Indian Affairs
Fiscal Year 2029 Budget Formulation Guidance
October 2026

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Attachment A - Budget Formulation Timeline

Attachment B - Tribal Preferred Program Ranking Tool

Attachment C - Consolidated Final Tribal Preferred Program Ranking Tool by Region

Introduction

Indian Affairs (IA) manages multiple fiscal year budgets concurrently, as reflected in, **Attachment A - Budget Formulation Timeline**. During the budget formulation process, IA demonstrates its respect for Tribal sovereignty by providing a forum for American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes to submit recommendations for Tribal initiatives, policies, and budget recommendations.

Timeframe

To ensure that Tribes and IA Central and Regional Offices are able to provide meaningful input into the IA budget request, we are using the following timeline to coincide with the Department of Interior (DOI) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) schedule:

Table 1: Budget Formulation Schedule

Date	Workgroup Activity
OCT 13, 2026	IA Office of Budget and Performance Management (OBPM) releases budget formulation guidance, including the Tribal Preferred Program Ranking Tool, through a virtual kickoff meeting.
OCT 2026 – JAN 2027	IA Regional Budget Staff releases budget formulation guidance, including the ranking Tool, to Tribes in their respective regions. IA Regional Offices hold a minimum of two (2) Tribal budget formulation meetings/work sessions, one of which is to obtain consensus on final rankings for their region. Tribal submission due dates are determined by IA Regional Offices but should be no later than Feb 3, 2027.
FEB 10, 2027	IA Regional Offices ensure that all Tribal ranking Tool submissions (Attachment B) are completed and turned into OBPM, including the Consolidated Tribal Ranking by Region. (Attachment C)
FEB 10 – MAR 10, 2027	OBPM prepares the National Tribal Priority Rankings.
Spring, 2027	TIBC Spring Meeting. Results of the National and Regional Tribal Priority Rankings are presented to the full TIBC body by OBPM. The TIBC body deliberates budget priorities and determines budget strategy for FY 2029.
Spring, 2027	TIBC Budget Subcommittee holds a 2-day work session following the TIBC meeting to develop Tribal budget submission.
Spring, 2027	TIBC Budget Subcommittee presents proposed budget and draft testimony to full TIBC Committee for approval through a virtual meeting.
Spring, 2027	TIBC Tribal Chairs meet with the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs on the Tribal budget and testimony.
MAR 10, 2027	IA Regional Offices submit their 2029 budget requirements and priorities to IA Field Operations.
MAR 31, 2027	IA Field Operations submit their consolidated 2029 IA Regional Office Priorities. Priorities must be ranked.

Date	Workgroup Activity
	The consolidated 2029 IA Regional Office Priorities are shared with Central Office (CO) program staff for use in formulating their budgets.
APR 2027	CO program staff submit their 2029 budget requirements and priorities to OBPM.
APR 2027	CO program staff brief their 2029 prioritized budget requirements to OBPM.
APR–MAY 2027	OBPM prepares FY 2029 Budget Deliberation Information Briefing to include all Tribal, regional, and CO budget submissions.
APR–MAY 2027	Budget deliberations with IA Senior Leaders. OBPM develops IA budget proposal.
JUN 2027	FY 2029 IA Budget Proposal due to Department of Interior Budget Office. IA Senior Leaders approve.

Date	Workgroup Activity
Late JUL/Early AUG 2027	DOI Passback. DOI releases final decisions on 2029 IA Budget Proposal. IA Senior Leaders approve.
AUG 2027	OBPM develops 2029 IA Budget Request to OMB.
AUG 2027	TIBC Summer Meeting.
SEP 2027	FY 2029 IA Budget Request due to OMB. IA Senior Leaders approve.
OCT 2027	FY 2030 Budget Formulation begins.
DEC 2027	FY 2029 OMB Passback. OMB releases final decisions on 2029 IA Budget Request. IA Senior Leaders approve.
DEC-FEB 2027	OBPM develops IA Greenbook. IA Senior Leaders approve.
FEB 2028	FY 2029 President's Budget is released. IA Greenbook goes to print.

Tribal Preferred Program Ranking Tool

For the FY 2029 budget formulation process, to ensure that Tribes are able to provide meaningful input into the IA budget request, IA uses a Tribal Preferred Program Ranking Tool (Tool), **Attachment B - Tribal Preferred Program Ranking Tool**.

This Tool allows the IA Office of Budget and Performance Management (OBPM) and the Tribal/Interior Budget Council (TIBC) to contact Tribes for their input into the budget formulation process. This ranking Tool also allows the Bureau of Indian Education to receive recommendations for education programs and education construction priorities for input into the BIE budget formulation process. This Tool asks Tribes biennially, or every other year, to outline their top program preferences within eight (8) different strategic funding categories:

1) Strengthening Tribal Communities

2) Trust Natural Resources Management

3) Trust Land & Water Rights Management

4) Public Safety and Justice

5) Economic Development

6) Education*

7) Construction

8) Resource Management Construction.

**Tribes may rank the Education section but it is not required. Schools and TCUs should only complete this category.*

Each strategic funding category outlines programs that support the overall accomplishment of that strategy. Each program also includes a brief description of the activities and projects supported by the funding provided for the program.

Note: The Consolidated Tribal Government Program (CTGP), Self-Governance, and Human Services Tribal Design programs are not included in the Tool because they are made up of Tribal transfers and are not appropriated funding lines.

Use of the Information: The information gathered from the Tribes using this Tool will be weighted to determine which programs in each category rank highest.

Information will be weighted and totaled by category, first by Tribe, then consolidated at the regional level, and then on a national scale. These rankings will then be presented by OBPM at the Tribal Interior Budget Council (TIBC) Spring Meeting and will be used by the full TIBC body to assist them in deciding the FY 2029 and FY 2030 Budget Formulation Strategy for Indian Affairs. The priorities identified during this cycle will be used for two fiscal years unless otherwise voted on and changed by TIBC or if a Tribe submits an updated ranking Tool.

Within each category, Tribes are not required to rank all program lines. They can rank one line, all lines within the category, or any portion of the lines that apply to their Tribe. Additionally, they are not required to do rankings for all categories, only those categories that are applicable to their Tribe.

The Tool also includes a section for Tribes to rank the eight (8) categories.

An Evaluation Form is included in the Tool so Tribes can inform OBPM of issues or problems they encountered with the Tool or the budget formulation process.

See Table 2: Points System for Weighting and Ranking Tribal Submission. This table displays the categories and points earned for each priority ranking in the Tool. More information and specific instructions for completing the submission can be found below and in the Tool itself.

Table 2: Points Systems for Weighting and Ranking Tribal Submission

Priority #	Strengthening Tribal Communities	Trust Natural Resources Management	Trust Land & Water Management	Public Safety and Justice	Economic Development	Education	Construction	Resource Management Construction
Priority 1	8 Points	14 Points	18 Points	10 Points	7 Points	19 Points	15 Points	7 Points
Priority 2	7 Points	13 Points	17 Points	9 Points	6 Points	18 Points	14 Points	6 Points
Priority 3	6 Points	12 Points	16 Points	8 Points	5 Points	17 Points	13 Points	5 Points
Priority 4	5 Points	11 Points	15 Points	7 Points	4 Points	16 Points	12 Points	4 Points
Priority 5	4 Points	10 Points	14 Points	6 Points	3 Points	15 Points	11 Points	3 Points
Priority 6	3 Points	9 Points	13 Points	5 Points	2 Points	14 Points	10 Points	2 Points
Priority 7	2 Points	8 Points	12 Points	4 Points	1 Points	13 Points	9 Points	1 Points
Priority 8	1 Points	7 Points	11 Points	3 Points		12 Points	8 Points	
Priority 9		6 Points	10 Points	2 Points		11 Points	7 Points	
Priority 10		5 Points	9 Points	1 Points		10 Points	6 Points	
Priority 11		4 Points	8 Points			9 Points	5 Points	
Priority 12		3 Points	7 Points			8 Points	4 Points	
Priority 13		2 Points	6 Points			7 Points	3 Points	
Priority 14		1 Points	5 Points			6 Points	2 Points	
Priority 15		1 Points	4 Points			5 Points	1 Points	
Priority 16			3 Points			4 Points		
Priority 17			2 Points			3 Points		
Priority 18			1 Points			2 Points		
Priority 19						1 Points		

IA Central Office Budget Formulation Staff

The IA Central Office Budget Formulation staff provides support to the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (ASIA); Deputy Assistant Secretary – Management; Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs; Director, Bureau of Indian Education; Regional Directors; and Tribes for budget formulation. Key activities include:

- Outline annual formulation process and develop guidance for IA Central Office

(CO) programs, IA Regional Offices, and Tribes.

- Provide information and training on the formulation process, ranking Tool, and budget requests.
- Ensure Tribal initiatives are included at the National Budget Meeting during the TIBC Spring Meeting.
- Is an active participant of and provides recommendations to the working sessions of the TIBC Budget Sub-committee.
- Ensure Tribal program rankings and IA Regional Office priorities are provided to Central Office programs for use in formulating their budgets.
- Ensure the Tribal priority rankings are provided to the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (AS-IA) for use in making budget decisions.
- Develop the IA Budget Request in accordance with DOI and OMB guidelines.

IA Central Office Programs

IA Central Office programs will receive information on the budget priorities and needs of Tribes and IA Regional Offices in the spring of each year and consider these needs when formulating their budget. The CO programs will provide input on their budget priority needs using an OBPM template to be released in the spring. The template allows them to outline their requested needs with a compelling justification describing the budget change. All templates will be submitted to the Division of Budget Formulation in Central Office, OBPM for inclusion in the deliberation information briefing used by senior leaders to make final budget decisions. Briefings will be held by OBPM with each CO program to allow them to provide further information regarding their requests. Additional budget formulation guidance and tools will be provided to the Central Office programs annually in March or April.

IA Regional Directors / Regional Budget Staff

IA Regional Directors and IA Regional Budget Staff are required to provide ongoing support to Tribes at the regional level, ensuring input from all Tribes within their region, including Self-Governance Tribes, and from BIE school representatives.

IA Regions will solicit the active participation of Indian Tribes and organizations in the formulation of the IA budget request using the Tribal Preferred Program Ranking Tool and by holding a minimum of two budget formulation meetings with their Tribes.

IA Regions will solicit the active participation of the BIE schools by reaching out to

the BIE Deputy Director and the BIE Budget Formulation staff notifying them in advance of the date and time for their regional Tribal budget formulation sessions.

IA Regions also have the option of providing their budget priorities and needs to Central Office Programs. IA Regional Offices may complete and submit their federal budget priority needs using a template designated by the Field Operations budget office. Field Operations will provide additional guidance and tools to the IA Regional Budget Staff during the Fall/Winter months each year.

National Budget Meeting / TIBC Spring Meeting

The mission of the TIBC is to provide an advisory government-to-government forum and process for Tribes and the Department to develop budgets that allow for the fulfillment of tribes' self-determination, self-governance, sovereignty, and treaty rights, as well as sufficient levels of funding to address the needs of Tribes and their tribal citizens.

The National Budget Meeting is conducted biennially at the TIBC Spring Meeting. The National and Regional Tribal priority rankings are presented to the full TIBC body and budget strategies for the upcoming request are determined.

The role of regional Tribal representatives during the National Budget Meeting:

- Attend and participate in the National Budget Meeting at the TIBC Spring Meeting.
- Be familiar with the details of regional recommendations and be prepared to present and actively discuss recommendations.
- Has the authority to negotiate regional Tribal proposals in order to produce National budget recommendations and initiatives to the AS-IA and the Secretary of the Interior.

TIBC Budget Sub-Committee

This workgroup consists of a diverse group of 638, direct service, and self-governance Tribal volunteer representatives from TIBC and Federal budget staff.

The sub-committee will:

- Meet to discuss improvements to the budget formulation process and policies.
- Meet to develop a proposed Tribal budget for review and concurrence by the TIBC body.
- Develop testimony to accompany the proposed Tribal budget.

- Present the proposed Tribal budget and testimony to the full TIBC body for approval.
- Meet with the AS-IA and present the Tribal budget and testimony upon TIBC approval.

Costs incurred by the Tribe(s) for the purpose of participating in the TIBC Budget Sub-Committee shall be the responsibility of Indian Affairs.

Budget Information Disclosure

Indian Affairs provides the TIBC representatives and attendees with the following budget-related information annually:

- Comprehensive Table of enacted and requested funding
- Appropriations, allocations, and expenditures information for programs, functions, and activities
- Report on Tribal Priorities vs. Request vs. Enacted.

Tribal requests for additional information shall be reviewed and answered to the extent practicable, unless embargoed and/or prohibited by law.

Budget Formulation Evaluation

To effectively evaluate the budget formulation process and the ability of IA to incorporate Tribal recommendations, IA will use the Feedback and Evaluation Form within the Tool to assess the:

- Effectiveness of the process used to formulate the budget
- Effectiveness and ease of use of the Tribal ranking Tool
- Effectiveness of IA activities related to promoting Tribal input regarding the process used to formulate the budget.

Tribal Budget Formulation at the Regions
Detailed Instructions for IA Regional Offices

IA Regional Office Responsibilities

Each IA Regional Office will assist with Tribes' participation in the ranking process by ensuring the Tribal Preferred Program Ranking Tool is distributed to all Tribes within their region, including Self Governance Tribes.

The **Region must hold two (2) meetings with all Tribes** in their area (including Self- Governance Tribes) during the months of October through January. The first session should be held as early as possible to go over guidance on the budget formulation process and provide a demonstration of the Tribal Preferred Program Ranking Tool.

The Region must notify the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) Deputy Director and BIE Budget Formulation staff of the meeting dates as soon as they are locked in.

The Region must monitor ranking Tool completion rates for Tribes, reach out to those that have not completed the ranking Tool, and offer technical assistance or other additional support to get their submission completed.

The second session will be held once all Tribal submissions are in and the weighting and regional consolidations have been completed by the IA Regional Budget Office.

The Region will bring the Tribes back together to review the consolidated ranking and develop a unified regional ranking for submission to Central Office OBPM. The Region will also work with their Tribes at the second session to ensure consensus on the priority ranking of the categories themselves.

Each IA Regional Office will ensure that the data submitted in **Attachment C – Final Consolidated Tribal Preferred Program Ranking Tool by Region**, which will be presented at the Spring TIBC Meeting, is complete. BIE school weightings for the Education and Construction Categories will be included in the overall ranking. At the Spring TIBC Meeting, the Education and Construction category rankings by the schools and Tribes will be presented both separately and combined.

This information will allow the TIBC Budget Subcommittee and AS-IA to view Tribal preferred program preferences from a regional viewpoint, as well as the National level.

Each IA Regional Office will provide:

1) Two (2) budget formulation meetings with Tribes

    - The first meeting is a training session on the Tribal Preferred Program Ranking Tool and the Federal Budget Process.
    - The second meeting is a review and consensus of the consolidated regional Tribal ranking, including the categories.

2) The ranking Tool to all Tribes within their region, including OSG Tribes, and the BIE POC.

3) Guidance on the overall budget formulation process.

BIE Responsibilities

The BIE Budget Office and their budget formulation staff will coordinate with IA Regional Budget Offices to confirm the dates of initial and follow up budget formulation meetings with Tribes. The BIE Budget Office and budget formulation staff will attend each IA Regional Office's budget formulation meetings with the Tribes.

The BIE Budget Office and the BIE budget formulation staff will coordinate with BIE ADDs and EPAs to designate POCs for the schools under each ADDs (ADD-Bureau Operated Schools, ADD-Tribally Controlled Schools, ADD-Navajo). Then the BIE budget formulation staff, ADDs and POC's will meet (can be done virtually) with the schools to provide a demonstration and technical guidance on completing the ranking Tool, outlining that the schools need to complete only the Education and Construction Category rankings.

The BIE Budget formulation staff and POCs will monitor ranking Tool completion rates, reach out to those schools that have not completed the ranking Tool, and offer technical assistance or other assistance to obtain and complete their submission.

The BIE budget formulation staff will consolidate overall weightings for each line item within the Education and Construction Categories for all of their schools using the weighting factors included in this guidance.

Once consolidated, the BIE budget formulation staff will send the consolidated results to each IA Regional Office. The BIE budget formulation staff and POC will attend the budget formulation closing session with each region, review the consolidated ranking, and develop a unified regional ranking for the Education and Construction Categories.

During rollout of the National Ranking, OBPM and BIE budget staff will present the Education and Education Construction rankings from schools as well as Tribes both separately and consolidated.

Finalizing Regional Tribal Ranking Submissions

To complete regional Tribal ranking submissions, each IA Regional Office should:

- Consolidate and apply a weight to all Tribal Preferred Program Ranking Tool information submitted by Tribes in their region. *[See weighting instructions below.]*
- Meet with Tribes to discuss their overall regional Tribal ranking. Agree upon any changes or recommendations proposed in their final ranking.
- Provide Central Office, OBPM with a copy of their final regional Tribal ranking, including category rankings, using **Attachment C – Final Consolidated Tribal Preferred Program Ranking Tool by Region**.
- During the Spring TIBC Meeting, regional representatives should be present to address any issues related to their regional rankings.

Instructions for Weighting & Ranking Tribal Submissions

All categories will be ranked according to the weightings in Table 2 regardless of whether a Tribe ranks all lines, one (1) line or a portion of the lines. For example, if a Tribe only selects one (1) line and ranks it #1 under Strengthening Tribal Communities, that line will be ranked at eight (8) points. Each category will be weighted as follows:

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Priority 6	3 Points	9 Points	13 Points	5 Points	2 Points	14 Points	10 Points	2 Points
Priority 7	2 Points	8 Points	12 Points	4 Points	1 Points	13 Points	9 Points	1 Points
Priority 8	1 Points	7 Points	11 Points	3 Points		12 Points	8 Points	
Priority 9		6 Points	10 Points	2 Points		11 Points	7 Points	
Priority 10		5 Points	9 Points	1 Points		10 Points	6 Points	
Priority 11		4 Points	8 Points			9 Points	5 Points	
Priority 12		3 Points	7 Points			8 Points	4 Points	
Priority 13		2 Points	6 Points			7 Points	3 Points	
Priority 14		1 Points	5 Points			6 Points	2 Points	
Priority 15		1 Points	4 Points			5 Points	1 Points	
Priority 16			3 Points			4 Points		
Priority 17			2 Points			3 Points		
Priority 18			1 Points			2 Points		
Priority 19						1 Points		