



U.S. Department of **JUSTICE**

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February 19, 2008

Dear Tribal Leader:

On behalf of the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) I would like to thank each of you who participated in our annual Tribal Consultation on September 19, 2007 at the Sandia Pueblo. I would also like to thank those of you who submitted written comments regarding the consultation topics outlined in Section 903 of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (VAWA 2005). OVW has summarized the recommendations that we received and enclosed a copy of the summary for your review. Additionally, OVW has posted copies of all of the written testimony and comments on our consultation Web site, available at www.ovwtribalconsultation.com.

While OVW received numerous recommendations, there were five issues that appear to be the most pressing: (1) OVW's use of a population-based strategy to determine award limits for the Federal Fiscal Year 2007 Grants to Indian Tribal Governments Program; (2) OVW's efforts to streamline its grant application process for tribal governments; (3) OVW's policy on allowing children to attend OVW-sponsored training and technical assistance events; (4) OVW's efforts to increase coordination with the United States Department of Health and Human Services; and (5) implementation of various sections of Title IX of VAWA 2005 including the criminal provisions, the national baseline research study on violence against Indian women, and granting tribes access to the Federal criminal databases.

Award Limits for the Grants to Indian Tribal Governments Program

During last September's Consultation many tribal leaders expressed a wide range of concerns regarding OVW's use of a population-based strategy to determine award limits for the Federal Fiscal Year 2007 Grants to Indian Tribal Governments Program (Tribal Governments Program). Leaders and representatives from smaller tribes felt that the population-based funding limits placed them at a competitive disadvantage in terms of accessing grant funds. Others felt very strongly that funding from the Tribal Governments Program should be distributed based on a demonstration of need.

After careful consideration, OVW decided to revise the Tribal Governments Program for Federal Fiscal Year 2008. This year new applicants to the program are able to request up to \$450,000. While there is no explicit limit on the amount of funding that current grantees can request, OVW has offered guidance to current grantees that it might not be able to offer awards to them in excess of \$900,000 due to the anticipated demand for funding. Additionally, the

application requirements have been changed to focus more attention on each applicant's demonstrated need for funding.

Streamlining the OVW Grant Application Process

OVW is proud to report that the \$47.1 million that OVW awarded to address crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking committed against American Indian and Alaska Native women in Federal Fiscal Year 2007 is nearly double the amount of funding that OVW awarded to tribal specific projects in Federal Fiscal Year 2006. The \$47.1 million that OVW awarded to support tribal projects also accounts for more than half of the \$82 million that all grant-making agencies at the United States Department of Justice awarded to Indian country in Federal Fiscal Year 2007. Despite this unprecedented achievement, OVW remains acutely aware of the unmet need in Indian country.

At the time of its inception in Federal Fiscal Year 2007, the Tribal Governments Program represented the largest single source of funding specifically for tribal governments that OVW had ever received to distribute. OVW received 106 applications in response to its Federal Fiscal Year 2007 Tribal Governments Program solicitation. The 106 applicants requested more than \$58 million in grant funding. Tribal applicants also requested approximately \$24 million in grant funding from OVW's other non-tribal specific grant programs. The total amount of grant funding requested from OVW to support Indian country projects in Federal Fiscal Year 2007 was approximately \$82 million. However, in Federal Fiscal Year 2007, OVW had approximately \$32 million available to make awards from the Tribal Governments Program. OVW could not satisfy the demand for funding from Indian country through a single funding source in Federal Fiscal Year 2007, and does not anticipate that it will be able to satisfy the need from a single source of funding in Federal Fiscal Year 2008.

This means that in Federal Fiscal Year 2008, tribal governments who are seeking more funding than would otherwise be available to them through the Tribal Governments Program will need to submit additional applications to other OVW discretionary grant programs for supplemental funding. While OVW is supportive of efforts to increase the range of support and services available to victims in tribal communities, OVW also encourages communities to approach program development issues thoughtfully and strategically. A grantee who receives funding from more than one grant program will be required to submit more than one set of programmatic and financial reports, and may face additional administrative compliance requirements.

OVW's Policy on Children Attending OVW-Sponsored Events

Each year OVW invests millions of dollars in its training and technical assistance program in order to provide all of its grantees with an array of services and support necessary to successfully develop and implement their grant funded projects. These conferences, meetings, and other events provide OVW's grantees with an opportunity to receive critical training, network with other grantees, and learn about violence against women from some of the nation's leading experts in the field. OVW appreciates that many of the participants at these events are working mothers who would like to bring their children with them. OVW, however, must strike a delicate balance between acknowledging the needs and demands of mothers with respecting the right of each participant to learn and exchange information in a forum free from distractions and disruptions.

In response to the objections raised by tribal leaders and representatives during the 2006 and 2007 consultations to OVW's policy which discourages participants from bringing children to OVW-sponsored training and technical assistance events, OVW has decided to review this policy and explore how it can be revised to address the issues and concerns articulated by tribal leaders.

Coordination with the United States Department of Health and Human Services

Over the past year OVW has actively sought opportunities to engage in a dialogue with representatives from the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on issues related to violence against women. OVW's Deputy Director for Tribal Affairs, Lorraine Edmo, has met with representatives from the Indian Health Service to discuss issues related to the sexual assault of Indian women, and OVW's Director has highlighted the issue of violence against Indian women during meetings of the Director's Federal Inter-Agency Leadership Council. The dialogue between OVW and HHS will be ongoing, and OVW will continue to collaborate with HHS. OVW will invite HHS to participate in the planning and the conduct of its 2008 Tribal Consultation.

Implementation of Title IX of VAWA 2005

In 2006 and again in 2007, tribal leaders who participated in OVW's consultation voiced their concerns about the implementation of various aspects of Title IX of VAWA 2005, including the national baseline research study of violence against Indian women, the criminal provisions, and access to Federal criminal justice databases. The process of establishing the task force necessary to guide the national baseline research study has taken longer than OVW initially anticipated. OVW is hopeful that the task force will be named within the next 30 days. OVW will work with the National Institute of Justice to convene the first meeting of the task force as soon as possible after the appointment of the task force members has been finalized.

It will require the coordinated collective effort of many different components within the United States Department of Justice to proceed with the full implementation of many of the other sections of Title IX, including the criminal provisions and the access to Federal databases. The various components responsible for the implementation of these sections have been working diligently since the passage of VAWA 2005 to address these issues. OVW has been in communication with the various bureaus, agencies, and offices within the United States Department of Justice that have been charged with implementing these provisions. OVW is committed to providing guidance and assistance to support the full implementation of each of the provisions contained in Title IX.

OVW's 2008 Tribal Consultation

OVW is planning the 2008 consultation and will once again look to tribal leaders for insight and guidance during the planning process. OVW held its first planning conference call with tribal leaders on February 14, 2008, and a second call has been tentatively scheduled for the week of February 25, 2008. One of our goals for this year's consultation is to make it more results oriented. OVW received a number of recommendations at the 2006 consultation that we have been able to act upon; however, this information may not have been adequately conveyed to tribal leaders. Therefore, in the coming weeks, we will disseminate an updated copy of the most

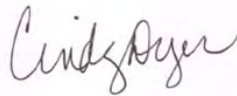
frequently cited recommendations from the 2006 consultation. The revised list will include all of the original recommendations from 2006 along with brief notes on the action that OVW has taken to address those recommendations.

OVW would like to express its sincere gratitude to each of the tribal leaders who have taken time from their busy schedules to assist us with planning the past two consultations. OVW welcomes the input of all tribal leaders during the planning process. We hope that you, or your designee, will be able to join us for our next planning teleconference. Information regarding the date and time of the next call will be disseminated via e-mail by Lorraine Edmo.

If you have a question or concern regarding our consultation, or would like to make a recommendation to OVW on how to improve the process, please contact Lorraine Edmo, OVW's Deputy Director for Tribal Affairs at either (202) 307-6026, or lorraine.edmo@usdoj.gov.

I look forward to working with you in 2008, and hope that this year's consultation will be as successful as the first two.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cindy Dyer". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Cindy Dyer
Director

Enclosure