



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

SEP 28 2021

Dear Tribal Leader:

The U.S. Department of the Interior (Department) seeks Tribal and stakeholder input regarding the implementation of the Indian Boarding School Initiative (Initiative) that Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland announced in June 2021.¹ The Initiative's purpose is an initial collection and review of Department documents and records, and compilation of its existing data. These are first steps in addressing Indian boarding school policies and their effects as part of the Department's report due to the Secretary by April 1, 2022.

For over a century, the Bureau of Indian Affairs was involved in the operation and oversight of Indian boarding schools in the United States. As a result, the Department is uniquely positioned to assist in the effort to recover the histories of Federal Indian boarding schools.

The Department seeks to consult with Tribal governments, Alaska Native Corporations, and Native Hawaiian Organizations on key issues for inclusion in the Department's Initiative report and help lay the foundation for future sitework to protect potential burial sites and other sensitive information. To facilitate discussion during the consultations, participants are requested to address the following topics:

- Appropriate protocols on handling sensitive information in existing records;
- Ways to address cultural concerns and handling of information generated from existing records or from potential sitework activities;
- Potential repatriation of human remains, including cultural concerns and compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act;
- Future policy and procedure implementation to protect burial sites, locations, confidential information, and culturally sensitive information;
- Management of sites of former boarding schools;
- Privacy issues or cultural concerns to be identified as part of the Initiative; and
- Other issues the Department should address in its review.

The Department will conduct the webinar consultation sessions listed below and will accept oral and written comments. Please register in advance for any consultation session you plan on attending. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Please note that these Tribal consultations will be closed to the press and the public to protect confidential information that may be discussed during the sessions.

¹ "Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative," Memorandum from the Secretary of the Interior to Assistant Secretaries, et al. (Jun. 22, 2021).

The consultation schedule is:

Tuesday, November 2, 2021

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET

Please register in advance at:

<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJltdOutpzsoGAeuPCEBeNPj2mFoIDfdEz0>

Tuesday, November 16

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET

Please register in advance at:

https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJltf-itpkjGXFeP95IZrzuJJ24_RkLyPE

Thursday, November 18

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET

Please register in advance at:

<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJltd-utqjltG1E6KndFBZq0y9Dmh81TLY4>

You may provide written input by Friday, December 17, 2021 to consultation@bia.gov. I look forward to speaking with you. If you have questions regarding this effort, please contact Heidi Todacheene, Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs, by email at Heidi_Todacheene@ios.doi.gov or by phone at (202) 208-7163.

Sincerely,



Bryan Newland
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs