



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

OCT 13 2015

Dear Tribal Leader:

We invite you to attend two upcoming roundtable meetings focusing on homelessness and education in Indian Country. Both sessions will take place at the **National Congress of the American Indians' 72nd Annual Convention and Marketplace** at the Town and Country Resort in San Diego, California. Registration for the conference is not required to attend either of these events

First, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, in coordination with the Department of the Interior and several other member agencies, is committed to preventing and ending homelessness among Native Americans. We invite you to provide input at a roundtable regarding homelessness among Native Americans. The session will be held on **Sunday, October 18, 2015, from 1-4 p.m. at the Town and Country Resort in Royal Palm Three**. Representatives from the Department of the Interior, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness will be in attendance. To help chart a course to end homelessness in Indian Country, we are interested in receiving tribal input on:

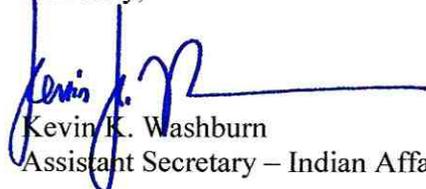
- What are the specific needs and circumstances of Native Americans who experience homelessness?
- What strategies are working to prevent homelessness or to help people who become homeless?
- What actions can be taken to address Native American homelessness at the Federal, state, or tribal level?

Please see the enclosed list of further discussion questions and strategy areas. If you would like to submit written comments on this topic, please send them to Ms. Kathryn Isom-Clause via email to Kathryn_Isom-Clause@ios.doi.gov.

Secondly, over the past two years, the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) has worked with a significant number of tribal leaders, schools, and stakeholders to redesign its organizational structure to meet the shifting demands of its school system. Since most of these schools are now operated by the tribes instead of the Federal Government, BIE needs a different paradigm to be effective. During this consultation, we will discuss the BIE's future, provide updates on its reorganization based on input from tribal consultations, and answer any questions that tribal leaders may have about BIE's proposal to restructure BIE-managed schools. This session will take place **Wednesday, October 21, 2015, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Town and Country Resort in Salon Four and Five**.

Thank you for your leadership. We look forward to continuing to work with you on these important issues.

Sincerely,


Kevin K. Washburn
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

Enclosure



Discussion Questions for Tribal Leaders and Native American Policy Experts

- 1) What are the unique challenges presented by homelessness among Native Americans both on and off tribal lands?
- 2) What actions can be taken at the tribal, state, and/or Federal-level to address challenges and barriers associated with ending Native American homelessness?
- 3) The interagency working group is currently developing strategies to support a path to end Native American homelessness. This work is being organized within 4 distinct strategy areas:
 - a) Provide guidance and technical assistance to: 1) increase the knowledge and capacity of tribal communities and homelessness services and housing providers to improve access to housing and services; and 2) increase the availability of housing options for Native Americans experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness both on and off tribal lands.
 - b) Improve data collection on homelessness among Native Americans both on and off tribal lands to better enumerate the size and scope of the problem;
 - c) Ensure that Federal strategies and actions to set a path to end Native American homelessness are informed by consultation and engagement with tribal leaders, urban Native communities, and experts in the field; and
 - d) Elevate awareness of the crisis of homelessness and housing instability among Native Americans, both on and off tribal lands, through coordinated Federal messaging and communications.
- 4) Are these the right set of strategies? From your perspective, what are the challenges associated with achieving these?
- 5) It is our understanding that tribal communities face barriers in accessing Federal programs for which they are eligible. Which programs in particular are there barriers to accessing? What types of assistance or guidance from Federal partners would be helpful in mitigating these challenges?
- 6) Is it more helpful for existing Federal programs to be opened up to tribal communities or to boost targeted programs already available to tribal communities?
- 7) What types of messaging and communication would be most helpful in elevating the crisis of homelessness and housing instability?