices to improve their performance and rating. The office coordinates findings, generates reports, and monitors corrective actions for internal and external trust activities including the evaluation of tribally managed trust programs set up under compact/contract. The office plans and coordinates contracts to ensure reviews and evaluations of program activities are timely, and prepares timely reports and/or makes recommendations to top management on the efficiency, economy, legality and effectiveness of operations at the program and field level resulting from review/audit findings. The office coordinates and develops reporting requirements for correction of identified weaknesses.

26.3 Offices Reporting to the Principal Deputy Special Trustee.

A. The Chief Information Officer (CIO). The CIO is responsible for Information Technology (IT) for OST nationwide and oversees and directs IT support services including technical support, capital planning and acquisition of IT equipment, IT security, and electronic and hard copy records management activities. The CIO ensures interface with other systems and develops a strategic plan to support the OST business processes and manages IT services in accordance with Departmental IT directives. The CIO reviews all IT expenditures for OST to ensure that adequate resources are available to support trust activities. The CIO also coordinates acquisition requests for procurement/expenditures in accordance with Departmental guidelines, enterprise architecture and capital planning.

(1) Office of Trust Records (OTR). The OTR reports to the CIO and is responsible for the management of Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and OST fiduciary trust records programs consistent with requirements set forth in 44 U.S.C. Chapter 31. The fiduciary trust records management program is developed and implemented in concert with other offices in OST, BIA, Minerals Management Service (MMS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA). The OTR coordinates its activities with offices and agencies such as the Office of the Solicitor, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the Department of Justice, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Indian Trust Accounting Division of the General Services Administration

(a) Division of Records Management Policies, Procedures and Training. The division is responsible for managing a nationwide records program that is in conformity with the legal obligations of the trust relationship between the Federal government and American Indians. The Division Chief reports to the Director, OTR. The division is responsible for the development, issuance, and implementation of Department-wide records, regulations, and policies based on life cycle management concepts and standards for textual and electronic records. Program responsibilities address the creation, maintenance, receipt, delivery, custody and control, processing, inventory, database management, maintenance of Indian records and their accession and disposition, transfer, storage, security and safety to ensure document preservation in accordance with the Federal Records Act and NARA regulations, and other applicable laws and regulations. The division is responsible for implementing internal controls; providing cyclical evaluations and followup; providing general and specialized records management training for textual and electronic records to BIA and OST staff and tribes; and, coordinating the scheduling of textual and electronic records. The division is responsible for overseeing a program to ensure that modern information systems incorporate essential record keeping requirements and facilitate long-term internal and external uses of trust records. The division is also responsible for identifying innovative solutions for managing electronic trust documents. The division develops working agreements with Interior bureaus/offices and other agencies and provides technical assistance to Indian tribes for P.L. 93-638 contracted and compacted programs to develop and implement a tribal archives program. The division establishes and implements a Vital Records Program and is responsible for administering the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act (PA) function for OST. The

division will also develop special programs to support other reform initiatives that impact Indian records management activities.

(b) Division of Records Management Operations. The division is responsible for providing direction and guidance to recover documents for historical accounting, and recover tribal records and Individual Indian Money account documents. The Division Chief reports to the Director, OTR. The division is responsible for specialized research and document production services to DOI solicitors, tribes, individual Indians, Department of Justice attorneys, or requesters having a legal need for access to proprietary Indian asset or income data. The division is also responsible for providing research service to OST and BIA personnel requiring documentation found in OST records located at OTR. The division is responsible for development and implementation of a field operations program that will implement records management responsibilities at BIA/OST regional and field locations. This division is responsible for design, installation, training, implementation and maintenance of automated systems that support the overall records management and litigation support program requirements. These automated systems include records inventories and litigation databases used for researching and controlling large document collection.

(2) Office of Information Technology Services. The office reports to the CIO and develops policies, procedures, and guidelines for the management and deployment of information technology assets and management of electronic records. Information Technology (IT) policies support Departmental initiatives for a comprehensive information technology investment framework for expenditures, technology management, information and telecommunications management, inventory, asset management, and security. IT reviews are conducted to ensure compliance with all directives and with security management initiatives. The office provides daily OST data systems support to ensure proper maintenance of existing systems to support the OST operational requirements. Support includes testing and implementing automated trust funds financial systems and providing technical support for trust funds aspects of automated data processing. The office also ensures necessary interface with other systems in BIA, MMS, tribal operations, and other affected offices in the Department.

B. Office of Budget, Finance and Administration. The office is responsible for OST budget formulation. It administers appropriated funds and manages and coordinates procurement, personnel and property activities through three components: Budget and Finance, Administration, and Acquisition Support.

C. Office of External Affairs. The office is responsible for Indian self-governance activities and self-determination activities, legislative contacts for Indian trust asset management, contacts with the news media, and coordinating outreach activities in Indian country.

26.4 Deputy Special Trustee -Trust Accountability. The Deputy Special Trustee - Trust Accountability manages and supervises the Office of Trust Training; the Office of Trust Regulations, Policies and Procedures; and the Trust Program Management Center.

A. Office of Trust Training. The office is responsible for developing and coordinating training of employees in support of fiduciary trust funds activities. The office ensures proper accreditation of staff in all professional series and/or accreditation required for the performance of specific duties and responsibilities.

B. Office of Trust Regulations, Policies and Procedures. The office is responsible for ensuring organizational knowledge, access, and compliance with applicable trust-related regulations, policies, and procedures. The office coordinates policies and procedures for implementing regulatory requirements and participates in program audits. The office promulgates and integrates trust policy into all business processes and coordinates trust procedures with internal and external organizations involved with trust activities.

C. Trust Program Management Center. The center manages trust reform projects ensuring integration into daily operations and business process modeling including compliance with the Federal Managers Financial Integrity Act. The center ensures coordination of process realignment, design, and implementation with state-of-the art technology and data management and coordinates universal support functions for trust processes and develops the Trust Business line strategy. Responsibilities also include sponsoring newly developed processes and management tools, monitoring risk management, and preparing and following up on findings and reports.

26.5 Deputy Special Trustee - Field Operations. The Deputy Special Trustee - Field Operations manages and supervises the Office of Appraisal Services, the Trust Administrators, and the Trust Beneficiary Call Center.

A. Office of Appraisal Services. The office reports to the Deputy Special Trustee - Field Operations. It provides impartial estimates of value for a variety of specific real property interests on land owned in trust or restricted status. Estimates are provided through a Chief Appraiser and regional appraisal staff.

B. Regional Fiduciary Trust Administrators

(1) Regional Fiduciary Trust Administrators report to the Deputy Special Trustee - Field Operations and provide technical assistance on trust matters. Their responsibilities include coordinating trust asset management activities with the BIA in their respective geographic area; providing guidance to field staff in the examination, verification, and maintenance of accounts and accounting data for accounts; ensuring general trust funds and judgment funds are received, recorded, and disbursed and/or maintained timely and accurately; and providing leadership and oversight to ensure timely, courteous, and accurate response to account holders. Regional Fiduciary Trust Administrators also supervise a staff of Fiduciary Trust Officers.

(2) The Fiduciary Trust Officers are co-located with or in close proximity to BIA field locations. They work directly with the BIA Deputy Agency Superintendents - Trust Operations, to ensure a smooth flowing front line operation designed to enhance services to tribes, Individual Indian account holders and other interested parties. Their

responsibilities include reviewing and approving management plans and concurring with the BIA Deputy Agency Superintendents - Trust Operations on actions that meet certain risk criteria. They serve as primary points of contact in local collections offices for beneficiary services, trust funds, and encoding transactions. They also provide technical assistance on trust matters and ensure proper documentation for trust transactions.

C. Trust Beneficiary Call Center. The Center reports directly to the Deputy Special Trustee - Field Operations and is responsible for responding to inquiries from trust beneficiaries. The Call Center has access to various trust systems and operations staff in order to provide comprehensive account information to beneficiaries and complement local services.

26.6 Deputy Special Trustee - Trust Services. The Deputy Special Trustee - Trust Services manages and supervises the Office of Trust Funds Management and the Office of Trust Reporting and Reconciliation.

A. Office of Trust Funds Management (OTFM). The OTFM is responsible for policies, standards and procedures governing trust funds, including receipting, accounting, investing, and disbursing individual and tribal trust funds. The office operates and controls accounting activities that properly record all funds received, disbursed, invested, and held in trust for individual Indians and Indian tribes, providing centralized accounting services for all trust funds management activities. As necessary, OTFM works directly with field offices to ensure cash management supporting documentation is in compliance with policies and procedures. The office plans, develops, operates, and controls the buying, selling, and trading of investment instruments.

(1) Division of Trust Funds Accounting. The division operates and controls accounting activities that properly record and report all funds received, disbursed, invested, and held in trust for individual Indians and Indian tribes. It plans, develops, and recommends policies and procedures governing trust operations. It also coordinates with other Federal agencies as necessary in the maintenance of trust accounts.

(2) Division of Trust Funds Investments. The division plans, develops, operates, and controls the buying, selling, and trading of investment instruments in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies. The division provides technical advice and assistance to Regional offices, agencies, and Indian tribes in developing financial plans and investment strategies for tribal trust funds.

B. Office of Trust Reporting and Reconciliation. The office reconciles subsidiary and controlled accounts and monitors trust funds activities at the OTFM and field levels. The office prepares internal and external financial accounting reports. It is also responsible for the accurate and timely preparation and submission of appropriate external reports, and required tax forms. Reconciliation of trust funds activities include custodial management of proprietary data, compliance and interface with Treasury cash flow reports, and Minerals Management Service and BIA receipt of funds and source documents. The office prepares and issues beneficiary statements of performance.

10/6/03 #3599

Replaces 4/21/03 #3588

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