

TRIBAL COURT—STATE COURT FORUM

An Advisory Committee of the Judicial Council of California

Forum E-Update

March 2025

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Judicial Council of California

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FORUM NEWS

Forum cochair Judge Abby Abinanti among those honored: [California Judicial Center Library Exhibition Honors Impactful Women in State's Legal History](#)

California Courts Newsoom – March 14, 2025

The California Judicial Center Library's latest exhibition is a celebration of California women in law, including trailblazing judicial officers at all court levels. [Resolute and Resilient: Celebrating 175 Years of California Women and the Law](#) features illustrated panels and primary source materials such as photographs and artifacts celebrating California women's contributions to the law and honoring the state's pioneering women attorneys, judges, and justices.

IN THE NEWS

[5 takeaways from Arizona's MMIP Task Force 2024 report](#)

Arizona Luminaria – February 24, 2025

As Arizona's Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Task Force enters its third year, it continues to seek solutions to the ongoing injustice of Indigenous communities affected by violence and disappearances — from national collaboration and victim compensation outreach to addressing the sober-living home scandal and improving law enforcement training, according to its yearly report.

[Despite opposition, Montana legislator advances two priority bills from American Indian caucus](#)

Montana Free Press – February 25, 2025

The legislation includes the Montana Indian Child Welfare Act and an attempt to add more accountability to the state's Indian Education for All law.

[‘I Came Back to My Culture, and I Healed.’](#)

Native News Online – February 25, 2025

As Maine's tribes confront an addiction crisis, Wabanaki Public Health & Wellness pioneers a treatment model that returns cultural practices to the heart of addiction recovery.

[A Utah version of the Indian Child Welfare Act is again in limbo](#)

KUER Utah – February 26, 2025

Utah's version of the federal Indian Child Welfare Act has [once again](#) stalled in the Legislature.

The Judicial Council's Tribal Court—State Court Forum produces this newsletter to provide news and resources of interest to state court-tribal court collaborators. The views expressed are those of the authors and may not represent the views of the forum members, the Judicial Council of California, or the funders.

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Tribal/State Programs Link:

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FORUM LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

Visit the Forum's home page

<http://www.courts.ca.gov/3065.htm>

Native America Calling: The ongoing push for MMIP action and awareness

Indianz.com – March 6, 2025

A play in Burbank, California, exposes the frustrations Native Americans often express about the ongoing tragedy of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP).

The problem with Indian laws made by others

Harvard Law Today – March 12, 2025

Daylong conference explores indigenous issues across the legal Landscape.

Washington Supreme Court takes up tribal sovereignty challenge

Courthouse News Service – March 13, 2025

The justices struggled at the hearing to find room to step into Congress' shoes and waive a tribe's sovereign immunity from a quiet title lawsuit.

Northern Arapaho Business Council creates two new positions to address MMIP crisis

Wyoming Public Radio – March 14, 2025

The Northern Arapaho Business Council (NABC) [recently created two new liaison positions](#) to help address Missing and Murdered Indigenous People issues, also known as MMIP.

[According to a 2024 report from the state's MMIP task force](#), Indigenous people go missing at disproportionately higher rates than white residents in Wyoming.

Another Casualty of the Federal Government's Purge of Publicly Available Data: Efforts to Find Missing Native Parents and Kids

The Imprint – March 18, 2025

Among the recommendations of the Not Invisible Act Commission were specific protections for foster youth, who end up lost at higher rates than their peers. The commission titled its report Not One More and detailed calls to action for multiple federal agencies — including the Departments of Justice and the Interior, Health and Human Services and the Administration for Children and Families. This year, legislators and policymakers were supposed to establish ways to better track the missing, and step up efforts to find them. But on Feb. 18, the 212-page, comprehensive set of findings and recommendations that 41 commissioners worked on for three years suddenly vanished from the U.S. Department of Justice website.

Alarming violence rates continue against Indigenous women

Public News Service – March 18, 2025

A new study showed intimate partner violence disproportionately impacts Indigenous women more than any other ethnic or racial group in the U.S. The murder rate for Native American women and girls is up to 10 times higher than the national average, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, yet they account for less than 1% of the population.

These programs are supported with funds from the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice that are administered through the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Court Improvement Program, and the California Department of Social Services.

[More than 100 Tulsa cases involving Natives sent to tribes in mayor's sovereignty push](#)

Public Radio Tulsa – March 21, 2025

In an event lasting more than two hours at Tulsa's municipal court Thursday, members of the Cherokee and Muscogee nations saw charges from assault to speeding shifted to the purview of their tribes.

[New Mexico Bill Would Provide 'Turquoise' Safety Alert When Native Americans Go Missing. Here's What That Means](#)

Time – March 21, 2025

A bill that would create a "turquoise" safety alert system for missing Native American people in New Mexico has been endorsed by the Legislature.

[Montana legislature aims to resolve law enforcement dispute](#)

Montana Free Press – March 20, 2025

At the center of the conflict is Public Law 280 and law enforcement funding in Lake County, which overlaps with much of the Flathead Indian Reservation

[Oregon bill would allow tribes to petition for removal of state control from tribal affairs](#)

InvestigateWest – March 24, 2025

Proposal would simplify patchwork laws governing jurisdiction on tribal lands.

[BIA to use forensic technology to help solve Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons cases](#)

Aspen Public Radio – March 24, 2025

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is making new efforts to help solve Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) cases. Now, the federal agency is using forensic technology to help reunite the remains of Native Americans with their families and tribal nations.

[Together we rise: Native attorneys take their federal oath](#)

NHO News – March 25, 2025

Community lies at the heart of the Indian Legal Program at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University. For its alumni, success isn't just about one person — it's about strengthening a movement. These dedicated advocates work to defend tribal sovereignty, amplify Native voices and ensure Indigenous representation in the legal system.

[Rebecca Nagle considers Supreme Court wins and what's at stake for tribes under Trump](#) (Book Review)

High Country News March 25, 2025

uring the forced removal of Muscogee (Creek) people from their ancestral lands in the Southeastern U.S., tribal members carried the embers and ashes of their town fires with them, determined to re-establish the flames in the new communities they planned to build in what's now known as Oklahoma. Those fires still burn today in places on the Muscogee Reservation.

[One little Indian girl: Two mothers, two worlds](#)

Cassville Democrat – March 26, 2025

Local resident recounts adoption from Navajo Tribe, reconnecting with roots.

[New Marion County court program aims to reunite Native families in child welfare system](#)

Salem Reporter – March 27, 2025

A new program in the Marion County Circuit Court is working to keep Native American children with their families or other tribal members by helping parents overcome struggles that landed them in the child welfare system.

[North Dakota's first Indian Child Welfare Act Court could be established in Northeast Judicial District](#)

Yahoo News – March 27, 2025

With the passage this week of a budget bill amendment that would allocate funding to specialized courts throughout the state, the Northeast Judicial District is one step closer to establishing an Indian Child Welfare Act Court in North Dakota.

[The Indian Child Welfare Act is before the Minnesota Supreme Court again. Here's why](#)

MPRNews – April 1, 2025

Two Martin County foster parents are getting another audience in front of the Minnesota Supreme Court Tuesday, after arguing last fall that a nearly 50-year-old law that prevented them from adopting two Native children is unconstitutional.

PUBLICATIONS

[Article IV and Indian Tribes](#), Grant Christensen, 110 Iowa L.Rev. 629 (2025)

Unlike the first three articles of the Constitution which create the three branches of the federal government and articulate their limited powers, Article IV establishes a set of rules to police the actions of states and knit them together into a single union. Notably absent from Article IV is any mention of the tribal sovereign.

[Barriers and Opportunities in Reporting Impaired-Driving Data from Indian Country](#), Judge J. Matthew Martin, ABA Judges' Journal, Vol. 64, No. 1 (2025)

On 2021, the most recent year for which the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has data, there were 188 alcohol-involved crash fatalities on federally recognized Indian reservations in the United States. Of these individuals, 111 were Natives. While this may seem like a drop in the ocean of the greater, national impaired-driving fatalities, each of these deaths represents a comparatively outsized cultural loss. Each death in a small tribal community means one fewer person to pass on language and Indigenous traditions, cultural norms, and values already stressed by other factors. While every impaired-driving fatality is an insoluble loss, in Indian Country, impaired driving is part of an existential threat to Native existence. Therefore, it is counterintuitive that tribal culture and tradition might be the source of pushback on proven countermeasures to such a threat. This article offers some explanations as to one such example of pushback.

[How Poor Is Poor Enough? How Jurisdictional Differences in Implementing the Right to Counsel Affect Indigent Native Americans](#), J. Santana Spangler-Day, 48 Am. Indian L. Rev. 217

The Sixth Amendment right to court-appointed counsel is one of the most significant procedural trial rights guaranteed by the Constitution. It can be, and often is, the difference between an accused's loss of freedom versus their maintenance of it. The right to court-appointed counsel has been considered a fundamental right, applied to the states, for nearly six decades, and it helps ensure that those "too poor to hire a lawyer" receive "a fair trial."¹ In all the years since *Gideon v. Wainwright*, an incredibly important question remains unanswered: how poor is poor enough?

[Oklahoma v. Castro-Huerta—Using Sentencing Inequities to Address the Oliphant in the Room](#)

Dillon M. Sullivan, 48 Am. Indian L. Rev. 325

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the Supreme Court provided a sliver of hope to Native American tribes that self-determination— free from state interference—was possible through the Court's decision in *McGirt v. Oklahoma*.

[A Tribal Court Blueprint for the Choctaw Freedmen: Effect of Cherokee Nation v. Nash](#)

LeeAnn Littlejohn, 48 Am. Indian L. Rev. 349

When I was a young girl, my father would often tell my siblings and me that our family was Choctaw. Considering that I am a phenotypically darkskinned African American, with tightly coiled hair and two African American parents, I assumed he was just making a joke since we live in Oklahoma. The towns surrounding my hometown, such as Seminole, Tecumseh, and Holdenville, had a thriving Native American population. Therefore, I often saw Native Americans with golden brown skin, red undertones, and long black silky hair.

[Between Empire and State: Haudenosaunee Sovereignty at the League of Nations](#), Kate Alba Reeve, Law and History Review, Volume 42, Issue 3, pp. 499 – 520.

In 1923, Haudenosaunee leader Deskaheh Levi General traveled to Geneva and launched a campaign for Indigenous statehood at the League of Nations. Drawing on a not-so-distant imperial past, the campaign was a novel attempt to use international law to assert Indigenous sovereignty.

[Courts of Indian Offenses, Courts of Indian Resistance](#), Alexandra Ray, Michigan Law Review (forthcoming 2026)

In the late nineteenth century, the Department of the Interior created the Courts of Indian Offenses with the express goal of eliminating elements of Native culture through the coercive power of criminal law.

David Getches: A Jurist at the Service of the Indigenous Cause, Armando Guevara Gil, 36 Colo. Env't L. J. 1 (2025)

For this brief exploration of the creative and prolific work of David Getches (1942-2011), the author selected three doctrinal contributions that he elaborated in different but complementary areas of Indian law in the United States.

Disenrollment as Citizenship Revocation: Promoting Tribal Sovereignty by Embracing International Norms Author: John K. Crawford, the Yale Law Journal, February 2025

This Note argues that Indian tribes can best address disenrollment by viewing the problem through the lens of international norms regarding citizenship revocation. Tribal officials and members, advocates and journalists, and scholars and practitioners of federal Indian law typically understand disenrollment, which is when a tribe severs its governmental relationship with certain members, as a practice unique to Indian Country. However, while tribes' unique legal status facilitates disenrollment, this practice can nevertheless be understood as a form of citizenship revocation, which is when a state deprives certain persons of their previously held citizenship. By understanding disenrollment as citizenship revocation, tribes can draw from a wide body of existing literature about states' citizenship-revocation regimes when considering limitations on their power to disenroll.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is pleased to share that we are now accepting applications to administer the Guaranteed Income (GI) Pilot Program for Older Adults. Tribes, Tribal organizations and consortia are encouraged to apply. Application materials can be found on our [website](#) and are due no later than April 18, 2025, 2025. For questions, please email GIPilot.RFA@dss.ca.gov.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Human Trafficking Youth Prevention Curriculum Guide

Child and Family Policy Institute of California

Preventing and Addressing Child Trafficking (PACT)

The Human Trafficking Youth Prevention Curriculum profiles in the resource have been collected and grouped by focus: **Primary Prevention**, **Secondary & Tertiary Prevention** approaches.

The Indian Child Welfare Act: A Family's Guide Answers to Your Questions About ICWA

National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA)

A resource for families providing information on the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

UPCOMING CONFERENCES, WEBINARS, AND TRAININGS

April 1-3, 2025 (Rockville, Maryland)

24th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN)

Webinar Series: Enhance Virtual Access to Civil Protection Orders

National Center for State Courts

NCSC seeks courts to participate in the **Civil Protection Order Technical Assistance Project**, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). This initiative brings together a Learning Collaborative—featuring expert technologists, access to justice experts, Mentor Courts (experienced courts), and Learner Courts (pilot courts)—to strengthen and expand safe, user-friendly virtual court portal technology for domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking cases.

Ask us any questions you have about the process. Please contact us at svandenberg@ncsc.org

Webinar Schedule:

- **April 7: Civil Protection Order Portals 101** An introduction to virtual portals for civil protection orders—how they work, why they matter, and what they can offer to courts and the communities they serve.

- [April 9: Implementation Basics for Civil Protection Order Portals](#) Learn the essential steps for successfully implementing and optimizing a virtual court portal, with a focus on best practices and common challenges.
- [April 15: Q&A Webinar on the Learner Court Application Process](#) Considering applying to be a Learner Court? This session provides an overview of the application process, project expectations, and an opportunity to ask questions before submitting your application.

Starting April 9, 2025

[Advanced ICWA Training Program](#) UCDavis Continuing Professional Education: Human Services

In partnership with the California Tribal Families Coalition and the California Department of Social Services, The Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice at UC Davis Human Services is offering an opportunity for anyone working with child welfare system-involved children and families to participate in our Advanced ICWA Training Program. ***The 6-Part full day course will be offered on April 9th, April 16th, April 29th, May 7th, May 22nd, May 28th from 9:00am - 4:30am.*** An application is required to be considered and will be open through **March 19th, 2025.**

April 13-16, 2025 (Providence, Rhode Island)

[2025 Annual Conference National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts: Resilience Through History: Reflecting on 150 Years of Progress and Setbacks in Racial and Ethnic Equity](#)

April 15-17, 2025 (Las Vegas, Nevada)

[National Missing and Unidentified Persons Conference](#)

April 18, 2025, 1:15 p.m.-4:00 p.m. (Virtual)

[2025 Title IV-E Summit: "Healing Together: The Road to Building Collaboration, Sustainability and Well-Being in Child Welfare."](#)

April 22-24, 2025 (Anaheim, CA)

[International Conference on Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, and Forging New Pathways](#)

May 22, 2025 (Virtual)

[Child Sex Trafficking: From Suspicion to Disclosure](#)

May 28-29, 2025 (Virtual)

[Creating a Community Action Plan for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse](#)

June 2-5, 2025 (San Diego, CA)

[The National Judicial College- "Restorative Justice"](#)

June 18-20, 2025 (San Diego, CA)

[Transformation of Youth Justice Symposium](#)

June 23-26, 2025 (UC Riverside Campus-Riverside, CA)

[20th Annual Youth Court Summit](#)

July 20-23, 2025 (Chicago, Illinois)

[NCJFCJ 88th Annual Conference](#)

COVID-19 SPECIFIC GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

[FEMA COVID-19 FUNERAL ASSISTANCE](#)

FEMA will continue to provide funeral assistance until Sept. 30, 2025, to those who have lost loved ones due to this pandemic.

NEW GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

*Please check the direct links to the grants regularly, as the status, closing dates, and availability may change in time. At this time, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) has removed previously posted grants and webinars. For a complete list of funding opportunities available at this time, here are links to consult: [Grants.gov](#), [Office of Justice Programs](#), [Bureau of Justice Affairs](#), and [U.S. Department of Justice](#).

2025 AmeriCorps State and National Native Nation Planning Grants

AmeriCorps

AC-12-13-24

Deadline: April 9, 2025

AmeriCorps planning grants provide support to eligible organizations that develop an AmeriCorps program that will engage AmeriCorps members in solving community problems.

Guaranteed Income Pilot Program for Older Californians

California Department of Social Services

Deadline: April 18, 2025

Per the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget agreed to by California's Governor and the Legislature, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) will oversee a guaranteed income (GI) pilot program serving adults 60 years of age or older residing in California and either eligible for or receiving a means-tested benefit. This pilot program is currently in the early planning stage.

Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program

Department of Health and Human Services

Centers for Disease Control - NCIPC

CDC-RFA-CE-25-0114

Deadline: May 5, 2025

The purpose of the DFC Support Program is to establish and strengthen collaboration to support the efforts of community coalitions working to prevent youth substance use.

Safe Streets and Roads for All Funding Opportunity

Department of Transportation

69A345 Office of the Under Secretary for Policy

DOT-SS4A-FY25-01

Deadline: June 26, 2025

Funds for the fiscal year (FY) 2025 SS4A grant program are to be awarded on a competitive basis to support planning and demonstration activities, as well as projects and strategies to prevent death and serious injury on roads and streets involving all roadway users.

Veterans Cemetery Grants

Department of Veterans Affairs

VA National Cemetery Administration

VA-NCA-VCGP-2025

Deadline: July 1, 2025

The program assists states, territories, and tribal governments in providing gravesites for Veterans in those areas where NCA cannot fully satisfy their burial needs.

PREVIOUSLY REPORTED GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Tribal Homekey+ 2024 Notice of Funding Availability

California Department of Housing and Community Development

Deadline: Application portal opens late January 2025

Tribal Homekey+ is the Permanent Supportive Housing component of the BHIBA. This funding represents the Department's ongoing investment in Tribal housing opportunities and continues a statewide effort to sustain and rapidly expand permanent supportive housing for households and individuals who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness and are living with a behavioral health challenge. Rather than utilizing a set-aside within the standard Homekey+ Program, this NOFA operates independently and is tailored to meet the specific affordable housing needs of California Tribes. Website: <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-and-funding/homekey/tribal-program> Homekey Tribal Program Email: HK Tribal@hcd.ca.gov.

Indian Highway Safety Law Enforcement Grant

Department of the Interior

Bureau of Indian Affairs

BIA-IHSP-2025-003

Deadline: May 1, 2025

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Office of Justice Services (OJS), Indian Highway Safety Program (IHSP) solicit proposals for implementing traffic safety programs and projects that are designated to reduce the number

of traffic crashes, deaths, injuries, and property damage within these populations. [Grant applications should be sent to this e-mail address ojs_indian_highway_safety@bia.gov](mailto:ojs_indian_highway_safety@bia.gov)

Indian Highway Safety Occupant Protection Grant

Department of the Interior

Bureau of Indian Affairs

BIA-IHSP-2025-002

Deadline: May 1, 2025

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Office of Justice Services (OJS), Indian Highway Safety Program (IHSP) solicit proposals for implementing traffic safety programs and projects that are designated to reduce the number of traffic crashes, deaths, injuries, and property damage within these populations. [Grant application should be sent to this e-mail address ojs_indian_highway_safety@bia.gov](mailto:ojs_indian_highway_safety@bia.gov).

National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH)

Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families-IOAS-OTIP

HHS-2025-ACF-IOAS-OTIP-ZV-0002

Deadline: May 2, 2025

The National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) is a national toll-free hotline that operates 24 hours a day, every day of the year via telephone, text, and chat, to assist adults and minors who have experienced a severe form of human trafficking as defined by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000. The objectives of the NHTH include: Operate the NHTH's telephone, text, chat, and website via a coordinated national communications system available 24 hours a day. Provide timely information and service referrals to victims of human trafficking using a trauma-informed, person-centered, culturally responsive, and linguistically appropriate approach. Notify law enforcement agencies of potential cases of human trafficking, where appropriate; and Establish and maintain a comprehensive online directory of community-based service providers in communities across the United States. Develop trusted relationships to identify, update, and maintain comprehensive internal and online referral directories. Directories must include vetted organizations equipped to meet the service needs of survivors and/or respond to tips of potential human trafficking in accordance with relevant referral protocols.

OVC FY25 Tribal Victim Services Set-Aside Formula Program

U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Justice Programs

Office for Victims of Crime

O-OVC-2025-172320

Deadline to submit SF-424 in Grants.gov: May 9, 2025

Deadline to submit application in JustGrants: June 6, 2025

The purpose of this funding is to support the provision of services to crime victims in American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities through a discretionary administrative formula program funded under a set-aside designated by law from the Crime Victims Fund (CVF). The funding may be used to improve and support a Tribe's victim services and is available for a broad range of expenses that are reasonable and necessary to serve crime victims.

NIDA Research Center of Excellence Grant Program

Department of Health and Human Services

National Institutes of Health

PAR-23-076

Open Date (Earliest Submission Date): August 25, 2023

Deadline: November 18, 2025

This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) is to provide support for research Centers that (1) conduct substance use and addiction research in any area of NIDA's mission, including the intersection of substance use/addiction and HIV, (2) foster outstanding innovative science, (3) are multidisciplinary, thematically integrated, and synergistic, and (4) serve as national resource(s) to provide educational and outreach activities to relevant research communities, educational organizations, the general public, and policy makers.

HEAL Initiative: Research to Increase Implementation of Substance Use Preventive Services

Department of Health and Human Services

National Institutes of Health

RFA-DA-24-066

Earliest Submission Date: December 17, 2023

Expiration Date: January 17, 2026

The goal of this initiative is to support research that can improve public health and respond to the opioid crisis by increasing knowledge pertaining to the delivery and sustainability of prevention services. This notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) solicits applications to address understudied areas of opportunity that, if researched, could create the foundation needed to inform a prevention infrastructure for ongoing delivery and sustainment of interventions to prevent opioid and other substance misuse and use disorders.

[NAGPRA Repatriation Grants](#)

Department of the Interior

National Park Service

P25AS00474

Deadline: May 8, 2026

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to make grants to museums, Indian Tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations for the purposes of assisting in consultation, documentation, and repatriation of Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony (25 U.S.C. 3008). NAGPRA Repatriation grants assist museums, Indian Tribes, and NHOs to defray costs associated with the packaging, transportation, contamination removal, reburial, and/or storage of NAGPRA human remains or cultural items. Project activities may include, but are not limited to: travel, transportation, testing or decontamination, building containers for transport, ceremonial materials, or Staff time.