United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

SEP 25 2026

Dear Tribal Leader:

The Bureau of Trust Funds Administration (BTFA) manages a records and information program that upholds the legal obligation of the trust relationship between the federal government and American Indians and Alaska Natives. After many years of development, we are ready to propose updates to the Indian Affairs Records Schedule for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Indian Education, and the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration. We seek your input on the updated schedules, which are intended to meet statutory and regulatory requirements; properly identify, manage, preserve, and safeguard Indian Affairs records; and eliminate unnecessary retention of routine operational materials.

Updating the Indian Affairs Records Schedule is essential for complying with the regulatory requirement outlined in 36 C.F.R. § 1225.22. This process ensures the Schedule accurately reflects current operations of Indian Affairs programs and preserves records of significant historical, cultural, and legal value. The proposed updates improve clarity, consistency, and long-term stewardship of records that document implementation of the Department of the Interior's trust responsibilities. By grouping related records into broader categories based on shared characteristics, such as type, purpose, and applicable legal or regulatory requirements, the revisions simplify the schedules and make them easier to understand and use. This approach supports consistent records management practices and aligns the preservation of Indian fiduciary trust records with current best practices.

The BTFA will host four virtual Tribal consultation sessions to provide information on the proposed updated dispositions and to gather comments and recommendations to support alignment between the revised retention periods and the Department of the Interior's trust responsibilities. A brief description of the schedule and questions for consideration are provided in Attachment A.

We welcome oral and written comments on the questions outlined. You may submit written comments to consultation@bia.gov by November 30, 2026, to ensure we have time to consider them. Please note that all relevant comments, including any personal information you provide, may be posted publicly without change.

To view the consultation schedule, the proposed Indian Affairs Record Schedule details, and register for a virtual consultation, please visit https://www.bia.gov/service/tribal-consultations/upcoming-tribal-consultation-sessions.

Consultation Schedule

- October 26, 2026, from 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm Eastern (ET)
- October 27, 2026, from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm Central (CT)
- October 28, 2026, from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm Mountain (MT)
- October 29, 2026, from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm Pacific (PT)

We look forward to speaking with and hearing from you at one of these sessions. If you have any questions, please contact IA_RecordsMgmt@btfa.gov.

Sincerely,

William Henry Kirkland III
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

Enclosure

Attachment A

Indian Affairs Records Schedule – Trust, Tribal Government, and Program Records (Record Group 75)

0001 – General Program Activity Records
Records in this category document and support administrative or program activities but do not warrant permanent retention and should not be kept longer than 25 years. These records facilitate the routine management of Indian Trust Assets but do not capture major decisions related to their handling or development.

0002 – Long Term Indian Trust Records
Records in this category are retained for long-term reference and are considered "high value" due to their enduring importance to the Department of the Interior (DOI) program operations, financial stewardship, and trust accountability. Although they provide critical documentation needed to support ongoing analysis, oversight, and verification activities, they do not meet the criteria for permanent preservation at the National Archives. These records document financial transactions, deposits, and the execution and maintenance of trust obligations, to include information used for comparative financial and natural resource management. It also encompasses documentation essential to the historical accounting and reconciliation of Individual Indian Monies (IIM) and Tribal Accounts, supporting DOI's long-term fiduciary responsibilities.

0003 – Historic and Culturally Significant Program Records
Records in this category document historically significant events and decisions across Indian Affairs' business lines. These records capture the management of Indian Trust Assets (ITA) and the fulfillment of Trust responsibilities under an Indian Fiduciary Trust (IFT). Agreements covered under this item include any treaty, convention, or cooperative agreement to which the United States is a party and for which DOI or its component bureaus or offices hold substantial implementation responsibilities. Generally, programmatic records that do not require archival preservation should be managed under 0001 – General Program Activity Records.

0004 – General Contract, Grant, and Financial Monitoring Records
Records in this category detail economic development via loan guarantees, loan services, trust mortgages, credit financing and operations; mission related grants; disbursement of funds; and similar records. Also included are records related to financial monitoring of projects related to trust relationships. NOTE: For routine contract case files or routine grant files use General Records Schedule 1.2: Grant and Cooperative Agreement Records.

0005 – Historically Significant Loans, Grants, Audits, or Investigations / One Time Sample of Process Records
Records in this category include case files from items 0004 or 0007 that involve loans, grants, audits, or investigations that are historically significant due to cultural impact, media or congressional interest, or their role in altering established processes. This also includes example case files created when processes are revised or when actions are carried out in a novel or unique way, serving as documentation of the change. Selection of records for this category will occur through consultation between the initiating program and the Responsible Records Officer to ensure they meet the criteria for permanent retention.

0006 – Human Services and Legal Records
Records in this category include Human Services (formerly Social Services) records and records related to the Indian Child Welfare Act, Foster Home Placement workflows, the adoption of Native American children, documentation required under Public Law 99-570, and records involving child abuse, neglect, and other child-protection activities supporting child placement. This also includes records relating to litigation and court records specific to Native American legal issues.

0007 – Audits and Investigation Records
Records in this category are retained for long-term reference, deemed "high value" with enduring importance to DOI, but are not considered appropriate for permanent preservation at the National Archives. They include information related to law enforcement investigations and audits of significant events, ranging from felony cases to largescale programmatic reviews, audits, and stress tests.

Questions for Consideration

- Are the proposed retention periods appropriate and sufficient to meet the needs of your community?
- Are there records you believe should be preserved for longer periods, or permanently, due to their historical, cultural, and legal significance?