



SOCIAL SECURITY

Fiscal Year 2022 Tribal Consultation and Call to Action Plan

The January 26, 2021 Presidential Memorandum requested a detailed plan of action for executive department and agency to implement policies and directives of Executive Order (EO) 13175 of November 6, 2000 titled *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*. In response to the Memorandum, we created our [2021 Tribal Consultation and Call to Action Plan](#). We are pleased to share the 2022 Tribal Consultation and Call to Action Plan executive summary to build on our accomplishments in 2021 and reaffirm our commitment to meaningful and robust engagement regarding policies that have Tribal implications.

Our plan provides action for the following initiatives:

- Strengthen Tribal Consultation and Education
- Improve Service Delivery
- Increase Outreach Efforts to Tribal Communities
- Promote Hiring and Support for Local Assistance Efforts
- Explore Developing an office for Tribal Affairs

Strengthen Tribal Consultation and Education

To ensure Tribes have full access to our programs and services, we will engage through meaningful consultation on policies that have direct effects on Tribal communities. To meet this goal, we will:

- Host national consultations with Tribal Government officials and offer national roundtable discussions to hear Tribal perspectives.
- Gain insight from Office of Management and Budget and inter-agency activities on consultation through the White House Council on Native American Affairs.
- Seek opportunities on national platforms at annual conferences to share benefit program guides and host roundtable discussions for national and regional experts to engage in active policy feedback sessions.
- Expand our employees' knowledge of Tribal cultures, treaties, and laws, and foster their awareness, sensitivity, and effective communications.

Improve Service Delivery

To improve service delivery models, we will market how Tribal members can obtain services for SSA programs. We will seek alternative service channels to improve access to our programs. We will promote further awareness of the needs of our populations facing barriers, such as native languages barriers, by:

- Using technology to bridge distances to improve service delivery to Indian country for field office and hearing office services, including efforts for improved customer experience in Tribal communities.



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- Increasing awareness of the Tribal Social Security Fairness Act of 2018, which gives Tribes the option of extending Social Security coverage to their Tribal council members.
- Providing program training to coordinators with agencies such as Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Administration for Community Living, and Indian Health Services.
- Engaging with Federal partners to raise awareness on overlapping policy matters, such as streamlining impacts from the Tribal General Welfare Exclusion Act.
- Seeking opportunities clarify for military service members who can receive expedited processing of claims through our Veterans Wounded Warriors Program.

Increase Outreach Efforts to Tribal Communities

To improve access to and understanding of our programs, we will continue to conduct seminars with Tribal entities to explain our programs. We will help Tribal community members create *my Social Security* accounts. We will also

- Create regional partnerships, inclusive of Urban Indian Centers, to preserve essential knowledge and resources vital for establishing Tribal relationships.
- Enhance understanding of benefits eligibility under our programs through varied methods of communication, such as, blogs, social media, radio, and newspapers.
- Publish a detailed benefits guide for Tribal Benefit Coordinators on Social Security services, and market available resources on our public-facing website for Tribal affairs (www.ssa.gov/people/aian) to inform Tribal members how to apply for benefits and appeal SSA unfavorable decisions.
- Analyze data to identify underserved Tribal communities and set up listening sessions with those communities so that SSA employees can learn ways to improve services in our field offices and hearing offices, as well as share published material and information on service delivery channels.
- Host an exhibit booth at national conferences hosted by Tribal Community groups and organizations.

Promote Hiring and Support for Local Assistance Efforts

We are committed to recruiting a diverse, qualified pool of applicants at all levels of the agency. To meet this goal, we plan to:

- Have our Diversity and Inclusion Council team of executives play a key role in our efforts to broaden recruitment efforts among underrepresented groups.
- Assist Tribal applicants to create USAJOBS accounts and locate jobs on the site.



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- Utilize Regional Advisory Councils designed to enhance diverse recruitment; collaborate with Human Resources to enhance attendance at targeted job fairs for SSA participants, and seek Office of Personnel Management authority for internship opportunities.
- Explore ways to market employment and services through Tribal Colleges and Universities, including community colleges, by expanding our network.
- Seek opportunities to donate excess equipment through usual donation process.

Explore Developing an Office for Tribal Affairs

We foster transparency, participation, and collaboration in our programs and operations with Tribal Government Offices. Based on years of experience in achieving our mission to support Tribal policy, we are exploring an option to open an Office for Tribal Affairs within the agency to devote resources to develop, implement, and track progress on the Tribal Call to Action plans. We are identifying Federal agencies, of similar structure and mission (i.e., providing direct public service), who established and maintain an Office of Tribal Affairs.

Managing the Plan

The Office of the Commissioner maintains two executive roles, the Tribal Consultation Official Nancy Berryhill and Tribal Executive Lead Renee Ferguson, to monitor compliance and drive associated Tribal activities to support EO 13175 and President Biden's Memorandum dated January 26, 2021.