



Hankie Ortiz

Director, Office of Tribal Self-Governance

Indian Health Service

Hankie Ortiz is an enrolled member of the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma and is also Caddo and Comanche. Ms. Ortiz earned a Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Montana School Of Law and a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from the University of Oklahoma.

As Director of the Office of Tribal Self-Governance (OTSG), Ms. Ortiz has primary responsibility for the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (Public Law 93-638) as it pertains to health related activities affecting the Tribal Self-Governance Program. This includes advocacy on behalf of American Indians and Alaska Natives on the development and implementation of federal self-governance policy. The OTSG is responsible for advancing the positions and interests of self-governance tribes and providing policy analysis and development support to tribal governments and the Indian Health Service (IHS) Director in the evolving area of self-governance and tribal/federal government relationships.

Ms. Ortiz began her career with the IHS in July 2006 as the Director, Division of Regulatory Affairs and has served as the Deputy Director for the IHS Office of Management Services. Prior to joining the IHS, she was a practicing attorney for twelve years, practicing in state, federal, and tribal courts. She worked for two private American Indian law firms in Oklahoma, representing tribes and individual American Indian clients and for the Native American Rights Fund in Washington D.C. Ms. Ortiz was an attorney with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of the General Counsel (OGC) in the Public Health Division in Rockville, Maryland and in Region IX, San Francisco, California, advising IHS Headquarters and Area offices and representing the Agency before the Administrative Hearing Boards, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Merit Systems Protection Board. She also assisted the Department of Justice with IHS cases in Federal Court.

Ms. Ortiz has many years of experience in the area of tribal self-governance. As an OGC attorney, she drafted, reviewed, and negotiated self-governance compacts and funding agreements as part of various federal negotiation teams under Title III and Title V for the IHS Oklahoma, Nashville, Bemidji, California, and Phoenix Areas. She played an instrumental role in the Title V negotiated rulemaking process, authoring portions of the implementing regulations. She was the OGC representative and core member of the Agency Lead Negotiator (ALN) Curriculum Team, a group that developed a curriculum to be used in training future ALNs and educating IHS management and staff on self-governance matters.

Ms. Ortiz played instrumental roles in creating professional organizations and providing leadership. She was a founding member, Treasurer and President-Elect of the Native American Bar Association of Washington D.C. and a Founding Board Member of the California Indian Legal Association. She was asked by the Governor of Maryland to serve on the Maryland Commission of Indian Affairs where she served as the Vice-Chairman. She was a Co-Chair of the Inaugural Washington D.C. Indian Law Conference and selected to serve as an Americans for Indian Opportunity Ambassador. She is regarded as an expert on Indian health law and Public Law 93-638 issues and is often asked to be a presenter, speaker, or instructor on related topics.

Her recent accomplishments include three National Director's Awards for her outstanding performance, dedication and commitment to the mission of the IHS.