Unprecedented collaborative training to focus on domestic violence, will include a roundtable discussion on the Violence Against Women Act

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For Immediate Release: May 15, 2014
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WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Office of Justice Services (OJS) in collaboration with the United States Department of Justice, United States Attorney's Office District of Montana, and the Montana Department of Justice will hold the third of its 2014 tribal court trial advocacy training sessions for tribal court personnel on May 19-22 in Helena, Montana. Reflecting unprecedented collaboration among Federal, State and Tribal groups, this session will focus on trial issues surrounding a charge of domestic violence and will also address issues on Human Trafficking, Child Protection and the duties of a Victim Specialist.

Because of a high level of interest, the Office of Justice Services is providing legal training it successfully held in 2012 and 2013 to new groups of tribal court judges, prosecutors, public defenders and other court personnel to improve their trial advocacy skills. This year, training seminars will focus on case studies involving illegal narcotics, domestic violence and sexual assault on adults and children. In addition, each session includes a roundtable discussion on the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) with a panel of tribal attorneys who have first-hand knowledge of the requirements of the VAWA jurisdictional pilot project application.

This training is a component of the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010. It is being conducted under the Tribal Court Trial Advocacy Training Program – a joint effort by the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Justice that furthers the mandate of the Act to strengthen tribal sovereignty over criminal justice matters on federal Indian lands by sharpening the skills of those who practice within the tribal court system.

The program began as a result of a collaborative effort by OJS and the DOJ's Access to Justice Initiative to offer trial advocacy training with courses designed specifically for tribal courts and free training to the judges, public defenders and prosecutors who work in them. This program has expanded to include United States Attorney's Offices and, in this case, a collaboration with the Montana Department of Justice. Training is conducted by working law professionals using instructional materials prepared by experts knowledgeable about tribal court issues, with specific knowledge on issues affecting the Montana Tribes. The program is unique for its public defenders training and now has specific training for tribal judges.

President Obama signed the Violence Against Women Act on March 7, 2013. It includes important provisions for federally recognized tribes to combat violence against Native women, such as homicide, rape, assault and battery in the home, workplace and on school campuses throughout Indian Country.

WHO: Office of Justice Services, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior.

WHAT: The third OJS Tribal Court Trial Advocacy Training Program session of 2014 to improve the trial advocacy skills of tribal court judges, prosecutors, public defenders and other court personnel as mandated under the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010. This session will focus on trial issues surrounding a charge of domestic violence and includes a roundtable discussion on the Violence Against Women Act.

WHEN: May 19-22, 2014 (MDT) Monday, May 19: 1:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 20: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, May 21: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Thursday, May 22: 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

WHERE: Red Lion Colonial Hotel, 2301 Colonial Drive, Helena, Mont. 59601. Phone: (406) 443-2100.

CREDENTIALS: This invitation is extended to credentialed media representatives, who must display sanctioned media credentials for admittance to the event.
