



# Department of Justice

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## **DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ANNOUNCES NEW FUNDING FOR TRIBAL COMMUNITIES**

### *Nearly \$100 Million Provided for Indian Country Initiatives in 2008*

WASHINGTON - U.S. Associate Attorney General Kevin J. O'Connor today announced more than \$50 million in additional grant funds from the Justice Department to help tribal communities, bringing the total to nearly \$100 million awarded to tribal communities in 2008. These awards include funds for tribal courts assistance, alcohol and substance abuse prevention, juvenile and mental health programs, victim assistance, and developing responses to violent crimes against Indian women. O'Connor made the announcement in remarks to the Four Corners Indian Country Conference in Albuquerque, NM.

"This investment will help tribes develop criminal justice strategies that meet their needs," said Associate Attorney General O'Connor. "Tribes face unique challenges that require unique solutions. We are committed to working in partnership with tribes to improve public safety."

More than \$38 million of the funding announced today was awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) through the Tribal Governments Programs, Tribal Coalitions Program, Legal Assistance for Victims Program, Rural Domestic Violence Program, Grants to Encourage Arrests Program, Safe Havens Program, Transitional Housing Program, and Civil Legal Assistance Program. Funding includes support to enhance the response to violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women at the tribal, federal and state levels. These grants also fund the coordination of services to victims and development of education and prevention strategies.

The new funding also includes more than \$8 million awarded through the Tribal Youth Program, which helps tribal communities prevent juvenile delinquency, reduce violent crime, and improve tribal juvenile justice systems.

Additional funding announced today includes:

- More than \$7 million awarded through the newly created Correctional Facilities on Tribal Lands Grant Program to help tribes construct and/or renovate correctional facilities on tribal lands.
- More than \$5 million awarded through the Tribal Courts Assistance Program to assist tribal justice systems to establish a core structure, improve case management, train court personnel, improve prosecution and indigent defense, support probation diversion and alternative sentencing programs, and focus on juvenile services.
- More than \$3 million awarded through the Indian Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention Demonstration Program to help control and prevent crimes associated with the distribution and use of alcohol and controlled substances in tribal communities.
- More than \$1 million awarded through the Tribal Juvenile Accountability Discretionary Program, which helps tribes strengthen their juvenile justice systems by ensuring that youth are held accountable for their offenses.
- Nearly \$500,000 awarded through the Counseling and Faith-Based Services for Crime Victims in Indian Country program to support both counseling services to victims of crime by faith-based organizations and to create collaborative partnerships between local victim assistance programs and faith-based organizations, spiritual leaders and traditional healers in American Indian/Alaska Native communities.
- More than \$1 million awarded through the Drug Court Discretionary Grant Program provides financial and technical assistance to develop and implement treatment drug courts that effectively integrate substance abuse treatment, mandatory drug testing, sanctions and incentives, and transitional services in a judicially supervised court setting with jurisdiction over nonviolent, substance-abusing offenders.
- More than \$500,000 awarded through the Tribal Criminal History Records Improvement Program to improve the quality and accessibility of tribal criminal history records and promote justice related data sharing across tribal, state, and national criminal records systems.

Previously announced funding to tribal initiatives in 2008 includes:

- The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services released \$14 million in grants under the Tribal Resources Grant Program. The grants were awarded to 80 tribal police departments and governments in 22 states, and can be used to fund the purchase of crime-fighting technology systems, basic law enforcement

equipment, and to procure training and technical assistance. In total, since 1995, COPS has provided more than \$314.4 million to support Native-American law enforcement agencies.

- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention provided \$2 million for mentoring programs to at-risk Native American youth. In addition, \$2 million was provided to Big Brother Big Sisters of America for mentoring programs in Indian Country.
- More than \$3 million in grants and assistance provided to tribal governments through the Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking Office (SMART) in support of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 to assist tribes with developing or enhancing programs designed to implement the sex offender registry and notification programs.

In addition to funding, the Department has provided a comprehensive range of technical assistance and support to Indian Country in 2008. In July, SMART hosted its second annual National Symposium on Sex Offender Management and Accountability in Baltimore. The symposium brought together lawmakers, state, local and tribal government officials; law enforcement; and frontline professionals who manage sex offenders. Scholarship funding was available to tribes that elected to implement their own sex offender notification and registration systems and wanted to attend the conference. The conference included special tracks related specifically to sex offender management in Indian Country and tribal governments.

In August, the Department's newly created Violence Against Women in Indian Country Task Force convened for the first time in Washington, D.C. The task force, composed of members of national tribal domestic violence and sexual assault organizations, tribal governments, and national tribal organizations, are assisting the National Institute of Justice and the Office on Violence Against Women in developing and implementing a program of research on violence against Indian women, including domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking and murder. The program will evaluate the effectiveness of the federal, state, and tribal response to this violence.

Last year, ten tribal sites were selected to serve as pilot communities as part of the Department's AMBER Alert in Indian Country Initiative. The ten tribal sites serve as regional programs across the country. The Department continues to work with tribal nations to develop their own plans tailored to their specific needs so that children in Indian country may benefit from AMBER Alert.

This year the Department continued its series of consultation, training and technical assistance sessions, focusing on tribal priority issues related to public safety for families and communities. Aimed at improving law enforcement and criminal justice in Indian country, the sessions targeted issues such as tribal court systems, multi-jurisdictional coordination and communication, sexual offender registry, and other law enforcement areas.

Total funding amounts and a full list of awardees are available at the Tribal Justice and Safety Web site, <http://www.usdoj.gov/tribaljusticeandsafety>.

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