



PROMOTING EFFECTIVE TRIBAL CONSULTATION AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

“History has shown that failure to include the voices of tribal officials in formulating policy affecting their communities has all too often led to undesirable and, at times, devastating and tragic results. By contrast, meaningful dialogue between Federal officials and tribal officials has greatly improved Federal policy toward Indian tribes. Consultation is a critical ingredient of a sound and productive Federal-tribal relationship.”

Presidential Memorandum, November 5, 2009

INCREASING OUTREACH EFFORTS

- HOST TRIBAL OUTREACH EVENTS.** Host and attend benefits sign-up events for tribal communities to strengthen government-to-government relationships and encourage open dialogue on ways to improve Social Security services.
- PUBLICATION GUIDE.** Develop and update a benefits guide for tribal leaders and benefit coordinators to share information on Social Security services.
- SEEK INPUT.** Seek input from tribes to enhance outreach and consultation efforts with tribal communities. Consult regularly with tribes through ongoing communication, education and outreach activities.
- ATTEND LISTENING SESSIONS.** Attend listening sessions to allow tribal communities to vocalize their concerns on ways to improve Social Security services.
- CONDUCT OUTREACH VIA MEDIA.** Partner with local media platforms to conduct outreach, such as publishing newspaper articles, participating in radio and television programs, posting signage, using social media, creating public service announcements, etc.
- COMMUNICATE OUTREACH ACTIVITIES.** Establish an ongoing reporting process for tracking and communicating ongoing and upcoming American Indian activities throughout the regions.
- RECOGNITION FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS.** Recognize employees who go above and beyond to increase tribal outreach.

IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY

- COMMUNICATE SOCIAL SECURITY SERVICES.** Improve access and understanding of our programs through conducting seminars to share information on disability programs, SSI, Medicare Extra Help, Medicare state buy-in provisions, online services, service delivery changes, Wounded Warriors and other services and initiatives.
- RAISE AWARENESS.** Use creative means to raise awareness about our expedited disability claims initiatives such as creating a national webinar.
- EXCHANGE INFORMATION.** Publish papers and participate in American Indian events to share information on service delivery options such as Video Service Delivery and Social Security Express.
- IDENTIFY NEEDS.** Identify policy concerns and consult with the Tribal Consultation Official to revise our policy to better serve tribal communities.
- PARTNER WITH URBAN INDIAN CENTERS.** Reach out to Urban Indian Centers to identify and address the service needs of the urban Indian community.



STRENGTHENING POLICY CONSULTATION AND EDUCATION

- TRIBAL CONSULTATION.** Promote tribal consultation with tribal leaders and share the agency’s mailbox for communicating with the agency: SSA.Tribal.Communications@ssa.gov
- CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE.** Train employees on cultural knowledge to communicate effectively with the American Indian customer. Awareness, sensitivity and competency are all essential dimensions of knowledge and understanding.
- HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE.** Train employees on the treaties, federal laws, or court decisions applicable to American Indian nations. This includes the applicability of state law to activities occurring on tribal lands to understand the dynamics of tribal-state relations and knowledge of existing intergovernmental agreement.
- NATIONAL CONSULTATION AND EDUCATION WORKGROUP.** Share ideas with the national workgroup, which includes representatives from Operations, the Office of Retirement and Disability Policy, the Office of Communications, and the American Indian/Alaska Native Advisory Council. The goals of the workgroup involve consultation on matters that will improve service delivery and creating education opportunities for employees.
- COLLABORATE ACROSS COMPONENT LINES.** Communicate with component liaisons on tribal-related matters at the Deputy Commissioner level.

PROMOTING HIRING AND LOCAL ASSISTANCE EFFORTS

- MAKE TRIBAL OUTREACH A PRIORITY.** Establish a tribal outreach budget in Operations to improve government-to-government relationships.
- PROMOTE HIRING.** Seek opportunities for hiring American Indians through initiatives such as American University’s Washington Internship for Native Students (WINS) Program and similar programs.
- RECRUITMENT.** Sponsor recruitment events in schools with American Indian students to increase the opportunity of employment with the Social Security Administration.
- DONATE EXCESS COMPUTERS AND FURNITURE.** Evaluate inventory to donate furniture, such as chairs, desks, printers and computer equipment to tribal communities in need.
- TRAIN THE TRAINER.** Work closely with Tribal Benefit Coordinators to offer guidance to share with tribal community members.
- PROMOTE LOCAL SOCIAL SECURITY SERVICES.** Invite tribal representatives to local field offices to provide information on Social Security services and answer any questions.
- ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP.** Promote advisory council membership by requesting help from management to obtain new members.

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CHECK THE BOXES WHERE YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE