

Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

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Series: Organization

Part 130: Bureau of Indian Affairs

Chapter 1: Creation, Mission and Functions

Originating Office: Bureau of Indian Affairs

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1.1 Creation. The Bureau of Indian Affairs was created in the War Department in 1824 and was transferred in 1849 to the Department of the Interior. In 1954, the medical components of the Bureau were transferred to the Department of Health and Human Services.

1.2 Authority. The Snyder Act of 1921 (25 U.S.C. 13) provided substantive law for appropriations covering the conduct of activities in the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The scope and character of the authorizations contained in this Act were broadened by the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (25 U.S.C. 461 et seq.), which ended the allotment policy and created a foundation for tribal self-government; the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, as amended (25 U.S.C. 450 et seq.), which provided for maximum Indian participation in programs and services conducted by the Federal Government; the Tribal Self-Governance Act (25 U.S.C. 458aa et seq.), which transferred control to tribal governments over funding and decision-making for Federal programs, services, functions, and activities; and the Education Amendments of 1978, as amended (25 U.S.C. 2001 et seq.), which provided for formula distribution of funds for elementary and secondary schools and for maximum participation of tribes in education programs. Delegations of the authority of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs to Bureau officials are published in Part 230 of the Departmental Manual. The Indian Affairs Manual (IAM) contains redelegations of the Assistant Secretary's authority.

1.3 Mission. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is responsible for administering Federal Indian policy; fulfilling its Federal trust responsibilities to American Indians, tribal governments, and Alaska Natives; and promoting tribal self-determination and self-governance.

1.4 Functions. To accomplish its mission, the Bureau of Indian Affairs provides tribes with the resources to exercise authority as sovereign nations by contracting or compacting Bureau programs, fosters strong and stable tribal governments; and improves the quality of life in tribal communities by providing financial assistance to individual Indians residing on or near reservations who do not qualify for other financial assistance provided by the state(s) and providing improvements to existing substandard housing for eligible needy Indians. The Bureau provides investigative and police services and technical expertise to federally recognized Indian tribes, provides tribes with the resources to aid in developing a self-sustaining economic base,

assists in developing conservation and management plans to protect and preserve natural resources on trust lands and shared off-reservation resources, fulfills its trust responsibilities to protect and preserve trust lands, and provides administrative operational responsibilities for field activities.