



SOCIAL SECURITY

The Commissioner

August 9, 2012

The Honorable Jeffrey D. Zients
Acting Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Mr. Zients:

We are pleased to provide the annual progress report on our Tribal Consultation and Coordination Plan. Since we submitted our last progress report on August 9, 2011, we have completed a number of activities to advance our plan. We detail our progress in the enclosed report.

Our Tribal Consultation Workgroup met regularly to review our consultation policies and outreach efforts. While there have been no policy, legislative, or regulatory proposals that required formal consultation in the past year, we continue to work closely with tribal leaders through our communication, education, and outreach activities.

If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Kojuan Almond, our Acting Associate Commissioner for External Affairs, at (410) 965-1804.

Sincerely,

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Michael J. Astrue

Enclosure

**Social Security Administration
Tribal Consultation Plan – 2012 Progress Report**

Since our last progress report on August 9, 2011, we have had no policy, legislative, or regulatory proposals that required formal consultation. Our Tribal Consultation Workgroup will continue to monitor whether any new proposals have tribal implications. We will continue to strengthen our relationships with Indian tribes, as defined in *Executive Order 13175 - Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*, through ongoing communication, education, and outreach activities.

Maintain and Expand Ongoing Communication

To improve access and understanding of our programs, we continue to conduct programmatic seminars with Indian tribes, provide program-training guides to tribal benefit specialists, and provide information about our programs and services to tribal community members.

Since our last progress report, we also:

- Provided 26 Native American students with internships through the American University's Washington Internship for Native Students (WINS) Program;
- Participated in monthly meetings with the Federal Regional Council, Tribal Affairs Committee comprising nineteen Federal agencies in Social Security's San Francisco Region;
- Participated in the American Indian HIV/AIDS Task Force to promote our programs and services;
- Participated in the Native American Veterans Talking Circle and Great Lakes Intertribal Council to discuss our Wounded Warriors initiative;
- Partnered with Native American Community Clinics and the regional Indian Health Boards to provide information our programs and services;
- Partnered with California Indian Legal Services to distribute information about our programs and services to various Indian tribes;
- Provided program information to Tribal Colleges and Universities' counselors who work with Native American students with disabilities;
- Partnered with the Indian Health Service medical centers in Arizona, California, and Nevada to enable the electronic exchange of health information and improve the disability determination process;
- Published an article on Social Security benefits for veterans for the Oneida Tribal Newspaper in Oneida, New York;
- Published monthly articles on Social Security programs and services for the Smith River Rancheria, Smith River, California and the Yurok Tribe Newspaper in Klamath, California;
- Developed several radio programs on Social Security programs and services for a Native American radio station, KILI, in Porcupine, South Dakota; and

- Published articles on Social Security programs in the Char-Koosta News publication of the Flathead Indian Nation, in Pablo, Montana.

Continuing Outreach and Tribal Consultation Efforts

We continue to enhance outreach and consultation efforts with tribal communities by:

1. Seeking Input from Tribes

We meet monthly with tribal leaders and representatives from the Seminole Tribe, Broward County, Florida and the Miccosukee Indian tribe in Miami-Dade County, Florida to facilitate communications regarding program benefits and services for tribal community members.

We meet monthly with the Grand Traverse Band Indian Tribe in Peshawbestown, Michigan regarding program benefits and services for tribal community members.

We meet quarterly with the Moapa Indian Tribe in Moapa, Nevada and provide information about our programs and services.

In August 2011, we hosted an informational meeting on our online services and the Ticket to Work Program. We met with the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation (AIVR) counselors and tribal representatives from seven tribes throughout Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. As we continue to gather feedback, we will continue to work with AIVR counselors and tribal representatives to determine the most effective ways to distribute information about our agency's online services and Ticket to Work Program.

In September 2011, we met with tribal leaders from the Echota Cherokee Tribe of Alabama, Falkville, Alabama, the Cherokee Tribe of Northeast Alabama, Woodville, Alabama, the Piqua Shawnee Tribe of Alabama, Birmingham, Alabama, and the United Cherokee Ani-Yun-Wiya Nation of Alabama, Guntersville, Alabama. We are working with each tribe to coordinate our participation at their tribal events.

In April 2012, we participated in the Department of Health and Human Services Tribal Consultation session in Billings, Montana. We met with tribal leaders from Pine Ridge, South Dakota; Rosebud Sioux, South Dakota; Fort Peck, Montana; Fort Belknap, Montana; Northern Cheyenne, Montana; Crow Nation, Montana; Eastern Shoshone, Wyoming; Northern Arapaho, Wyoming; and the Chippewa Cree Rocky Boy, Montana Indian Tribes. We addressed program entitlement questions and provided information on our programs and services for tribal community members.

In June 2012, we met with tribal leaders from the Smith River Rancheria of the Tolowa Indian Tribe, Northern California to discuss alternate ways to distribute information about our programs and services to the tribal community members.

In June 2012, we conducted a conference call with tribal leaders from the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, San Jose, California to discuss opportunities to provide program information and services to their community. We are working with the tribe to coordinate our participation at their tribal events.

2. Developing Core Consultation Issues

We will consult on issues involving program entitlement and benefit eligibility and legislative or regulatory changes.

3. Enhancing Staff Training and Awareness

In November 2011, the Saginaw-Chippewa Tribe in Mount Pleasant, Michigan provided Social Security staff with information on working with their tribal government.

In February 2012, we published a research paper titled [*Measures of Economic Well-Being among American Indians and Alaska Natives \(AIAN\) Aged 62 or Older in 2030*](#). The WINS student interns developed the research paper to raise public awareness on the economic and health challenges tribal community members face.

In March 2012, we participated in a teleconference with the International Association for Indigenous Aging. We discussed issues facing Indian elders and tribal leaders.

In May 2012, we established a [Chicago AIAN website](#), which includes information about ongoing tribal community activities in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

In June 2012, the Executive Director of the American Indian Community House met with our Deputy Commissioner and our New York Region's senior management to discuss Native American social services and advocacy groups.

4. Consulting Regularly with Tribes

We conducted consultations with Indian tribes to improve the Ticket to Work Program's Employment Networks (EN) application process, resolve program issues, and discuss communications with tribal communities.

In February 2012, we hosted a conference call with leaders of the Consortia of Administrators of Native American Rehabilitation and tribal leaders from the Menominee of Wisconsin, Delaware Nation of Oklahoma, Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma, Jemez Pueblo of New Mexico, and Lumbee Nation Indian tribe, Lumberton, North Carolina. As we continue to gather feedback, we will work with tribal leaders to determine the most effective ways to improve the EN application process.

5. Exchanging of Information between SSA and Tribal Governments

On November 1, 2011, we sent a letter to the leaders of the 565 federally recognized tribes and five tribal advocacy groups, announcing our redesigned [Social Security American Indians and Alaska Natives \(AIAN\) website](#).

In the letter, we highlighted a new section on the AIAN website entitled, "Tribal Communications," in which we:

- Posted a special poster developed in honor of the National Native American Heritage Month;
- Posted a video greeting by our Indian Tribal Consultation Official;
- Posted a photo and biography of our Indian Tribal Consultation Official;
- Published our Tribal Consultation and Coordination Plan;
- Provided a link to the Bureau of Indian Affairs tribal directory;
- Provided a link to the Social Security Regions; and
- Provided information on our video service delivery locations for tribal communities.

We posted a webcast to the Circle of Life section of the AIAN website titled [Tribal Communities & Social Security – Working Together](#). The webcast provides information on our programs and services. In the webcast, we promote our tribal e-mail box, SSA.Tribal.Communications@ssa.gov, for tribal leaders to submit feedback and inquiries.

In February 2012, we produced a webcast titled [Living with HIV/AIDS- How Social Security Can Help](#). We promoted the webcast through the Indian Health Services' (IHS) e-mail communications to Indian tribes and in IHS newsletter.

In March 2012, we informed the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) about the availability of a Social Security Disability Consortium Grant. NCAI shared the grant information with all Indian tribes.

In June 2012, our Indian Tribal Consultation Official met with tribal leaders of NCAI's Human Resource Committee during their 2012 Mid-Year Conference. We shared information on our activities with tribal communities. As we continue to gather feedback, we will work with tribal leaders to determine the most effective ways to improve communications with Indian tribes.

We actively participated in a number of Indian tribal events, including:

- Oneida Intertribal conference at Turning Stone (Verona, New York, August 2011);
- Pembroke Day 2011 at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke (Pembroke, North Carolina, September 2011);
- Association of American Indians Retirement Conference (San Francisco, California, September 2011);

- Lac Court Oreilles Tribal Health and Benefits Fair (Hayward, Wisconsin, September, 2011);
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Indian Health Services (IHS); Tribal Outreach & Education Conference (Reno, Nevada, October 2011);
- NCAI National Conference (Portland, Oregon, October 2011);
- CMS and IHS Tribal Outreach & Education Conference (Denver, Colorado, November 2011);
- 58th American Indian Center Annual POW-WOW (Chicago, Illinois, November 2011);
- Eastern Band of Cherokee tribe Per Capita Spend Down event (Cherokee, North Carolina, December 2011);
- Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians Elders Event (Dowagiac, Michigan, February 2012);
- Empowering Native Families Indian Parent Conference (Glendale, Arizona, March 2012);
- National American Indian Girl and Woman HIV/AIDS Day Conference (Phoenix, Arizona, March 2012);
- 24th Annual Indian Council on Aging Conference (Tucson, Arizona, March 2012);
- National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Conference (San Francisco, California, March 2012);
- Indian Urban Center Career and Resource Fair (Denver, Colorado, March 2012);
- Disability Mentoring Day at Fond Du Lac Tribal College (Cloquet, Minnesota, March 2012);
- Tribal Relations Day (Pierre, South Dakota, March 2012);
- NCAI's Executive Winter Session Conference (Washington D.C., March 2012);
- 14th National Health and Human Services Tribal Budget Consultation (Washington D.C., March 2012);
- Urban Indian Directors' Health and Resource Fair (Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 2012);
- Tlingit & Haida Tribal Elders Caregivers Council Conference (Juneau, Alaska, May 2012);
- Kenaitze Alaska Elders Roundtable (Kenai, Alaska, May 2012);
- Gila River Indian Community Training Conference (Blackwater, Arizona, May 2012);
- Tohono O'odham Nation Elders Conference (Sells, Arizona, May 2012);
- National Promise Health Tribal Nations Conference (Tempe, Arizona, May 2012);
- American Indian Wellness Fair "Keeping the Circle Strong" (Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 2012);
- Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian Senior Celebration Fair (Cherokee, North Carolina, May 2012);
- Lumbee Nation POW-WOW (Lumberton, North Carolina, May 2012);
- United Indian Health Services, San Diego Urban Indian South Organization, and Santa Ynez Indian Tribal Health Clinic Conference (San Diego, California, May 2012);
- Indian Health Center of Santa Clara Valley Conference (San Jose, California, May 2012);
- Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe Senior Health Fair (Bowler, Wisconsin, May 2012);
- Apache Elders Senior Connection Conference (San Carlos, Arizona, June 2012);

- Huhukam Memorial Hospital Benefit Coordination Training Conference (Sacaton, Arizona, June 2012);
- California State Indian Child Welfare Act Conference (Eureka, California, June 2012);
- Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) National Conference (Denver, Colorado, June 2012);
- Wisdom Steps Conference Mille Lacs Reservation (Onamia, Minnesota, June 2012);
- NCAI's Mid-Year Conference (Lincoln, Nebraska, June 2012);
- Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Veterans Enrollment and Information Fair (Eagle Butte, South Dakota, June 2012);
- United National Indian Tribal Youth Annual Conference (Phoenix, Arizona, July 2012); and
- Lori Piestewa National Native American Conference (Fort McDowell, Arizona, July 2012).

6. Additional activities in support of Executive Order 13270 - Tribal Colleges and Universities

As part of our outreach and communications efforts with tribal governments and Tribal Colleges and Universities, we developed a system for donating furniture and computer equipment to Native American schools, universities, and libraries. We donated excess computer equipment throughout Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. We will continue these efforts in fiscal year 2013.

We will continue to build upon our accomplishments and accelerate efforts to improve our consultation policy and communication methods with Indian tribes and tribal officials.