

Strengthening Tribal Nations



Standing up for justice and tribal sovereignty; increasing economic opportunity; expanding quality health care; protecting native homelands — this is the foundation we can build on. This is the progress that we can make together.

*President Barack Obama
November 13, 2013*

On June 26, 2013, President Obama appointed Interior Secretary Sally Jewell as the Chair of the White House Council on Native American Affairs. To underscore the President’s commitment to effective partnerships with American Indian and Alaska Native communities, the Council was established by Executive Order to enable Federal agencies to work more collaboratively and effectively with federally recognized Tribes to advance their economic and social priorities. The Council is focusing its efforts on advancing five priorities that mirror issues tribal leaders have raised in annual White House Tribal Nations Conferences, including:

- Promoting sustainable economic development and job growth.
- Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of tribal justice systems.
- Expanding and improving educational opportunities for Native American youth.
- Protecting and supporting the sustainable management of Native lands, environments, and natural resources.
- Supporting greater access to and control over nutrition and healthcare, including special efforts to confront historic health disparities and chronic diseases.

Reaffirming the Department of the Interior’s commitment to Native Americans, Secretary Jewell has advocated Strengthening Tribal Nations as a key priority for the Department. The White House Council is a comprehensive multi-year effort to improve conditions for American Indians and Alaska Natives throughout Indian Country. Informed by consultation with the Tribes and reflective of tribal

priorities, Interior’s 2015 budget continues to focus on improving self-determination for tribal Nations, safety of Indian communities, trust resource management, and post secondary, elementary, and secondary education.

The 2015 budget request for Indian Affairs is \$2.6 billion, \$33.6 million above the 2014 enacted level. The current budget request is complemented by a proposal for education and economic development in Indian Country as part of the President’s Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative.

INDIAN AFFAIRS (dollars in millions)	
2014 Enacted	2,531.3
2015 Request	<u>2,564.9</u>
Change	+33.6
CHANGES	
Strengthening Tribal Nations	+26.5
Advancing Nation-to-Nation Relationships.....	+5.2
Supporting Indian Families and Protecting Indian Country	+11.6
Supporting Sustainable Stewardship of Trust Resources	+3.7
Advancing Indian Education	+6.0
Achieving Better Results at Lower Costs .	-2.5
Transfer of Indian Arts and Crafts Board .	+1.3
Program Reductions	-3.8
Fixed Costs	+9.7

ADVANCING NATION-TO-NATION RELATIONSHIPS

In November 2013, President Obama hosted the fifth annual White House Tribal Nations Conference. The event included thirteen Cabinet members and dozens of senior Administration officials who met with representatives from the 566 federally recognized Tribes on a wide range of issues including advancing the government-to-government relationship, economic development, housing, excellence in education, energy, infrastructure, law enforcement, cultural protection, natural resources, and Native American youth.

The input gained since the first White House Tribal Nations Conference has helped guide the Administration's priorities and decisionmaking processes. This input has informed legislative and programmatic initiatives and funding priorities in the 2015 budget, including full funding for contract support costs.

The 2015 President's budget request for contract support is \$251.0 million, an increase of \$4.0 million above the 2014 enacted level. Based on the most recent analysis, the requested amount will fully fund the estimated 2015 contract support need. The availability of contract support cost funding is a key factor in tribal decisions to assume responsibility for operating Federal programs, furthering self-governance and Indian self-determination. The Interior Department fully funded estimated contract support costs in 2014. The Bureau of Indian Affairs will continue to consult with Tribes to develop streamlined mechanisms and a long-term approach to advancing these shared goals.

To further enhance the Nation-to-Nation relationship, Indian Affairs is continuing its comprehensive look at the regulations addressing how Indian groups apply for and receive Federal recognition as an Indian Tribe. The Department is reviewing comments recently received and plans to proceed with a proposed rule for publication in the Federal Register. After another round of consultations and a formal comment period, Indian Affairs plans to publish the final rule in 2014. In addition, the 2015 budget proposes language to clarify the Department's authority to take Indian land into trust and amend the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, thereby reducing significant delays in processing land into trust applications.

SUPPORTING INDIAN FAMILIES AND PROTECTING INDIAN COUNTRY

Supporting Indian families and ensuring public safety are top priorities for the President and tribal leaders. As part of the President's commitment to protect and promote the development of prosperous tribal communities, BIA proposes the Tiwahe Initiative, a new effort to support community and cultural awareness in Indian Country. Tiwahe means family in the Lakota language.

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

The 2015 budget includes a comprehensive and integrated approach to address the interrelated problems of poverty, violence, and substance abuse faced by Indian communities. The proposed increase of \$11.6 million for social services and job training programs will support the initiative by providing culturally-appropriate services with the goal of empowering individuals and families through health promotion, family stability, and strengthening tribal communities as a whole. In its initial phase, the Tiwahe Initiative will expand BIA's capacity in current programs that address Indian children and family issues and job training needs.

To promote public safety and community resilience in Indian communities, the 2015 budget maintains resources to build on recent successes in reducing violent crime and implements a new goal to lower repeat incarceration in Indian Country. The goal of the pilot program is to lower rates of repeat incarceration at the three targeted reservations of Red Lake, Ute Mountain, and Duck Valley by a total of three percent by September 30, 2015. To achieve this goal, BIA will implement a comprehensive

PRIORITY GOAL
SAFER AND MORE RESILIENT
COMMUNITIES IN INDIAN COUNTRY.

GOAL: Reduce repeat incarceration in Indian communities.

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

“alternatives to incarceration” strategy, that seeks to address underlying causes of repeat offenses, including substance abuse and social services needs, by utilizing alternative courts, increased treatment opportunities, probation programs, and interagency and intergovernmental partnerships with tribal, Federal, and State stakeholders. The BIA had sizable success in meeting the violent crime reduction goals related to its previous agency performance goal. The strategy to meet the goal included increased community policing, tactical deployments, and interagency and intergovernmental partnerships. With the same resolve, BIA will strive to meet its new goals.

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE
STEWARDSHIP OF TRUST RESOURCES

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

Taking land into trust is one of the most important functions Interior undertakes on behalf of Indian Tribes. Homelands are essential to the health, safety, social, cultural, and economic welfare of tribal governments. In 2013, Interior acquired 32,148 acres of land in trust on behalf of Indian Tribes and individuals and approved 438 fee-to-trust applications. The Administration has set an ambitious goal of placing

more than 500,000 acres of land into trust by the end of 2016. To that end, BIA has processed more than 1,500 land-into-trust applications, accepting more than 240,500 acres in trust on behalf of Tribes since 2009. The BIA intends to build on this progress to meet or exceed the 500,000 acre goal.

The BIA is striving to increase the economic utilization of Indian lands. In addition to implementing the Helping Expedite Responsible Tribal Homeownership Act provisions for tribal leasing approval, Indian Affairs continues to implement other new Federal leasing regulations finalized in early 2013. The updated regulations encourage and accelerate economic development in Indian Country. The revised regulations reformed the former antiquated, one-size-fits-all Federal surface leasing regulations for Tribes and individual Indians. The rule defines specific processes, with enforceable timelines, through which BIA must review leases and permits. The regulation establishes separate, simplified processes for residential, business, and renewable energy development, so that, for example, a lease for a single family home is distinguished from a large solar energy project.

The 2015 budget will continue funding resource stewardship with expanded science and technical support started in 2014, including research, analysis, and technical support activities for the development of alternative and conventional energy sources, sustainable management of natural resources such as land, water, oceans, endangered and invasive species, and climate adaptation and resilience. In addition, the Indian Affairs budget proposes \$35.7 million for Indian land and water settlements in the 2015 budget, which is equal to the 2014 enacted level. The Bureau of Reclamation’s request for authorized water settlements in 2015 is \$112.0 million, an increase of \$12.3 million over the 2014 enacted level.

ADVANCING INDIAN EDUCATION

We know that education is the opportunity that lifts Indian children from the current into the future.

Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior
June 27, 2013

Native American youth are the most important economic and social resource of any Tribe, and their education is vital to the well being of Indian

Country. The 2015 budget request for the Bureau of Indian Education is \$794.4 million, \$5.6 million over the 2014 enacted level. Included within this funding request are programs that will advance the Department's continuing commitment to American Indian education.

A thriving educational system for American Indian students is essential for the long-term health and vitality of Native American communities and is a critical component of the broader initiative to strengthen tribal communities. In 2013, Secretary Jewell and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan convened an American Indian Education Study Group to address needed reforms to American Indian elementary and secondary education and seek higher levels of academic achievement.

The Study Group is overseen by Kevin Washburn, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, and includes representatives from BIE, Department of Education, leading academics, and Department of Defense educational system. Foundational issues the group is evaluating include: the creation of a relevant curriculum; the need for retention and recruitment of effective teachers; the application of appropriate pedagogical practices; and addressing the student achievement gap. The work will be done in concert with President Obama's initiative to support tribal self-determination. The group has traveled the Country to listen to BIE and tribal school employees, parents, and students directly impacted by the BIE system. They will conduct tribal consultations to gather tribal views and input on recommendations for improving educational outcomes in schools.

INDIAN LAND BUY-BACK PROGRAM

In 2013, the Land Buy-Back Program continued to implement the land consolidation portion of the Individual Indian Money Account Litigation Settlement. In the Settlement, \$1.9 billion was set aside to consolidate fractionated ownership of land interests in Indian Country. Under the terms of the Settlement, the Department of the Interior has until November 2022, to expend the funding to acquire, at fair market value, fractional interests in trust or restricted land from willing sellers. Fractionation has been identified as a key impediment to economic development and is a significant factor in the complexity and cost of managing the Indian Trust. Lands acquired through the program will remain in trust or restricted status and are immediately consolidated for beneficial use by tribal communities including energy development, farming, and timbering.

In December 2013, in a major step toward implementing the historic Settlement, Interior made initial purchase offers for fractional interests at three locations: Pine Ridge Reservation, Makah Indian Reservation, and Rosebud Reservation. Purchasing interests at fair market value from willing sellers will ultimately strengthen tribal sovereignty by supporting the consolidation of tribal lands. In 2014, the Land Buy-Back Program will extend offers to additional individual owners with fractional interests at these and other locations to increase the number of trust or restricted acres in tribal land bases. The program is focusing on the most fractionated locations and using a detailed mass appraisal method where feasible to achieve the most cost-effective acquisition of fractional interests.