



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Tribal Justice

Room 2318, RFK Main Justice Building
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

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September 2, 2016

Dear Tribal Leader:

On June 29, 2016, President Obama traveled to Ottawa for the North American Leaders' Summit (NALS) to meet with the President of Mexico and the Canadian Prime Minister to discuss a variety of topics impacting our shared borders. Among the many commitments announced at the NALS was a tri-lateral commitment to address the high levels of violence against indigenous women and girls that exist across North America. This commitment appears in the [White House Fact Sheet on Key Deliverables for the 2016 North American Leaders' Summit](#) under the "security and defense" pillar. All three countries agreed that the high levels of violence endured by indigenous women and girls across the region warrants increased attention and coordination, resulting in the formation of the new North American Working Group on Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls (the Working Group). The Working Group will meet for the first time in October in Washington, D.C. when government officials from Mexico and Canada will join the U.S. government to exchange knowledge, share best practices, and improve cross-border coordination in preventing and responding to violence against indigenous women and girls.

In preparation for the launch of this Working Group, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) invites you to provide input on key considerations regarding violence against Alaska Native and American Indian women and girls relevant to the objectives of the Working Group. To that end, DOJ's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) is hosting listening sessions with officials of federally recognized Indian tribes to discuss challenges presented by the U.S.-Mexico and U.S.-Canada borders in preventing and responding to this violence. Additionally, in preparing to exchange information with the governments of Canada and Mexico regarding best practices to prevent and respond to violence against indigenous women and girls, OVW is interested in hearing from Tribal leaders regarding what policies, programs and practices should be highlighted, as well as recommendations to address ongoing barriers and challenges. The enclosed framing paper presents background information on the Working Group and raises several questions and issues for your consideration.

The first listening session will take place telephonically, and an in-person listening session will be held in conjunction with the 2016 White House Tribal Leaders Conference.

September 16 Telephonic Listening Session	
3:00 p.m. Eastern Time	Participant Dial-in: 1-877-369-5243 or 1-617-668-3633 Access Code: 0196682#
September 28 In-Person Listening Session	
9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Eastern Time	White House Conference Center, Lincoln Room, 726 Jackson Place (directly north of the White House and west of Lafayette Park). Please be sure to bring a government-issued photo ID for security purposes.

If you would like to participate in either of the above listening sessions, please send an RSVP to Jaimie Woo at jwoo@ovp.eop.gov and note that you will be asked to provide your name and Tribal affiliation.

In addition, DOJ will accept written comments until the close of business on September 28, 2016, via email to OTJ@usdoj.gov or (if necessary) via regular mail to:

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Following the first Working Group meeting in October, DOJ will share outcomes of the meeting, as well as solicit further tribal input, at the Eleventh Annual Government-to-Government Tribal Consultation on Violence Against Women to be held on December 6, 2016 on the reservation of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians in Palm Springs, California. Information on registering for this annual tribal consultation on violence against women issues can be found at <http://ovwconsultation.org/>.

If you have questions, please contact the Office of Tribal Justice at (202) 514-8812 (not a toll-free number) or OTJ@usdoj.gov. We hope you will be able to participate in these important government-to-government listening sessions, and look forward to working with you on this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Tracy Toulou

Director, Office of Tribal Justice
U.S. Department of Justice

Attachment