

## Sonoff, Kevin (USAOR)

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**From:** USAO-Oregon <USAO-Oregon@public.govdelivery.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 24, 2023 9:03 AM  
**To:** Sonoff, Kevin (USAOR)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] April 2023 Oregon Indian Country Newsletter



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### Greetings from U.S. Attorney's Office Indian Country Team

Dear Partners and Friends,

We hope this latest edition of our Indian Country newsletter finds each of you well. It has been a busy start to the year for our office. U.S. Attorney Wight and other members of our team have enjoyed recent opportunities to meet in-person with several Tribal partners and agencies and look forward to additional meetings in the weeks and months ahead. Additionally, our docket continues to include important cases and prosecutions for tribes around the state.

We are excited to announce a new addition to our Indian Country team. In November 2020, AUSA Cassidy Adams joined the U.S. Attorney's Office and recently has been assigned as the lead prosecutor for violent crime in Indian Country related to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. AUSA Adams is excited to join our team and looks forward to meeting with Tribal government and law enforcement officials. Below is a brief bio and contact information for AUSA Adams and the other members of our team.

Our team looks forward to several important commemorations this month and next. April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) and April 23-29 is National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW). Every April, the Justice Department's Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) leads communities throughout the country in their annual observances of NCVRW. More information about NCVRW 2023 is available below. We are also looking ahead to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day on May 5 and expect the White House will issue its annual proclamation soon.

Finally, May 9 is National Fentanyl Awareness Day and our office is partnering with local agencies and treatment providers to offer programming for schools and community groups this spring and summer, and throughout the year, to educate youth and tribal communities on the rapidly evolving dangers of fentanyl.

As spring continues to take hold across the state, we wish everyone the very best. We are open to hearing from you about the needs you see in your area and for your Tribal members. We welcome your feedback, communication, and opportunities to connect.

Sincerely,

The U.S. Attorney's Office Indian Country Team



## Meet the U.S. Attorney's Office Indian Country Team

### **AUSA Cassady Adams [CTUIR]**

AUSA Cassady Adams has been with the USAO in the District of Oregon since November 2020. Prior to joining the USAO, Cassady worked as an AUSA in the District of Montana for 2.5 years, where she prosecuted violent crimes in Indian Country, drug trafficking crimes, and firearm crimes, as well as criminal appeals to the Ninth Circuit. Before joining DOJ, Cassady worked as a state prosecutor in Colorado for several years. Cassady grew up in Mobile, Alabama. She can be reached at [Cassady.Adams@usdoj.gov](mailto:Cassady.Adams@usdoj.gov).



**AUSA Tribal Liaison Tim Simmons [All 9 federally recognized tribes]:** AUSA Tim Simmons has been an attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice since 1995 and serves as a Tribal Liaison for all 9 Tribal Nations. AUSA Simmons is located in our Eugene Office and can be reached at [tim.simmons@usdoj.gov](mailto:tim.simmons@usdoj.gov) or (541) 465-6740.

**AUSA Pam Paaso [Warm Springs]:** AUSA Pam Paaso has been with the U.S. Attorney's Office since February of 2017 and is the dedicated prosecutor for crimes related to the Warm Springs Tribe. AUSA Paaso is located in our Portland Office and can be reached at [pamela.paaso@usdoj.gov](mailto:pamela.paaso@usdoj.gov) or (503) 727-1000.

**AUSA Jeff Sweet [Burns Paiute and Cow Creek]:** AUSA Jeff Sweet has been with the U.S. Attorney's office for 12 years and is the dedicated prosecutor for crimes related to the Burns Paiute Tribe and Cow Creek Tribe. AUSA Sweet is located in our Eugene Office and can be reached at [jeff.sweet@usdoj.gov](mailto:jeff.sweet@usdoj.gov) or (541) 465-6903.

**Tribal Victim Assistance Specialist Ella LeVally:** Ella LeVally became the Tribal Victim Assistance Specialist in 2020 and is located in the Portland Office. Ella can be reached at [ella.levally@usdoj.gov](mailto:ella.levally@usdoj.gov) or at (503) 727-1172.

**MMIP Coordinator Cedar Wilkie Gillette:** Cedar Wilkie Gillette has been the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) Coordinator since June 2020 and is located in our Eugene Office. Cedar can be reached at [Cedar.Wilkie.Gillette@usdoj.gov](mailto:Cedar.Wilkie.Gillette@usdoj.gov) or (541) 465-6045.

**Public Affairs Officer Kevin Sonoff:** Kevin Sonoff serves as the spokesperson and primary media contact for the USAO and is located in our Portland Office. Kevin can be reached at [kevin.sonoff@usdoj.gov](mailto:kevin.sonoff@usdoj.gov) or (503) 727-1000.

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## In the News

The *Not Invisible Act Commission* will be holding [field hearings](#) starting in April. The *Not Invisible Act* established the Commission as a cross jurisdictional advisory committee composed of both federal and non-federal members including law enforcement, Tribal leaders, federal partners, service providers, family members of missing and murdered individuals, and survivors. The Commission is developing recommendations through the work of six subcommittees focused on improving intergovernmental coordination and establishing best practices for state, Tribal and federal law enforcement to bolster resources for survivors and victim's families, and combatting the epidemic of missing persons, murder, and trafficking of American Indian and Alaska Native peoples, as specified under the law. The first public hearing will take place in Tulsa, Oklahoma on April 11, 2023 to be followed by additional locations.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security released its [Integrated Public Alert & Warning System \(IPAWS\) Strategic Plan](#).

On April 11, the DOJ Special Tribal Criminal Jurisdiction Reimbursement Program [Interim Final Rule](#) was published in the Federal Register. The Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2022 authorized a new program to reimburse Tribal governments for expenses incurred in exercising "special Tribal criminal jurisdiction" (STCJ) over non-Indians who commit certain covered crimes in Indian country. The rule will implement this new Tribal Reimbursement Program within the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) by providing details on how it will be administered, including eligibility, frequency of reimbursement, costs that can be reimbursed, the annual maximum allowable reimbursement per Tribe, and conditions for waiver of the annual maximum.

In November, the Supreme Court of the United States heard arguments in [Brackeen v. Haaland](#), the federal court case challenging the constitutionality of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). The questions presented to the Court are whether the ICWA's placement preferences discriminate on the basis of race in violation of the U.S. Constitution and whether ICWA's placement preferences exceed Congress's Article I authority by invading the arena of child placement. A decision is expected this spring.

In addition to the *Brackeen* case, we are keeping an eye on two other cases added to the Supreme Court docket: [Department of Interior v Navajo Nation](#) which impacts the federal government's trust and treaty obligation to provide water to tribal nations. The Court heard oral argument on March 20. [Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians v. Coughlin](#) which looks at whether tribal sovereignty has been abrogated by federal bankruptcy law.

### Recent Prosecution Highlights from the USAO District of Oregon

**U.S. v Kevin Lee Jones:** In February, a Grants Pass man was [sentenced](#) to 120 months for stealing from a tribal organization and illegally possessing a firearm as a convicted felon. Kevin Lee Jones pleaded guilty for stealing \$74,228 from a business owned by the Cow Creek Tribe. Jones was sentenced to 120 months in federal prison, 3 years' supervised release, and ordered to pay \$74,338 in restitution to the Cow Creek Tribe. The case was investigated by the FBI and the Cow Creek Tribal Police Department and prosecuted by AUSA Jeff Sweet.

**U.S. v Sara Janeese Hawley:** In December, a former employee of the Burns Paiute Tribe was [sentenced](#) to federal probation for stealing and crashing a vehicle owned by the Tribe used to transport students to and from school events. Sara Janeese Hawley pleaded guilty to theft from an

Indian tribal organization for stealing the vehicle and was ordered to pay restitution. The case was investigated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and FBI and prosecuted by AUSA Jeff Sweet.

**U.S. v Jordan Anthony Camardese:** In December, an Eastern Oregon drug dealer was [sentenced](#) to 10 years in federal prison after he was convicted at trial on multiple felony drug and firearm charges. Jordan Anthony Camardese, a resident of Umatilla, Oregon, was sentenced to 120 months in federal prison and four years' supervised release. The case was investigated by the FBI and BENT (a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) task force comprised of detectives from the Pendleton Police Department, Hermiston Police Department, Boardman Police Department, Oregon State Police, Morrow County Sheriff's Office, Milton-Freewater Police Department, and Umatilla Tribal Police Department). The case was prosecuted by AUSAs Kemp Strickland and Sarah Barr.

**U.S. v Tom Redhawk Tias:** In December, a resident of the Umatilla Indian Reservation [pleaded guilty](#) after he repeatedly struck a fellow resident of the reservation with his fists, causing the person's death. Tom Redhawk Tias pleaded guilty to one count of voluntary manslaughter. On April 20, 2023, Tias was [sentenced](#) to 48 months in federal prison and three years' supervised release. The case was investigated by the FBI and Umatilla Tribal Police Department and AUSA Pamela Paaso is prosecuting the case.

**U.S. v. Lowell Pierre:** In February, defendant Lowell Pierre pleaded guilty to felon in possession of a firearm. Pierre was caught unlawfully in possession of a firearm on the Umatilla Indian Reservation in June 2022. Pierre faces a maximum sentence of 10 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, and three years' supervised release. He will be sentenced in May 2023. The case was investigated by the Umatilla Tribal Police Department, FBI, and the ATF. AUSA Cassady Adams is prosecuting the case.

**U.S. v Lisa Nelson:** In January, defendant Lisa Nelson pleaded guilty to Embezzlement and Theft from Indian Tribal Organization. Defendant was sentenced to a 2-year term of probation, 150 hours of community service, barred from entering the Grand Ronde reservation, and required to pay restitution in the amount of \$20,620.00. The case was investigated by the FBI and Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department. US Attorney Natalie Wight prosecuted the case.

### **News in Oregon**

On March 23, the USAO conducted a Central Violations Bureau (CVB) training for the Umatilla Tribal Police Department. The CVB involves citations issued for petty offenses committed on federal property and Indian Country. The training was conducted by CVB Paralegal Amy Kuntz, AUSA Cassady Adams, and law clerks Jemma Pritchard and Henry Harder.

On March 8, Governor Tina Kotek [appointed](#) J.D. Tovey, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) Planning Director, as the Co-Chair of the Housing Production Advisory Council (HPAC).

Cow Creek Tribal Police Chief Brett Johnson has retired. Tribal Police Johnson worked to establish the Cow Creek Tribal Police Department and leaves after three years. We were honored to work with Chief Johnson and wish him the best on his continued life journey.

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## **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Person (MMIP) Information**

In November 2019, the Department of Justice launched a national strategy to address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) that included the hiring of MMIP coordinators to serve with U.S. Attorney's Offices. In June 2020, Cedar Wilkie Gillette became the District of Oregon's MMIP Coordinator. In this edition, MMIP Coordinator Wilkie Gillette discusses the Tribal Nations Summit and a brief update on the USAO MMIP Working Group.



- The White House held its second Tribal Nations Summit from November 30 to December 1, 2022. Among other things, it was announced that a Memorandum of Understanding was created between the FBI and BIA to improve law enforcement coordination within Indian Country, including for MMIP investigations. More information about the Summit is available [here](#).
- The USAO MMIP Working Group has created a MMIP Tribal Community Sub-Group of existing MMIP Working Group members to develop goals to create and strengthen meaningful partnerships with Tribal communities for MMIP. The Sub-Group has held three meetings since December 2022.
- The California-based Yurok Tribe and the U.S. Marshals Service are [teaming up](#) to examine strategies to tackle public safety concerns, namely missing indigenous children, as part of the federal law enforcement agency's new Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Initiative.

MMIP Coordinator Cedar Wilkie Gillette can be contacted at (541) 465-6045 or [Cedar.Wilkie.Gillette@usdoj.gov](mailto:Cedar.Wilkie.Gillette@usdoj.gov).

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## Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April highlights on-going advocacy and prevention efforts and draws much-needed attention to just how widespread sexual violence is within our communities. It is also critical to recognize the importance of sexual assault advocacy and prevention in Indian Country. Sexual assault in Indian Country must be examined within the context of the prevalence of violence and in conjunction with the effects of historical trauma and complicated jurisdictional issues.

Statistics alone do not capture the actual depth of historical trauma and oppression, including sexual violence, experienced by tribal communities. Here are some alarming statistics:

- Every 68 seconds, an individual in America is sexually assaulted.
- More than 4 in 5 American Indian and Alaska Native women have experienced violence in their lifetime, and 56.1 percent accounts for those who have experienced sexual violence.
- American Indian and Alaska Native women are 1.2 times more likely as non-Hispanic white-only women to experience violence in their lifetime and 1.7 times as likely to have experienced violence in the past year.

For more information, please see the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center fact sheet ([NIWRC Fact Sheet](#)) or visit their website at [www.niwrc.org](http://www.niwrc.org).

If you or someone that you know needs assistance, you can contact the following resources:

- **Stronghearts:** Culturally-specific and confidential helpline for American Indians and Alaska Natives impacted by domestic, dating, and sexual violence. Help, safety, and resources are available 24/7/365. Phone: 1-844-762-8483

Additional information available on website: [www.strongheartshelpline.org](http://www.strongheartshelpline.org).

- **RAINN** (Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network): The nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization in partnership with more than 1,000 local sexual assault service providers across the country. Help, safety, and resources are available 24/7/365. Phone: 1-800-656-HOPE

Online chat option and additional information available on website: [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org).

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## Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) Information

### LeBretia White Welcomed as the new Director of the Office for Victims of Crime Tribal Division



Ms. White comes to U.S. DOJ OVC from the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), where she has led work on the administration of state, Tribal and community efforts to promote adolescent pregnancy prevention and other youth risk behaviors as well as adulthood preparation. She has managed technical assistance efforts, overseen contracts, and provided guidance and expertise in the collection and reporting of data and dissemination of evaluation findings. Ms. White is a licensed social worker, and earlier in her career served as Program Manager at the DC Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, where she supervised a team of staff tasked with securing residential and community-based services for juvenile justice involved youth. Ms. White has worked with tribal communities during her tenure at HHS and is looking forward to leading OVC's work on behalf of Tribes.

### EXPANDED Tribal Victim Service Training and Technical Assistance Program

It's an exciting time for the OVC Tribal Division—with an expansion of our training and technical assistance (TTA) support. The Tribal Victim Services Training and Technical Assistance (T-VSTTA) team is our new OVC-funded Programmatic TTA provider. The T-VSTTA team is a blend of Native and non-Native professionals with over 100 years of combined experience in capacity building, victim services, program management, and AI/AN community engagement. The team includes staff from Tribal Tech, unapologetically Rez, RuralCAP, the National Center for Victims of Crime and Booz, Allen, Hamilton Inc.

They will provide hands-on, tailored support to all OVC Tribal grantees. Look for them at upcoming conferences and engagement activities such as the [National Indian Child Welfare Association \(NICWA\) Conference](#) and [National Missing and Unidentified Persons Conference](#).

#### Contact Information:

**Web:** <https://htcbc.ovc.ojp.gov/tribal-victim-services-training-and-technical-assistance>

**Email:** [Support@t-vstta.org](mailto:Support@t-vstta.org)

**Phone:** 833-887-8820

### Now Online: 2023 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Theme Artwork

National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) will be commemorated April 23–29, 2023. The [2023 NCVRW artwork](#) is now available to download and can be used to help inspire your community and raise awareness of victims' rights. The 2023 NCVRW theme is Survivor Voices: Elevate. Engage. Effect Change. This year's theme calls upon communities to amplify the voices of survivors and create environments where survivors have the confidence that they will be heard, believed, and supported.



Sign up for the [NCVRW subscription list](#) to receive important email updates.

## Federal Funding Opportunities

The Department of Justice offers funding opportunities to support law enforcement and public safety activities in state, local, and tribal jurisdictions; to assist victims of crime; to provide training and technical assistance; to conduct research and collect national statistics; and to implement programs that improve the criminal, civil, and juvenile justice systems. The [Fiscal Year 2023 Department of Justice Grants Program Plan](#) summarizes details about OVC funding opportunities that we expect to release, or have released, this fiscal year. The Program Plan also provides information about funding from other Department of Justice grant-making Components.

You can also to [Subscribe to News From OVC](#) to receive announcements about OVC funding opportunities.

For information about additional funding opportunities, visit the [OVC website](#), [Grants.gov](#), and the U.S. Department of Justice [Program Plan](#).

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## Upcoming Training, Events, and Grants

*Please note that these dates and venues may change- please check with the individual sponsoring agency for updates and confirmation.*

### [17th Annual Native American Housing to Homeownership Fair](#)

The 17th Annual Native American Housing to Homeownership Fair will take place on April 29, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at NAYA.

### [American Indian Justice Conference](#)

The American Indian Justice Conference will take place on May 3-4, 2023, in Reno, Nevada. The Conference will discuss strategies that enhance tribal justice systems including essential information on court development; alcohol and substance misuse; probation, reentry and policing; and addressing violent crime.

### [Smithsonian National Conference on Cultural Property Protection](#)

The Smithsonian Institution National Conference on Cultural Property Protection (NCCPP) will take place September 27-29 in Washington, DC. The theme of this year's conference is Focusing on Fundamentals: A Culture of Service.

### [Missing Child Investigations in Indian Country Series](#)

This National Criminal Justice Training Center self-paced series addresses the key challenges law enforcement officers and supporting agencies working in or with Indian Country communities often face when a child goes missing.

### [Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act Grants](#)

The 2023 Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act program is a competitive grant program that provides funding to improve the delivery of and access to mental health and wellness services for law enforcement through the implementation of peer support, training, family resources, suicide prevention, and other promising practices for wellness programs. Applications are due by April 21, 2023.

### **COPS Hiring Program Grants**

The 2023 COPS Hiring Program is a competitive grant program designed to provide funds directly to law enforcement agencies to hire new or rehire existing career law enforcement officers to increase their community policing capacity and crime prevention efforts. All local, state, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies that have primary law enforcement authority are eligible to apply. Applications are due by May 11, 2023.

### **CPD Crisis Intervention Teams Grant**

CPD is a competitive grant program designed to advance the practice of community policing by providing guidance on promising practices through the development and testing of innovative strategies; building knowledge about effective practices and outcomes; and supporting new, creative approaches to preventing crime and promoting safe communities. The CPD – Implementing Crisis Intervention Teams solicitation will provide grants directly to state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement agencies for the creation or expansion of crisis intervention teams and to embed mental and behavioral health services with law enforcement agencies so they can better respond to individuals in crisis in the community. Applications are due by May 8, 2023.

### **School Violence Prevention Program Grant**

The 2023 COPS Office School Violence Prevention Program is a competitive program that provides funding directly to States, units of local government, Indian tribes, and their public agencies to be used to improve security at schools and on school grounds in the jurisdiction of the grantee through evidence-based school safety programs. Applications are due by May 17, 2023.

### **FY 2023 Community-based Approaches to Prevent and Address Hate Crimes**

The Bureau of Justice Assistance will provide funding to support comprehensive community-based approaches to addressing hate crimes that promote community awareness and preparedness, increase victim reporting, and improve responses to hate crimes. Applications are due by May 17.

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## **What We're Watching and Reading**

In April, Wilson Wewa, a storyteller, spiritual leader, and oral historian for the Warm Springs Paiute, will be part of the 2023 High Desert Speaker Series. Wilson Wewa will discuss the land, its people and the past, present and future of protecting the high desert in Oregon in a presentation titled [The Land, Its People and the Future](#).

In April, [Some Stars of Native American Comedy](#) will perform at the Hult Center in Eugene.

In April, the 17th Annual [NAYA Native American Housing to Homeownership Fair](#) will take place in Portland, Oregon.

In March, the [Warm Springs Skatepark](#) celebrated its grand opening.

On Amazon Prime show called Three Pines which is a police-based murder mystery drama with a focus on MMIW.

The Columbia River Gorge Commission has [elected](#) its first Indigenous chair- Carina Miller, a member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

The [new children's book](#) "My Powerful Hair" is written by Carole Lindstrom and illustrated by Steph Littlebird. Lindstrom is Anishinaabe/Métis and an enrolled citizen of the Turtle Mountain Band of



Ojibwe and Littlebird is an artist, writer, curator and a registered member of the Grand Ronde Confederated Tribes.

The State of Washington recently [changed](#) nine derogatory place names to ones proposed by tribes.

The NBA Phoenix Suns' City Edition jerseys [recognize](#) Arizona's Native American tribes. The jersey depicts the Suns' logo surrounded by 22 feathers which represents Arizona's 22 tribes and matches the Native American medicine wheel.



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## A Note About Our Language

"Indian Country" is the legal term used to describe reservations and other lands set aside for Indian use, such as Indian allotments and lands held in trust for Indians or Indian tribes, and is defined under 18 U.S.C. § 1151. We use the term Indian Country versus the term Native American or some other term because it describes the statutory jurisdiction of the U.S. Attorney's Office.

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If you have questions or content suggestions, please email [USAOR.ICNews@usdoj.gov](mailto:USAOR.ICNews@usdoj.gov) or call (503) 727-1000.

