United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
Washington, D.C. 20240

OCT 25 2007

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Dear Tribal Leader,

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Division of Human Services announces the upcoming tribal consultation sessions scheduled during the months of November and December 2007. We encourage your participation in the sessions and welcome your questions and comments.

The consultation meetings will address the proposed revision to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) regulations, specifically, *Notice of Involuntary Child Custody Proceedings and Payment Appointment Counsel in State Courts* (25 CFR Part 23, Subpart B, 23.11). Pursuant to this regulation, the BIA Central and Regional Offices are responsible for the proper tribal notification of Indian and Alaska Native children into Indian and Alaska Native family homes when removed due to abuse and neglect.

The current duplicative notice procedures outlined in 25 CFR Part 23.11 is generating a substantial backlog and delay in the processing of Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) notices by the BIA. The proposed revision will eliminate the duplication of ICWA notices received by BIA agencies nationwide. The recommended revision would result in the creation of a centralized ICWA notice office responsible for managing and responding to the notices issued by states and agencies nationwide. The intended revisions will expedite the response and processing time, by the BIA, of notices received for those Native children who are placed in protective custody by states.

FORMAT OF UPCOMING CONSULTATION MEETINGS:

1. Historical overview of section 25 CFR Part 23, Subpart B, 23.11 (*Involuntary Child Custody Proceedings and Payment Appointment Counsel in State Courts*)

2. Summary of the consultation items, including the reason for proposing the item/topic and the background of the issues.

3. Questions, answers and comments session.

FORMAT FOR COMMENTS AND VIEWPOINTS

Meeting attendees may present their comments verbally or in writing (see attached comment form). Since many comments from meeting participants are anticipated, the following information should be provided on the comment sheet.

1. Name of respondent; **AND** Name and Address of the organization which the respondent represents.
2. Your comments and suggestions.

Written comments can also be sent to the Division of Human Services, Bureau of Indian Affairs by December 11, 2007. All comments should be sent to the Division of Human Services, Bureau of Indian Affairs, MS-4513-MIB, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240. Facsimile responses may be transmitted to (202) 208-2648.

We encourage all Tribes, State Agencies, and other interested parties to attend the consultation session in your area, or submit your written remarks to the BIA. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Ms. Rochelle Apodaca, Social Worker at (505) 563-3524 or Evangeline M. Campbell, ICWA Supervisory Social Worker at (202) 513-7623.

Sincerely,

Stephanie E. Birdwell

Stephanie E. Birdwell
Acting Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Attachments