Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

**Media Contact:** Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
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**WASHINGTON** – Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn today announced a new Bureau of Indian Affairs' Office of Justice Services (BIA-OJS) program to assist federally recognized tribal social services agencies seeking to place children in safe homes.

"The BIA-OJS Purpose Code X Program will provide tribal social service agencies with the information they need to protect the children they place into care in emergency situations when parents are unable to provide for their welfare," Washburn said. "This program provides BIA law enforcement personnel with the ability to provide our social service agency partners with much needed information to help to make sure children requiring emergency placements will be placed in safe homes."

The BIA-OJS Purpose Code X Program arose out of a 2014 working group formed by the Departments of Justice (DOJ) and the Interior (DOI) to identify sustainable solutions that provide tribes access to national crime information that addresses criminal and civil needs of tribes. The outcome of this collaboration was the BIA-OJS Purpose Code X Program and DOJ Tribal Access Program for National Crime Information (TAP) TAP will allow tribes to more effectively serve and protect their communities by ensuring the exchange of critical data.

Under the BIA-OJS Purpose Code X Program, BIA-OJS dispatch centers will be available to provide 24-hour access to criminal history records, so name-based checks can be done immediately. Protocols for operating under the new program are being developed by BIA-OJS and will be tested by a select number of tribes prior to a nationwide implementation of the program.

BIA-OJS obtained authorization to perform these name-based checks from the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact Council, an organization which has the legal authority to promulgate rules and procedures governing the exchange of criminal records for non-criminal justice purposes.

"The BIA Office of Justice Services and DOJ's Office of Tribal Justice have made collaboration on improving tribal access to information a high priority over the last year, and I am grateful to the Compact Council for approving our request so quickly," said BIA OJS Deputy Director Darren A. Cruzan.

OJS has also worked to improve tribal reporting to the Uniform Crime Report system and encouraged tribal participation in the National Data Exchange (NDEx) system.

All of these efforts underscore the importance of the exchange of information between law enforcement agencies to achieving public safety in all jurisdictions, including Indian Country.

The BIA-OJS's mission is to address public safety concerns in Indian Country by funding law enforcement, correctional departments and tribal court services to the nation's federally recognized tribes. It also coordinates emergency preparedness support on federal Indian lands by working cooperatively with other federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies throughout Indian Country. The BIA-OJS operates the Indian Police Academy in Artesia, N.M., which provides training and professional development to BIA and tribal law enforcement personnel.

Visit http://www.indianaffairs.gov/WhoWeAre/BIA/OJS/index.htm for more information about OJS and its work.

For more information on TAP, visit www.justice.gov/tribal/tribal-access-program-tap.