

President's FY2016 Indian Affairs budget requests \$2.9 billion to support Tribal self-determination, strengthen American Indian communities

Calls for \$1 billion investment in Indian education, fully funds contact support costs

WASHINGTON – President Obama's fiscal year 2016 budget request for Indian Affairs, which includes the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), is \$2.9 billion – a \$323.5 million (12 percent) increase from the FY2015 enacted level.

The request maintains the administration's strong support for Tribal self-determination, strengthening Tribal nations across Indian Country and meeting the federal government's responsibilities to the 566 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes, promoting opportunities for Native youth and strengthening Tribal education, economies and resilience.

"This fiscal year 2016 budget reflects President Obama's deep personal commitment to improving the lives of Indian people over the long term, focusing especially on Native youth, who represent the future of Indian Country," said Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn. "Indian Country has been united in requesting greater resources and the president has heard the Tribes' requests. This budget will improve the federal government's capacity to meet the trust responsibility and support Tribal self-governance."

The 2016 budget for Indian Affairs supports an "all of government" approach to addressing federal responsibilities and Tribal needs. Coordination of this work across the federal government is being carried out through the White House Council on Native American Affairs, established by Executive Order on June 26, 2013, by President Obama and chaired by the Department of the Interior.

Creating opportunities for Native youth

The budget includes key investments to support the launch of Generation Indigenus, an American Indian youth initiative focused on supporting opportunities and addressing barriers to success for American Indian youth.

This initiative will take a comprehensive, culturally appropriate approach to help improve the lives of American Indian youth.

In today's global economy, a high quality education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity – it is a prerequisite to success. Obama has set a vision for a 21st century education system grounded in both high academic standards and Tribal values and traditions.

Making advanced education opportunities available for Tribal members is a high priority for Tribes, who see education as the path to economic development and a better quality of life for their communities through an educated and skilled Tribal member workforce.

The president's budget proposes a \$1 billion investment in Indian education

to support a comprehensive transformation of the Bureau of Indian Education.

This multi-year process will transform the BIE into an organization that will serve as a capacity builder and service provider to support Tribes in educating their youth and delivers a culturally appropriate education across Indian Country.

The president's FY2016 budget request for Indian education operations and construction includes an increase of \$93.9 million for programs that improve classroom opportunities and outcomes, enrich instructional services and teacher quality, promote language and cultural programs, and enhance broadband and digital access.

The budget also includes an increase of \$58.7 million to repair and rebuild BIE-funded schools. The BIE budget also includes a \$4.6 million increase for scholarships for post-secondary education, with a focus on recipients seeking degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

The department is working with Tribes and other federal agencies, including the Departments of Education, Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor and Justice to implement education reforms and address issues facing American Indian youth.

Budget increases across other federal agencies through the Generation Indigenus initiative will support educational outcomes and provide wraparound services to help address barriers and provide opportunities for youth, including behavioral and mental health and substance abuse services.

The request also includes an additional \$3 million for the Bureau of Indian Affairs to support youth participation in natural resources programs.

The request would support approximately 60 new Tribal youth projects and training programs throughout Indian Country and supplement existing training programs within forestry, water and agriculture programs.

Supporting Indian families and protecting Indian Country

Supporting Indian families and ensuring public safety in Indian Country 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 and provide opportunities for youth, the BIA will continue to implement the Tiwahe Initiative.

The initiative promotes an integrated approach to supporting family stability and strengthening Tribal communities by addressing the interrelated issues associated with child welfare, poverty, domestic violence, substance abuse and incarceration.

Tiwahe means family in the Lakota language. This initiative aligns directly with the Generation Indigenus initiative that is focused on addressing barriers to success for Native youth.

Solutions require the coordination of social service programs, taking steps to maintain family cohesiveness, preparing family wage earners for work opportunities and providing rehabilitative alternatives to incarceration for family members with substance abuse issues.

The budget request proposes an increase of \$6 million for BIA social services programs through the Tiwahe Initiative, to provide culturally appropriate services to empower individuals and families through health promotion, family stability and strengthening Tribal communities as a whole.

The budget also includes \$4 million for BIA Law Enforcement Special Initiatives and \$5 million for tribal courts to implement a comprehensive strategy for providing alternatives to incarceration and increases in treatment opportunities across Indian Country.

To further promote public safety and community resilience in Indian communities, the budget proposal for BIA law enforcement builds on recent successes in reducing violent crime and expands efforts to lower repeat incarceration in Indian Country, a priority goal of the agency.

In 2016, the pilot program to lower rates of repeat incarceration will be expanded from three sites to five, with the goal to reduce recidivism at all sites by at least 3 percent.

Tribal nation-building

Programs run by Tribes through contracts with the federal government support Tribal nation-building and self-determination. Funding for contract support costs is a key factor in Tribal decisions to assume responsibility for operating federal programs, an undertaking that furthers Tribal self-governance and self-determination.

The president's budget request for contract support costs is \$277 million, an increase of \$26 million above the FY2015 enacted level. Based on the most recent analysis, the requested amount will fully fund 2016 Tribal contract support costs.

The budget also includes – for the first time – a new proposal to fully fund BIA and Indian Health Service contract support costs as mandatory funding, beginning in FY2017. The BIA and IHS will continue to work with Tribes and consult on policies to address long-term programmatic and funding goals.

Tribal leaders and communities, in partnership with the federal government, need access to quality data and information to make decisions about communities, economic development and resource management, and to improve programs that deliver services.

The budget request includes an additional \$12 million to help address the long-standing concerns Tribes have with the quality of data in Indian Country and the ability to collect, analyze and utilize evidence to support effective Tribal policy making and program implementation.

This funding also will support creation of an Office of Indian Affairs Policy, Program Evaluation and Data to directly support Indian Affairs' and Tribal data and analysis needs.

To support an "all of government" approach to delivering programs and funding to Indian Country, the budget request proposes an increase of \$4 million to establish the One-Stop Tribal Support Center to make it easier for Tribes to find and use the hundreds of services available to them across the federal government.

Initially, the center will focus on programs that serve American Indian youth, in support of the Generation Indigenus initiative and to pilot this new approach to serving needs in Indian Country.

The president's proposal includes \$4.5 million to establish an Indian Energy Service Center staffed by BIA, the Office of Natural Resources Revenue, the Bureau of Land Management and the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians to facilitate energy development in Indian Country.

Oil and gas resources are significant revenue generators in Indian Country, with royalty income climbing to \$1.1 billion in 2014, nearly three times the revenues in 2010.

The center will expedite leasing, permitting and reporting for conventional and renewable energy on Indian lands and provide resources to ensure development occurs safely, protects the environment and manages risks appropriately by providing funding and technical assistance to support assessment of the social and environmental impacts of energy development.

Sustainable stewardship of trust resources

BIA trust programs assist federally recognized 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 help Tribal landowners optimize the use of resources, providing benefits such as revenue, jobs and the protection of cultural, spiritual and traditional resources.

The president's budget includes a total increase of \$6.9 million for BIA Trust Real Estate Services activities to bolster the stewardship of trust resources.

The increase in funding will address the BIA's probate backlog and support land title and records processing, cleanup and geospatial support needs, and database management.

Supporting climate resilience in Indian Country

Tribes throughout the U.S. already are experiencing the impacts of a changing climate, including drought, intensifying wildfires, changes in plants and animals important to subsistence and cultural practices, impacts to treaty and trust resources, and coastal erosion and sea level rise.

The budget provides a total of \$50.4 million, a \$40.4 million increase over 2015, across nine BIA trust resource programs to support Tribal communities

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