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The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fiscal Year 2001 budget request is $2.2 billion, a net increase of $331.9 million above the FY 2000 enacted level. Leading the way in the increases in FY 2001 are School Construction, Trust Services, Law Enforcement, and Tribal Priority Allocation funds. Assistant Secretary Kevin Gover praised this budget, stating, "This budget is a good step forward. For too long, the needs of the American Indian people were ignored, and that neglect has created problems that are difficult to solve and expensive to fix. This budget will not fix them, even this budget is dwarfed by the great needs in Indian country, but it is an important and positive step in the right direction."

The Federal government is responsible for the funding of two school systems, the Department of Defense schools for military dependents, and the 185 schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the education of American Indian children on reservations within the United States. Over decades, the BIA school systems have been the victim of neglect, and the price is now steep to make these schools safe and adequately equipped for today's students. Of the 185 BIA schools, most are in need of either major repairs or new construction at an estimated cost of over $2.4 billion dollars. The request for BIA School Construction is $300.5 million, the largest amount ever requested to build schools in Indian country. This is a $167.3 million increase over the 2000 funding level, an increase of 126 percent. The requested construction funds will be used to replace older, unsafe, and dilapidated schools on reservations. The schools to be built include the Tuba City Boarding School in Arizona, Second Mesa Day School in Arizona, Zia Day School in New Mexico, Baca Consolidated Community School in New Mexico, Lummi Tribal School in Washington, and Wingate Elementary School in New Mexico. These six schools have structural and code deficiencies that threaten student safety and are not equipped with modern educational tools. "Our children have been attending schools in buildings that are dangerous, and this must stop," said Gover, "The education of our children is so important and these buildings have been ignored for so long, that we cannot build new schools fast enough in Indian country." In addition to replacement school construction, the budget also includes an increase of $103.4 million to address critical health and safety concerns at existing education facilities. This request will fund maintenance and repair projects to reduce the backlog for needed repairs to BIA school buildings.

Improving the trust management systems is a major priority of this administration, and the FY 2001 budget requests reflect this commitment. No one wants the Trust Fund management system fixed more than the American Indian people of the BIA," said Assistant Secretary Gover, "We are requesting the money to do this job, and do it right." The FY 2001 budget request includes an increase of $35.1 million dollars to bring the total to $107.6 million. These additional resources are critical to ensuring that the accumulated trust management problems being corrected under the Department's High Level Implementation Plan do not reoccur. The budget requests $12 million for realty services to improve real property management and ensure timely processing of transactions including sales, acquisitions, patents in fee, rights of way, and surface and subsurface leases). Additional increases include $5.3 million to perform cadastral surveys, $2.2 million for real estate appraisals, $3.0 million for probate functions, and $4.8 million for the Land Titles and Records Office to ensure land records are kept current. For general Trust services, a $4 million increase is requested to provide technical support to Tribes, and an increase of $2 million is request to expedite the processing of Alaska Native allotments.

In addition to these increases, an increase of $7.5 million has been requested to expand the successful Indian Land Consolidation program.

Improving law enforcement and public safety is a major concern for all of Indian country, and this year’s budget requests an additional $18.9 million increase for BIA Law Enforcement. These funds would continue efforts to strengthen core law enforcement functions on the reservations such as uniformed police, communications, basic detention services and detention officers. Since I have been here as Assistant Secretary, we have buried five police officers who were killed in the line of duty. All of these officers were on patrol alone, and I believe their deaths could have been prevented if we had enough resources to provide two cops for every reservation patrol car, or at least backup within a reasonable distance for every cop on the reservation. Our cops are doing heroic work, and far too often they are paying the ultimate price," stated Gover, All the memories of officers Hoskie Gene, Jack Spenser and Tenny Gatewood force us to be ever vigilant in getting enough resources for law enforcement in Indian country."

American Indian Tribes depend on the Tribal Priority Allocations (TPA) for basic necessities and programs critical to the quality of life and economic potential on reservations. The FY 2001 budget request funds TPA activity at $761.2 million, with program and uncontrollable increases of $60.5 million over FY 2000. Within TPA an increase of $16.3 million is requested for the Housing Improvement Program to provide critical low and no income housing repair and replacement services on reservations, and a $2.2 million increase is requested for scholarships to students seeking higher education. A $3.5 million increase for contract support funds for administrative expenses incurred by contracting Tribes are also requested.