



# Department of Justice

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## **JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES ACTIONS TO STRENGTHEN PUBLIC SAFETY IN INDIAN COUNTRY**

### **Department Will Expand Program that Gives Tribes Access to Federal Crime Data Opioid Awareness Trainings in Alaska and California Starting This Week**

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department today announced recent developments under the Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety to strengthen law enforcement and public safety in Indian country, including the continued expansion of a program that gives tribes access to federal crime data, addressing the opioid crisis, serving victims of sex trafficking, and strengthening investigations into crimes against children.

“We have listened to the concerns of tribal law enforcement, who are dealing with public safety challenges including rising violent crime, the opioid crisis, and human trafficking, often with limited resources and manpower,” said Associate Attorney General Rachel Brand. “The Justice Department is committed to a strong government-to-government partnership with tribal nations, including sharing valuable crime data and supporting Native American victims of crime.”

Listening sessions with tribal law enforcement in May and June clarified some of the most pressing public safety issues in Indian country. The following actions will strengthen efforts to address these challenges.

The Department of Justice is expanding the [Tribal Access Program](#) (TAP) for National Crime Information in Fiscal Year 2018. TAP provides federally-recognized tribes access to national crime information databases for both civil and criminal purposes. TAP supports the selected tribes in analyzing their needs for national crime information and provides access, technology and training.

In its first two years, the department has worked collaboratively with tribal governments on the TAP program to help resolve long-standing public safety issues in Indian country, such as the inability to access national crime information databases.

Any federally-recognized tribe interested in joining TAP is invited to submit an expression of interest between Aug. 16, 2017 and Sept. 15, 2017. For more information about TAP and instructions on submitting a statement of interest, please visit [www.justice.gov/tribal/tribal-access-program-tap](http://www.justice.gov/tribal/tribal-access-program-tap).

The Department of Justice and the Department of the Interior are hosting two upcoming Opioid Awareness Outreach meetings in August. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Executive office for the U.S. Attorneys (EOUSA), and the United States Attorney's Offices (USAOs) in Alaska and Eastern California, in conjunction with the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services (OJS), are sponsoring and co-hosting these important events. The outreach meetings will commence immediately after tribal consultations on Aug. 16 in Anchorage, Alaska and on Aug. 29 in Sacramento, California. The opioid awareness outreach will include presentations from DEA on the signs of opioid abuse, especially heroin and fentanyl awareness; from BIA's OJS on Narcan deployment initiatives in Indian country; and from the USAOs on federal drug laws. These discussions are part of an inter-departmental initiative to address the opioid crisis in Indian country.

"The developments announced today by Attorney General Sessions are vitally important to aiding tribal governments in dealing with and seeking solutions to serious drug, sex trafficking, and crimes against children issues afflicting their communities," said acting Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Interior for Indian Affairs Michael S. Black. "I urge tribal leaders and their police departments to take advantage of upcoming opportunities to provide their input on and learn more about ways of addressing these critical areas of public safety in Indian country. I also want to thank Attorney General Sessions and DOJ for their work in supporting BIA and tribal law enforcement efforts to strengthen public safety in these vulnerable communities."

The Justice Department's Office of Justice Programs Diagnostic Center, a training and technical assistance resource, is expanding its presence in Indian country. At the request of interested tribes, the Diagnostic Center provides customized assistance on a wide range of public safety issues. Among the issues being addressed in current tribal engagements include information sharing in tribal justice systems and jurisdictional coordination among tribal and local police departments. For more information about the Diagnostic Center, please see [www.ojpdagnosticcenter.org](http://www.ojpdagnosticcenter.org).

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) is developing programs in partnership with Native organizations in Seattle, Chicago, and Albuquerque to provide urban American Indian and Alaska Native victims of sex trafficking with access to culturally appropriate, comprehensive victim services. Funded under OVC's Project Beacon grant award program, these organizations will work collaboratively with state and local human trafficking task forces, as well as tribal communities, to ensure that American Indian and Alaska Native victims have an opportunity to receive a full complement of services designed to aid them in their recovery and healing from the experience of being trafficked.

Associate Attorney General Brand added: "We are committed to partnering with tribal nations, Native American organizations and others to meet the particular needs of Native American victims of sex trafficking, and to end the scourge of human trafficking more broadly."

The Department of Justice's National Indian Country Training Initiative, together with the FBI's Indian Country Crimes Unit, recently co-sponsored an Indian Country Homicide and

Child Abuse Training Seminar. The seminar was attended by FBI Special Agents, Assistant United States Attorneys, Bureau of Indian Affairs Agents and tribal law enforcement from across the country. The training covered a variety of topics meant to strengthen investigations into crimes against children, such as crime scene management, evidence collection, forensics, interviews, and dealing with victims of violent crime and sexual abuse.

The Attorney General remains committed to combatting violent crime and maintaining public safety in tribal lands, and will continue to pursue partnerships in support of American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

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