Training focuses on Trial Skills with an emphasis on the special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction authority under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA 2013)

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services and the Tulalip Tribes of Washington will co-host a VAWA Tribal Trial Advocacy Skills Training session September 2-4, 2015, for tribal court judges, prosecutors and criminal defenders covering basic trial advocacy skills and the use of special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction (SDVCJ) authority granted federally recognized tribes by the Violence Against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA). The training will take place on the Tulalip Reservation.

"VAWA is a historic step forward in public safety because it recognizes the central role tribes must play if we are serious about addressing the chronic problem of domestic violence in Indian Country," said Kevin K. Washburn, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs. "We support tribal governments addressing this problem because we know that some problems can only be solved within the community."

Trainers include experienced judges, public defenders, prosecutors, law school faculty, and federal attorneys from the Interior Department and the U.S. Department of Justice. The training will cover basic trial advocacy skills from the point of view of the parties and the bench, as well as information about prosecuting non-Indian defendants under VAWA. The training will consist of joint skill lectures and separate skills practice for each cohort, and will end with a mock trial in the Tulalip Tribal Courthouse.

The OJS Tribal Justice Support Directorate took note from the Intertribal Technical-Assistance Working Group's collaborative discussions on implementing VAWA SDVCJ and saw the value in supporting the concept that tribal experts should train other tribes interested in prosecuting under the VAWA SDVCJ. The Intertribal Technical-Assistance Working Group (ITWG) is a voluntary working group of designated tribal representatives launched by the Department of Justice as part of the Pilot Project phase of VAWA SDVCJ implementation. For more information on the ITWG, visit www.ncai.org/tribal-vawa.

Tulalip is the second tribe to co-host the Directorate's VAWA training series this year. In May, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe of Arizona co-hosted the Directorate's first training session, which utilized curriculum based on the Tribe's experience from its first year of exercising SDVCJ authority.

Tulalip and Pascua Yaqui Tribes are among five tribes approved as pilot projects to exercise VAWA SDVCJ authority on an accelerated basis. The OJS Tribal Justice Support Directorate plans to continue the series with a training hosted by the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate in spring 2016 as well as plans to work with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation and Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to bring the VAWA training series to other parts of Indian Country.

VAWA authorizes federally recognized tribes to exercise “special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction” over certain defendants, regardless of their Indian or non-Indian status, who commit acts of domestic or dating violence or violate certain protection orders on federal Indian trust lands. Under VAWA SDVCJ authority a tribe must protect the rights of defendants under the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968, including the right to due process, which requires including a fair cross-section of the community in jury pools which does not systematically exclude non-Indians. Furthermore, the due process rights also require informing defendants detained by a tribal court of their right to file federal habeas corpus petitions.

Substantive trial training will be provided specific to VAWA prosecutions including training on jurisdictional considerations, witness recantation, and evidence considerations, and will focus on three tracks: prosecutor, defender, and judicial.

WHO: Tribal Justice Support Directorate, Office of Justice Services, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior

WHAT: The Tribal Justice Support Directorate in the BIA’s Office of Justice Services will co-host with The Tulalip Tribes of Washington a VAWA Tribal Trial Advocacy Skills Training session that will cover basic trial advocacy skills and the use of special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction (SDVCJ) authority granted to federally recognized tribes by the Violence Against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA).

WHEN: September 2-4, 2015 (PDT)

- Wednesday, Sept. 2 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Hilbulb Cultural Center
- Thursday, Sept. 3 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Hilbulb Cultural Center
- Friday, Sept. 4 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Tulalip Tribal Court

WHERE: Hilbulb Cultural Center, 6410 23rd Ave NE, Tulalip, WA 98271 Tulalip Tribal Court, 6103 31st Ave NE, Tulalip, WA 98271

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