



## WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE EDUCATION

To: Tribal Governments

From: U.S. Department of Education, White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education and Office of Indian Education

Re: Consultation on Native Youth Initiative

Date: October 10, 2014

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is committed to meaningful consultation with tribes on policy decisions that have direct tribal implications. To that end, we are writing to inform you that ED will host a series of tribal consultations to obtain your input and guidance on a proposed Native Youth Initiative that would involve grant awards in FY 2015 under the Title VII Indian Education Demonstration Grants authority (ESEA Sec. 7121). We respectfully invite your input and guidance on this proposed initiative at one or more of the 4 consultation sessions scheduled during the month of October.

We are seeking your input to guide our preparation for the official rulemaking that will be required to implement this initiative; you will also have an opportunity to weigh in during the public comment period that will follow the publication of our Notice of Proposed Rulemaking later in the fall. We recognize that these timeframes are unusual but we are moving quickly in hopes of taking meaningful action as soon as possible to improve the lives of Indian children, and we are hopeful that you will partner with us and join our efforts by providing feedback through this consultation process.

### **Overview of the Native Youth Initiative**

Tribal leaders and Native American advocates have voiced their concerns regarding the myriad of challenges facing American Indian and Alaska Native youth, and they have implored agency action to develop a more comprehensive approach to youth development that will improve their educational and developmental outcomes. In response, and at the specific request of President Barack Obama and Secretary Arne Duncan, ED is developing a proposed Native Youth Initiative that would include three components: 1) technical assistance (TA) and capacity-building, 2) grants in FY 2015 to implement a focused intervention aimed at improving youth outcomes, and 3) a continuing and potentially more comprehensive and multifaceted approach to improving those same outcomes in FY 2016 and beyond. ED is inviting you to participate in this consultative process to obtain your input and advice on the concept and design of the proposed Native Youth Initiative.

### **Topics for Consultation**

**Topic 1** – As stated above, ED is considering changing the current focus of the Title VII Indian Education Demonstration grants funded under section 7121 of the ESEA. This is a very flexible authority that can

support a variety of in-school or out-of-school strategies (e.g. increasing family involvement, improving health and mental health care, smoothing transitions from juvenile justice systems, etc.) designed to help students improve educational outcomes. Under this authority, ED would establish new priorities for these grants whereby a community would address the shared and overarching educational goal of ensuring that students are college and career ready. This would begin with a local assessment of barriers to student success. Based on this assessment, communities would have the flexibility to choose strategies, which could be academic or non-academic in nature, that are relevant and appropriate for their respective tribal communities. Eligible applicants under the statute are: Indian tribes, Indian organizations, Indian institutions (including Indian institutions of higher education), Local Education Agencies (LEAs), State Education Agencies (SEAs), BIE-funded schools, and consortia of eligible entities.

To maximize the size and number of grants, the Office of Indian Education (OIE) may use all FY 2015 funding for new awards under the Special Programs for Indian Children, for the Demonstration grants using the new Native Youth priority (ED typically divides the funds between Professional Development (PD) and Demonstration grants). Existing PD and Demonstration grants would still receive continuation awards, assuming they meet the terms and conditions of their grants, including showing substantial progress. We are interested in your views on the overall design of the initiative, as well as how this might build on or complement current efforts underway in your communities.

**Topic 2** – ED is considering offering technical assistance in 2015 that would assist interested tribal communities in increasing and building their capacity to successfully apply for FY 2015 grants described in Topic 1, as well as to develop and implement comprehensive, integrated plans for more effective use of available Federal, State, local, and tribal resources to meet local needs. We are interested in hearing what types of TA would be helpful, and on what topics, both for potential applicants and for grantees. For example, would tribal communities be interested in receiving assistance with conducting a needs assessment, mapping resources, collecting and analyzing data, forming governance structures for partnerships, or other needs?

**Topic 3** – ED is considering various requirements and preferences for the new OIE Demonstration grants. Should ED: 1) Require an applicant to apply as part of a consortium that includes a tribe or tribal entity? 2) Require an applicant to apply as part of a consortium that includes either a public school district or BIE-funded school? 3) Require applicants to demonstrate capacity to improve outcomes for youth? 4) Give preference points (competitive priority) for a consortium that includes either a BIE-funded school or an eligible entity that has a grant under ANEP? 5) Give preference points (competitive priority) for a consortium that includes a TEA that has received ED’s STEP grant or the BIE’s Sovereignty in Indian Education grant?

**Consultation Dates and Locations**

Detailed location information will be made available at [www.edtribalconsultations.org](http://www.edtribalconsultations.org)

Date (2014)	Location	Type
October 17	Anchorage, Alaska	In-Person (National Indian Education Association)

October 21	N/A	Webinar and Teleconference
October 23	N/A	Webinar and Teleconference
October 29	Atlanta, Georgia	In-Person (National Congress of American Indians)

ED will make best efforts to have transcripts available from each of these consultation opportunities.

A PowerPoint presentation for the in-person consultations and webinars will be available on [www.edtribalconsultations.org](http://www.edtribalconsultations.org) by October 17.

We encourage you to participate in-person or submit written statements to [tribalconsultation@ed.gov](mailto:tribalconsultation@ed.gov) by November 1. As mentioned before, you will also have an opportunity to weigh in during the public comment period following the publication of our Notice of Proposed Rulemaking later this fall. When submitting, kindly include all of your identifying information including name, title, tribe representing, address, city, state and email address. Thank you for your interest in the proposed Native Youth Initiative and we look forward to partnering with you.

Respectfully,



William Mendoza, M.Ed. (Oglala and Sicangu Lakota)  
Executive Director  
White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education