

TRIBAL COURT—STATE COURT FORUM

An Advisory Committee of the Judicial Council of California

Forum E-Update

April 2025

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An Advisory Committee of the
Judicial Council of California

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FORUM NEWS

A rules and forms proposal co-authored by the Tribal Court—State Court Forum and the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee “[Juvenile Law: Indian Child Welfare Act \(ICWA\) Inquiry and Family Finding](#)” is among thirty rules and forms proposals circulating for public comment during the Judicial Council’s spring comment period. All the proposals are available here:

<https://courts.ca.gov/policy-administration/invitations-comment>. Comment deadline is May 23, 2025.

IN THE NEWS

[DOJ will 'surge' resources to Indian Country to investigate unresolved violent crimes](#)

KRTV Great Falls – April 2, 2025

The U.S. Department of Justice announced this week that it will “surge” FBI assets across the country to address unresolved violent crimes in Indian Country, including crimes relating to missing and murdered indigenous persons (MMIP). The FBI will send 60 personnel, rotating in 90-day temporary duty assignments over a six-month period.

[MMIP Task Force gives an update](#)

KRTV Great Falls – April 3, 2025

The Montana Missing Indigenous Persons Task Force has been in operation since the 2019 legislative session. The task force was designed address and reduce the numbers of missing indigenous persons.

['Operation Not Forgotten' will add resources in missing, murdered Indigenous people crisis](#)

AZCentral – April 3, 2025

Operation Not Forgotten, which assigns FBI personnel to key offices serving Native communities, was started in 2023 as part of the government’s Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives, also known as [Operation Lady Justice](#). The task force was established by an [executive order](#) in 2019 during President Donald Trump’s first term.

JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA

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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>

Indigenous echoes: Alaska's stats on MMIP likely higher, according to study

Alaksa's News Source – April 4, 2025

According to the Urban Indian Health Institute, the first recorded case of a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Woman or Girl was in 1943. Two-thirds of all the cases gathered in a new study were from 2010-2018, which they say suggests the number of cases is much higher than the institute was able to find and identify.

Native communities in New Mexico hope new Turquoise Alert System facilitate the safe return of more missing members

CNN – April 10, 2025

New Mexico this week became the latest state to pass a law aimed at addressing an ongoing national crisis surrounding missing and murdered Indigenous people – particularly in unsolved cases involving women and girls. Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Monday [signed a bill](#) creating the new Turquoise Alert System.

Montana Legislature hits pause on Public Law 280

Hagadone News Network – April 11, 2025

The future of Public Law 280, the law enforcement agreement between the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and state and county governments, seems to be on pause – at least at the legislative level.

California to Commemorate Missing & Murdered Indigenous People Day

Native News Online – April 11, 2025

May 5 marks National Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) Day. California continues to rank among the states with the highest number of unresolved MMIP cases. To honor and raise awareness during this important time, the California Native American Legislative Caucus—led by Chair Assemblymember James C. Ramos (D-San Bernardino)—will host a series of events at the State Capitol throughout the week.

Northeast Judicial District's presiding judge hopes ICWA court could address foster care racial disparities

Yahoo News – April 12, 2025

The Northeast Judicial District's presiding judge believes establishing an Indian Child Welfare Act court within his district could give more structure to existing procedures, and allow for a higher level of attention to the specific needs of Indigenous children and their families.

Investing In Sovereignty: The Oweesta Approach

Forbes – April 14, 2025

Native Americans own over 400,000 businesses across the United States, accounting for 1.2% of all U.S. firms. Yet many entrepreneurs face significant barriers in accessing capital, often due to the unique legal and geographic structures within tribal communities and broader challenges within the traditional lending system.

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.

Lac du Flambeau woman is latest in ‘public health crisis’ of missing Indigenous women in Wisconsin

Wisconsin Public Radio – April 15, 2025

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force is in final stages of preparing its report to help women like Melissa Beson. Beson was last seen on March 17, and her family reported her missing six days later. Since then, the Lac du Flambeau Tribal Police Department and other agencies have conducted ground, air and water searches over 824 acres to find her. Lac du Flambeau Police Chief TJ Bill said it has proven challenging.

‘Nothing but good medicine’: Minnesota groups plan to build an Indigenous birth center

The Imprint – April 16, 2025

A group of nonprofit child welfare and maternal health organizations expect to submit their proposed plan to Minnesota lawmakers by the end of this calendar year. While the ultimate funding mix has yet to be finalized, it’s likely to include state funds and Medicaid reimbursement.

Bill would allow Oregon tribes to request jurisdiction over civil and criminal proceedings

Oregon Public Media – April 22, 2025

Oregon tribes have been able to petition the governor to repeal the law on their land, but there’s [no official procedure](#) or timeline for that process to take place. [Senate Bill 1011](#) would change that by laying out clear guidelines for federally recognized tribes to regain control over civil and criminal matters that take place on tribal land.

Child Welfare League of America CEO on the Future of Indian Child Welfare

The Imprint – April 22, 2025

Between 1958 and 1967, the League partnered with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to enact the Indian Adoption Project, a federal initiative across 16 western states promoting the systematic separation of Indigenous families. Some children didn’t have families. Others were removed by social workers who went into tribal homes and arbitrarily deem families unfit — if they talked to the adults at all. Then tribal children were sent to live with white families, in an attempt to assimilate them through adoption.

New book shows generational impact of Native American boarding schools through a Wisconsin family

Wisconsin Public Radio – April 23, 2025

‘Medicine River’ author writes how her mother’s experience in 1930s Northwoods boarding school shaped their relationship.

Montana Indian Child Welfare Act Heads to Governor’s Desk

Charkoosta – April 24, 2025

Senator Jonathan Windy Boy, D-Box Elder, is no stranger to Indian Country policy. As of this year, Windy Boy has served in the Montana Legislature for 23 years and is currently in his 13th session. On April 22, 2025, one of his long-standing efforts took a major step forward when Senate Bill 147, also known as the Montana Indian Child Welfare Act (MICWA), passed both legislative chambers and now awaits the governor’s signature.

Colorado Among Growing Number of States Aiming to Strengthen Local ICWA Laws That Protect Tribal Children and Families

The Imprint – April 24, 2025

If proposed legislation passes, the state would amend and further strengthen its local version of the federal ICWA, which requires heightened protections for Indigenous children and families in child welfare cases.

MMIP San Diego Summit brings focus to missing and murdered indigenous people crisis

Times of San Diego – April 28, 2025

MMIP San Diego will host its first annual summit on May 3 at Viejas Casino & Resort in Alpine to promote awareness, empowerment, and action surrounding the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People.

Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation to host awareness walk to shed light on Missing and Murdered Indigenous people

Del Norte TriPLICATE – April 29, 2025

The Tolowa Dee-ni Nation invites the community to support Missing and Murdered Indigenous People during the 3rd annual MMIP Awareness Walk scheduled for 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday, May 5, at the Del Norte County Fairgrounds in Crescent City. Each year, thousands of Indigenous individuals go missing or fall victim to murder.

[Insurers Say 9th Circ. Extended Tribal Jurisdiction Too Far](#)

Law 360 – April 29, 2025

A group of insurers again urged the U.S. Supreme Court to review a Ninth Circuit decision ordering them to litigate COVID-19 coverage claims in Suquamish Tribal Court.

PUBLICATIONS

[Flowing justice: Quantifying water rights in the wake of *Arizona v. Navajo Nation* — Navigating the legal oasis for Native American water sovereignty](#), Sydney Shearhouse, Texas A & M Journal of Property Law, Vol. 11 No. 2 (2025)

Native American tribes are uniquely impacted as their water rights are not clearly defined in the treaties that established the various reservations. The Supreme Court decided in *Winters v. United States* (1908) that there is a fiduciary duty owed to Native American tribes by the federal government to protect and provide for necessary reservation resources and prevent outside actors from infringing upon the water rights of tribal reservations. This past year, in *Arizona v. Navajo Nation*, the Supreme Court decided it was not a breach of fiduciary duty by the United States to refuse to assess and quantify the water rights belonging to a tribal nation.

[Indigeneity, data genocide, and public health](#), Aila Hoss, 110 Iowa Rev. 1129 (2025)

Public health datasets will often tell us nothing about Indigenous people. This type of data suppression has been described as data genocide and data terrorism, because it demonstrates the effort to erase Indigenous people.

[Indigenous communities suffer multi-generational trauma \("susto"\) from the trafficking and slavery of Native women and children](#), Bill Piatt et al., St. Mary's Law Journals, The Scholar, Vol. 27 (2025)

Trafficking and slavery have probably existed as long as humanity has existed. Despite efforts on many fronts, it will likely not be eradicated in our lifetimes. Bondage and abuse impose unthinkable suffering upon the immediate victims caught in the clutches of trafficking. Yet Native people and communities suffer unique, multi-generational, and almost permanent trauma, often referred to as *susto*.

[The Ninth Circuit's RFRA standard of "substantial burden" as applied to Native American sacred sites](#), Erik Renner, UC Law Constitutional Law Quarterly, Vol. 52 No.1

This paper focuses on the Ninth Circuit's understanding of the "substantial burden" standard under RFRA as it is applied to Native American sacred site cases.

[Structural federal Indian law after *Brackeen*](#), Gregory Ablavsky, Arizona Law Review, Vol. 67:2

"You know, when it comes to Indian law, most of the time we're just making it up," Justice Scalia once observed. This admission echoed long-standing critiques of the Supreme Court's jurisprudence in the field, but these anxieties did not trouble the Court—until recently.

[Old Habits Die Hard: How the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act Perpetuates Settler Colonialism and Denies Indigenous Sovereignty](#), Brandon Dodds, Emory Law Journal Online – 53 (4-7-2025)

Around the time it was passed, the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 was considered by many to be a great victory for the Wabanaki Nations in Maine. But in the decades since, the Act has substantially hindered the Wabanaki Nations' self-determination efforts. Frequent litigation between the Nations and the state of Maine, narrow interpretation by courts, and the state of Maine's opposition to remedying the Act's most harmful provisions have constrained the sovereignty of the Wabanaki Nations.

["Political Rather Than Racial in Nature": Strengthening *Morton v. Mancari* Using the Indian Commerce Clause](#), Allison Kim, Cornell Journal of Law and Public Policy, v. 34:101

Federal Indian Law is under threat. In the decades since the 1974 Supreme Court case *Morton v. Mancari*, anti-Indian groups and extreme ideological groups have challenged important Indian tribes' rights, seeking to dismantle their political classification rather than the racial classification granted to them. It is through the political classification from *Mancari* that the unique tribal-federal trust relationship is harmonized with the inherent tribal sovereignty.

Recognition Policies, Self-Determination, and Legal Redress for Indigenous Peoples in the United States, Australia, and Canada: A Comparative Study, Christian Zavardino, *Cardozo Int'l & Compar L. Rev.* Vol. 8.1, 209.

The United States' federal system of devolved sovereignty and the concurrent operation of federal recognition of American Indian tribes involves the federal government's acknowledgment of tribes' continuing sovereignty and its granting of eligibility for certain federal benefits. This system, in tandem with state-level recognition practices, provides tribes with a degree of flexibility that allows them to pursue a government-to-government relationship with states in the face of federal unwillingness or inability to grant recognition.

Maternal Healthcare and Pregnancy Prevalence and Outcomes in Prisons, 2023

NCJ Number 309981, Author(s) Laura M. Maruschak, BJS Statistician, April 2025

This statistical brief presents findings on maternal healthcare and pregnancy prevalence and outcomes for persons in the custody of state or federal correctional authorities in the United States. It reports statistics on pregnancy testing and positive tests among female admissions; pregnancy prevalence and outcomes by type; pregnancy-related training for staff, emergency transportation protocols, and medical services; special accommodations and support services for pregnant and postpartum women; and provision of and participation in nursery or residential programs in which mothers reside with their children.

Annual Survey of Jails, 2023

United States. Bureau of Justice Statistics. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2025-04-07.

The data presented in this study were collected in the Annual Survey of Jails, 2023. These data are used to track growth in the number of jails and the capacities nationally, changes in the demographics of the jail population and supervision status of persons held, the prevalence of crowding issues, and a count of non-U.S. citizens within the jail population. The data are intended for a variety of users, including Federal and State agencies, local officials in conjunction with jail administrators, researchers, planners, and the public.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Beyond the Bench 2025: Coming Together Again to Support Children, Families & Communities is soliciting content for its upcoming conference scheduled in Los Angeles on November 18-19, 2025, with preconference activities on November 17, 2025. Beyond the Bench 2025 is a multidisciplinary statewide conference focused on children, youth, and families in the California court system.

Please complete the [Survey](#) to submit a workshop for consideration by May 9, 2025. Please send questions to beyondthebench@jud.ca.gov or jcart@jud.ca.gov.

Save the Date for NAICJA's 56th Annual National Tribal Judicial and Court Personnel Conference!

The [National American Indian Court Judges Association](#) (NAICJA) is pleased to announce that the 56th Annual National Tribal Judicial and Court Personnel Conference will be held at the [Gila River Resorts & Casinos – Wild Horse Pass](#) in Phoenix, AZ on October 13-16, 2025.

NAICJA's Annual Conference offers innovative and timely tribal justice information through high quality presentations by national experts. The theme of this year's conference is, "Tribal Courts: A Bulwark for Tribal Sovereignty."

Supporting Our Circle: The National Tribal Clearinghouse on Sexual Assault (NTCSA) is currently accepting applicants to the Speakers Bureau

National Tribal Clearinghouse on Sexual Assault

The Speakers Bureau is a crucial resource for communities seeking training on addressing and improving the response to sexual assault in Tribal settings. The Speakers Bureau is a resource for the program staff who plan meetings, trainings, conferences, and other types of events to connect with speakers or trainers in the field. NTCSA's Speakers Bureau will connect communities with individuals with experience working with and for Tribes.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Leaving a Legacy: Vision and Voices of 100+ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Tribal Youth Programs and Juvenile Healing to Wellness Courts**Tribal Youth Resource Center**

In this resource guide, you will find the program information for the FY 2015–FY 2021 Tribal Youth and Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court grantees. While each grantee/program’s information only spans approximately two pages, we hope that these profiles provide a clear picture of the commitment that extends far beyond—a snapshot of the time, work, and passion that each program has invested to support the lives and growth of youth in their community. Our vision is that this resource guide serves dual purposes: to honor the work of these communities/Nations through documenting their vision, intentions, and impacts, and to provide a living resource that inspires future programs, provides ideas for developing a Tribal Youth Program or a Youth Healing to Wellness Court, and builds connection across regions.

Housing and Homeless Division Tribal Grantee Webpage**California Department of Social Services**

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Housing and Homelessness Division (HHD) is committed to fostering meaningful and respectful partnerships with all federally recognized Tribes, tribal organizations (including Tribal 638 Providers and Urban Indian Organizations), tribal consortia, and tribally led nonprofit organizations in California (hereafter “tribal grantees”). Our goal is to engage collaboratively with tribal communities to enhance housing stability, reduce homelessness, and promote equitable access to resources.

Consult with the CSEC Action Team Advisory Board!

The CSEC Action Team Advisory Board is here to help shape policies, strategies, and services that support youth vulnerable to or impacted by the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). By consulting with the Board, you gain access to invaluable expertise that can drive meaningful change in your community.

Below are a few of the ways the Board can help you:

- Develop policies and practices to better identify and support youth
- Improve housing and placement services
- Build impactful training curricula
- Navigate complex casework and provide tailored support, and more!

Interested in collaborating? Don’t wait—reach out today! [Click here](#) to **request a consultation**, or [visit our website](#) to learn more about how the Advisory Board can support your work.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES, WEBINARS, AND TRAININGS

May 15, 2025, 1:00 – 2:30 pm (Virtual)

CDSS Policy Guidance Communication Webinar: ACL 23-46 Inquiry/Reason to Know/Notice (AB 3176); ACL 24-39 Transfer of tribal youth from counties; ACL 25-03 Indian Child Welfare Act Voluntary Proceedings And Involuntary Proceedings Requirements; ACL 25-08 Implementation Guidelines For Forming A Child And Family Team And Providing Child And Family Team Meetings For Children Or Youth In Family Maintenance Status; and ACL 25-20 Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) Eligibility And Assembly Bill (Ab) 2948

May 22, 2025, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm (Virtual)

Responding to Domestic Violence and Strangulation Incidents (National Indian Country Training Initiative Online Training Announcement)

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

May 29, 2025, 11:00am-12:30pm (Virtual)

Conducting the Trauma Informed Interview

June 2-5, 2025 (San Diego, CA)
[The National Judicial College- “Restorative Justice”](#)

June 4, 2025 (Virtual)
[Recognizing and Responding to Elder Abuse in Tribal Communities](#)

June 4, 2025 (Virtual)
 CSEC Action Team Meeting: [Understanding the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of LGBTQIA2S+ Youth: How Providers Can Collaborate to Build Inclusive Services & Spaces](#)

June 18-20, 2025 (Daytona, FL)
[Mobile Device Investigations](#)

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](#)

June 23-27, 2025 (Anaheim, California)
 August 18-22, 2025 (Austin, Texas)
[Courting Judicial Excellence: A Juvenile Justice Training Institute](#)

July 20-23, 2025 (Chicago, Illinois)
[NCJFCJ 88th Annual Conference](#)

October 30, 2025 (Virtual)
[Responding to Sextortion Related Offenses Against Children](#)

November 3-6, 2025 (Kohler, WI)
[Mindfulness for Judges](#)

April 21-23, 2026 (Las Vegas, NV)
[National Missing and Unidentified Persons 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](#).**

[Publishing Historical Records in Collaborative Digital Editions](#)

National Archives and Records Administration
 EDITIONS-202505

Deadline: May 7, 2025

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission seeks proposals to publish online editions of historical records. All types of historical records are eligible, including documents, photographs, born-digital records, and analog audio. Projects may focus on broad historical movements in U.S. history, such as law (including the social and political history of the law), politics, social reform, business, military, the arts, and other aspects of the national experience.

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 and open until all funds are awarded**

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

***March 31, 2025 This funding opportunity was updated to align with agency priorities. Carefully reread the full funding opportunity and make any needed adjustments to your application prior to submission.**

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.