



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

January 9, 2026

Consultation on Interagency Partnerships between the United States Departments of Education, Interior, and Labor

February 10, 2026 | 1:30-5:30 p.m. Eastern Time

Dear Tribal Leaders,

On February 10, 2026, from 1:30-5:30 p.m. Eastern Time, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) will conduct consultation on the Interagency Agreements (IAAs) between ED and the U.S. Departments of the Interior (DOI) and Labor (DOL). The purpose of this consultation will be to receive meaningful input and guidance from American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities to ensure that Tribal leader views inform the implementation of the IAAs. Each Department remains committed to upholding the Federal fiduciary trust responsibility as set forth in the Constitution of the United States, Treaties, Executive Orders, and decisions of the U.S. Courts. This consultation will be conducted by the U.S. Office of Indian Education and facilitated by ED's Tribal Consultation Official.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since the founding of the United States, the legal foundations and scope of each trust relationship between the Federal government and Indian Tribes, Alaska Native Villages, and/or Native Hawaiian Organizations have been statutorily unique. There are currently 575 federally recognized Indian Tribes, approximately 370 of which have treaties¹ with the Federal government that remain good law. Indian Tribes do not engage in treaty-making at the Department-level; they engage in treaty-making from one Nation to another to ensure the prosperity of their descendants. The Federal government recognizes this unique relationship and the importance of acting with consistency, expediency, and efficiency.

¹ <https://www.bia.gov/faqs/does-united-states-still-make-treaties-indian-tribes>

On November 18, 2025, ED announced² a deepening partnership with DOI³ and DOL.⁴ The partnership will be governed by IAAs through which ED will procure services from DOI and DOL for certain covered programs. DOI and DOL will provide services and technical assistance and support the integration of Native-serving programs. ED will maintain all statutory and policymaking authorities governing covered programs.

The IAA scope and purpose are as follows:

- Uphold the rights of Native families.
- Reduce reporting requirements to the extent permissible under the law.
- Assist Native youth and adults to receive high quality education, pursue high wages, meet job demands, and build skills.
- Enable administrative reform of policies and programmatic requirements.
- Improve processes to enhance both applicant and grantee experiences.

As described in the introduction section of this letter, the purpose of this consultation is to receive input and guidance from Tribal leaders on the implementation of the IAAs. The following resources below can be used to help Tribal leaders prepare for the upcoming consultation:

- IAA with DOI
<https://www.ed.gov/media/document/ed-and-doi-interagency-agreement-indian-education-partnership-september-30-2025-and-january-9-2026-addendum-113021.pdf>
- IAA with DOL
<https://www.ed.gov/media/document/ed-and-dol-interagency-agreement-elementary-and-secondary-education-partnership-september-30-2025-113000.pdf>
- ED's Tribal Consultation Policy
<https://www.ed.gov/media/document/tribalpolicyfinalpdf-35325.pdf>

² Press Release: <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-announces-six-new-agency-partnerships-break-federal-bureaucracy>

³ Interagency Partnership Fact Sheet (DOI): <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fact-sheet-department-of-education-ed-and-department-of-interior-doi-partnership-112463.pdf>

⁴ Interagency Partnership Fact Sheet (DOL): <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fact-sheet-department-of-education-ed-and-department-of-labor-dol-postsecondary-education-partnership-112464.pdf>

- All Fact Sheets between ED and Departments of Labor, Interior, Health and Human Services, and State
<https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-announces-six-new-agency-partnerships-break-federal-bureaucracy>

PARTICIPATION INFORMATION

To participate in-person (highly recommended) or virtually, please see the following venue information below:

Venue: National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI)
Fourth Street & Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20560

Date: February 10, 2026

Time: 1:30-5:30 p.m. Eastern Time

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER

Click on the above copy of the URL into your browser and press enter:

Please follow the registration link immediately above to participate at the consultation. To maintain physical security, attendees must register individually, and registration cannot be transferred to or used by others. Once you have completed registration, individualized confirmations for the session will be sent to you with additional information.

WRITTEN COMMENT PERIOD

Written public comments for a topic will only be collected through the TribalConsultation@ed.gov email address. The comment period is now open and will close at **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on March 12, 2026**.

SENSITIVE INFORMATION

An Indian Tribe may designate information provided during the consultation as “sensitive” and request non-disclosure of the information to the public. Certain Federal laws, including the Freedom of Information Act, may require disclosure of information designated sensitive by an Indian Tribe. Questions about this notice can be sent to TribalConsultation@ed.gov. This consultation is a closed press event.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

The Department invites Tribal leaders to provide input on the following questions:

1. How can ED, DOI, and DOL best ensure continuity and stability of funding, services, and support to Tribal communities during and after the transition of program administration under the Interagency Agreements?
2. What specific roles, responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms should be established among ED, DOI, and DOL to ensure clear accountability and avoid creating additional layers of Federal bureaucracy in administering Tribal education programs?
3. In what ways should the Federal government strengthen consultation, communication, and partnership with Tribal nations throughout the implementation of the Interagency Agreements to ensure Tribal voices meaningfully inform decisions affecting Tribal education programs?
4. What safeguards, oversight mechanisms, and performance measures should be put in place to ensure that the partnership of program administration strengthens services to Native students, families, and communities?
5. How can the Interagency Agreements better support Tribal sovereignty, honor Federal trust and treaty obligations, and ensure that Tribal education institutions maintain the expertise, relationships, and capacity they have built with Federal partners over time?
6. What impact do Tribal leaders anticipate as a result of programs being co-managed in conjunction with DOL and DOI?

Thank you in advance for your input, participation, and guidance. We look forward to continuing consultation with Indian Tribes, Alaska Native Villages, and Native Hawaiian Organizations and their leadership to empower high-quality education for all students.

Sincerely,



Linda E. McMahon
Secretary of Education