

TRIBAL COURT—STATE COURT FORUM

An Advisory Committee of the Judicial Council of California

Forum E-Update

November 2025

TRIBAL COURT—STATE
COURT FORUM

An Advisory Committee of the
Judicial Council of California

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FORUM NEWS

[Job Posting: Tribal/State Programs Attorney.](#) The Judicial Council is accepting applications for an experienced attorney to provide legal support to the judicial branch, including the Tribal Court-State Court Forum, other advisory committees, judges, and justice partners on federal and state Indian law including matters related to ICWA and the Violence Against Women Education Project. **Open until filled.**

[California Courts on Supporting Native American Communities in Our Court System Say Tribal and State Courts Work Together to Improve Outcomes for Native Americans Involved in the Justice System](#)

By Karen Datangel, November 14, 2025

What began with a simple request by one tribal court judge for a meeting with the state's Chief Justice has taken us to where we are today in California, the coming together of tribal court and state court leaders as equal partners to address areas of mutual concern.

IN THE NEWS

[California Indian Nations College Sees Record Enrollment and Expands Its Cultural & Academic Impact](#)

By California Indian Nations College, November 3, 2025

Palm Desert, California — California Indian Nations College (CINC), the only accredited tribal college in California in decades, is experiencing remarkable growth while making a profound impact on Indigenous education. Since its founding, CINC has served 506 students, providing culturally responsive higher education that empowers Native communities and fosters leadership, academic success, and cultural preservation.

[Native American Heritage Month: Rethinking Thanksgiving and Addressing Indigenous People's Mental Health Struggles](#)

By Raven Garza, November 4, 2025

It's November, which means many Americans will be celebrating Thanksgiving with their loved ones and giving thanks over a warm meal. For Indigenous people, however, this holiday is a reminder of the ongoing oppression, misrepresentation, and discrimination towards their community.

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF
CALIFORNIA**
**CENTER FOR FAMILIES,
CHILDREN & THE COURTS**
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, California 94102

Tribes File Federal Suit Over State Prosecution of Hunting, Fishing on Tribal Land

By Native News Online Staff, November 19, 2025

The Chickasaw Nation, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and Cherokee Nation have filed a federal lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma, alleging that Gov. Kevin Stitt and state officials are unlawfully prosecuting tribal citizens for hunting and fishing on tribal land.

When You Turn 18: A Legal Survival Guide Joins Judges in the Classroom Lesson Library, California Lawyers Foundation joins Power of Democracy Civic Learning Initiative to support teens transitioning to adulthood

By Penne Soltysik, November 7, 2025

When You Turn 18: A Legal Survival Guide, produced as a publication of the California Lawyers Foundation, served as the template for a new program for students, thanks to the help of an intern just two-years himself into adulthood.

'Story is Medicine': Fighting for the rights of Native peoples

By Mary Annette Pember, November 11, 2025

Lawyer/playwright/advocate Mary Kathryn Nagle is a champion for missing and murdered peoples and other victims of violence. A citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, lawyering is in her blood. Nagle is a descendent of John and Major Ridge, signers of the controversial Treaty of Echota in which Cherokee surrendered lands east of the Mississippi and embarked on the infamous Trail of Tears.

FBI surge leads to charges in 2020 killing in Native community

Associated Press, By Susan Montoya Bryan, November 25, 2025

Federal statistics show that Native Americans experience some of the highest per capita rates of violent victimization of any racial or ethnic group in the United States.

Attorney General Bonta Joins Bipartisan Letter Supporting the Tribal Warrant Fairness Act

Press Release, Attorney General, Rob Bonta, November 26, 2025

OAKLAND — California Attorney General Rob Bonta today joined a bipartisan coalition of 39 attorneys general in a letter to Congress supporting the Tribal Warrant Fairness Act (TWFA), which would level the public safety playing field by empowering tribes to work with the U.S. Marshals Service to combat the Missing and Murdered Indigenous People's (MMIP) crisis. Indigenous communities are disproportionately at risk of violence, murder, and going missing. To combat this unacceptable crisis, it is critical to quickly deploy law enforcement resources where they are most needed. In the letter, the attorneys general support TWFA's aim to further tackle this crisis by providing the assistance of the U.S. Marshals Service to tribal partners to protect children and increase public safety and offer suggestions on how to further strengthen TWFA.

FORUM NEWS & UPDATES

Visit the Forum's home page

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

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.

New Mexico Could Be First State to Address Forced Sterilization of Native American Women

By Elyse Wild, November 14, 2025

Jean Whitehorse's (Diné) Native name means "Many Children," but she only has one child. This spring, she spoke at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York to explain why. In the 1970s, during an emergency visit to a Gallup, New Mexico, Indian Health Service facility, Whitehorse was coerced into signing consent papers for a procedure she later learned rendered her unable to have any more children.

PUBLICATIONS**Child-Taking Justice and the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative**, University of Georgia School of Law Legal Studies Research Paper No. 2025-5, 119 American Journal of International Law 629-50 (2025), Diane Marie Amann, November 14, 2025

The focus of this article is the 2022–2024 Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative undertaken the U.S. Executive Branch. The initiative shed glaring light on the past history and present effects of a centuries-old practice by which the United States took Indigenous children from their families and forced them to attend residential schools where they were compelled to submit to Westernized and Christianized notions of "civilization."

Corporeal Property and the Limits of NAGPRA, Fordham Law Review, Volume 94, Issue 2, Article 6, M. Alexander Pearl, University of Oklahoma

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), enacted in 1990, was a landmark statute designed to address one particular consequence of colonialism. At base, NAGPRA attempts to remedy the wrongful appropriation and possession of Native American human remains and cultural items by certain entities—namely, museums and government institutions—that receive federal funding. The need for NAGPRA arose from the consequences of the mythology of Native peoples created by mainstream American cultural, political, and legal thought.

Jails Report Series: 2024 Preliminary Data Release, Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), NCJ Number 310861, Author(s) Zhen Zeng, PhD, BJS Statistician, Date Published December 2025, Publication Series Preliminary Data Release, Jail Inmates, Jails Preliminary Data Release

This web-only report provides preliminary statistics on key items from BJS's [Annual Survey of Jails](#) and [Census of Jails](#). The jail statistics presented include the number of persons held in local jails by inmate demographics and conviction status, the number of admissions to jail, and jail incarceration rates, from 2014 to 2024. Final statistics will be published in *Jail Inmates in 2024 – Statistical Tables* (forthcoming).

Emergence of Contemporary Indigenous Restorative Justice in Canada, The Honourable Leonard S Tony Mandamin, Constitution Forum Constitutionnel, Volume 34, Number 2, 2025

From time to time, I have been asked to write on Indigenous rights in Canada, which poses a challenge because there are many Indigenous Nations in Canada each with their own differing communities, cultures, and histories. This time I was asked to write about Indigenous restorative justice in Canada. I have been personally involved in and followed Indigenous justice issues for many years, both as a lawyer and as a jurist. This piece is my attempt to articulate the emergence of Indigenous restorative justice across Canada from its earliest days beginning in the 1960's to the present date. Indigenous law continues to evolve and grow.

ANNOUNCEMENTS**2025 Implementation and Tribal Model Court Sites Project Call for Applications****National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)**

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) is pleased to invite applicants from state and tribal dependency courts to participate in the Implementation Sites Project. The NCJFCJ, with funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), has partnered with courts across the country since 1992 to improve the way courts handle child abuse and neglect proceedings, and to improve the court experience for children and families.

The NCJFCJ is selecting new state and tribal court sites to participate in this two-year project. The selected sites will receive training, technical assistance, and support from the NCJFCJ and national experts to implement the principles and recommendations set forth in the Enhanced Resource Guidelines, the NCJFCJ's blueprint for best practices in abuse and neglect proceedings. New implementation sites will be "laboratories for change" as

they work to implement best practices in child welfare proceedings while sharing with, and learning from, nearly 30 other sites across the country. There is no direct funding available for participating courts.

[Governor Newsom proclaims Native American Heritage Month](#)

November 7, 2025

SACRAMENTO – Governor Gavin Newsom today issued a proclamation declaring November 2025 as “Native American Heritage Month.” This proclamation comes shortly before the Governor heads to the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) in Brazil, which is expected to feature the largest Indigenous participation in the conference’s history, focusing on Indigenous peoples’ roles as “guardians of biodiversity.”

[Click here for information](#) on the Newsom Administration’s partnership with Native American tribes, which includes truth and healing work, and [nature-based solutions](#).

Call for Workshop Proposals: Bay Area ICWA Symposium, April 15, 2026

The State of California Building, San Francisco, CA

The Bay Area ICWA Symposium is an event for tribal communities, service providers, attorneys, judicial officers, juvenile probation, child welfare social work practitioners, educators, and students to come together in support of Native American children and families. The Symposium is intended to build awareness and understanding of ICWA, share best practices, facilitate communication, build relationships, and to improve outcomes for Native American children, families, and communities. *The deadline to submit the [workshop proposal form](#) is **January 15, 2026**.

[Child Welfare Policy Manual Update](#)

The Administration for Children and Families published a revision to the Child Welfare Policy Manual (CWPM) section 7.4 Q&A #5. The revision is consistent with the original Q&A and provides an update consistent with title IV-B of the Act regarding allowable uses of subpart 1 child welfare funding for family reunification services (section 437(a)(7)(b) of the Act).

[HHS Awards \\$15 Million to Fund First-Ever Standalone National Indigenous Domestic Violence Hotline](#)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), today announced a projected \$15 million, five-year grant to fund a National Indigenous Domestic Violence Hotline (NIDVH). Authorized by the [Family Violence Prevention and Services Act](#) (FVPSA), the NIDVH will be operated by StrongHearts Native Helpline, which aims to help Native Americans impacted by domestic and sexual violence by bringing together safety, sovereignty and support. The investment in the first standalone NIDVH represents HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s commitment to advancing Tribal-led solutions and addressing domestic violence in Indigenous communities.

ONLINE RESOURCES

[Native American Heritage Month Resources](#)

California Department of Education

- Native Land Digital is an interactive map and educational resource that helps users learn about the Indigenous territories, languages, and treaties connected to the land they currently occupy: [Native-Land.ca | Our home on native land](#)
- Native Ways of Knowing Book List and Resources from SDCOE: [Native Ways of Knowing Books](#)
- SDCOE Website With Resource for Educators to Celebrate Native American Heritage Month: [SDCOE Website Link](#)
- HCOE NASMC Website, Resources, and PD Opportunities: [Native American Studies Model Curriculum | Humboldt County Office of Education](#)
- UC Davis NASMC Website (Official): [Native American Studies Model Curriculum Introduction | We Are California](#)
- Updates to Ed Code for NAGAT (Chaptered September 26, 2025): Assembly Bill (AB) 1369, which amends [California Code, EDC 35183.1](#). This bill addresses pupil rights related to school graduation ceremonies and associated events, specifically regarding the wearing of tribal regalia and culturally significant adornments. As outlined below, AB 1369 proposes that Native students and their families, not schools, have the authority to determine what constitutes a culturally significant item. Additionally, schools may not require a pre-approval process for these adornments. CA Bill Tracking website: [AB1369 | California 2025-2026 | Pupil rights: school graduation ceremonies and related events: adornments. | TrackBill](#)
- Take the Graduation Adornments Survey: [Native American Graduation Adornments Survey](#)

When you Turn 18: A Legal Survival Guide

California Lawyers Foundation

The guide is intended to provide youth with all of the necessary information they will need as they transition to adulthood. Additional resources and guides can be found here: <https://calawyersfoundation.org/our-work/youth-initiatives/resources-guides/>

Justice in Aging

Justice in Aging has created a number of resources to help advocates provide culturally appropriate and accessible services to tribal elders and advocate for programs and policies that address the long-standing inequities that keep members of tribal communities from aging with dignity.

Resources for Advocates

- Webinar Recording: [Justice for Tribal Elders, a Resource Round-up](#) (October 2025)
- Issue Brief: [Supporting Tribal Elders Through Home and Community-Based Services](#) (September, 2025)
- Issue Brief: [Supporting Tribal Elders Through the Older Americans Act](#) (January, 2025)
- Blog: [Traditional Health Care for Tribal Elders Through Special Medicaid Waivers](#) (January, 2025)
- Issue Brief: [Supporting Tribal Elders Through Social Security](#) (September, 2024)
- Issue Brief: [Justice for Tribal Elders—Issues Impacting American Indian and Alaskan Native Older Adults](#) (December, 2023)

Organizations Focusing on the Needs of Tribal Elders

- [The National Indian Council on Aging](#) (NICOA)
- [Native American Elder Justice Initiative](#) (NAEJI)
- [National Resource Center on Native American Aging Resource Center on Native Aging and Disability](#) (NRCNAA)

Native American Heritage Month - NOVEMBER 2025: Native Americans and Treaties

Salisbury University (SU)

This celebratory guide is hosted by the SU Libraries Diversity & Inclusion Committee, with 2024 assistance from SU Libraries staff members Stephen Ford and Mou Chakraborty

Resource Library

National Tribal Child Welfare Center for Innovation and Advancement

The National Tribal Child Welfare Center for Innovation and Advancement offers a curated library of over 150 resources to support the work of Tribal child welfare professionals, programs, and communities. This library is more than a collection of documents—it is a reflection of years of wisdom, innovation, and dedication from across Indian Country.

- [Strong Data, Strong Families: A Data System Guide for Tribal Child Welfare Programs](#) This guide is designed to support Tribal child welfare programs through the process of building or advancing data collection or case management protocols tailored to their unique needs and values.

Staff Perspectives on Transforming the Narrative on Data, Research, and Evaluation with Native Communities: A Compendium

Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation, An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

In this compendium written by ACF staff, you will read about processes for changing day-to-day activities related to data, research, and evaluation and for developing long-term plans to inform the improvement of human services programs such as Head Start, child welfare, and family assistance in Native communities.

The AFCARS Dashboard

Administration on Children Youth and Families (ACYF), Children's Bureau

The Adoptions and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) collects case-level information on all children served by the foster care system and those who have been adopted with Title IV-E involvement. Search features include viewing by state or tribe.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES, WEBINARS, AND TRAININGS

December 8, 9, 15 & 16, 2025 (Virtual)

[Intrafamilial Child Sexual Abuse: Insights, Interventions, Interruption and Next Steps](#)

December 15-17, 2025 (Appleton, WI)

[Advanced Strategies for Investigating and Prosecuting Domestic Violence](#)

December 16, 2025 (Virtual)

[Judicial Ethics and Professionalism in Tribal Courts](#)

January 14-15, 2026 (Washington, D.C.)

[National Judicial Education Workshop on Guardianships and Elder Abuse](#)

January 21-22, 2026 (Virtual)

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

February 9-13, 2026 (Columbia, South Carolina)

[Investigating and Prosecuting Violent Crime in Indian Country](#)

February 24-March 24, 2026 (Virtual)

March 1-4, 2026 (Atlanta, GA)

[American Probation and Parole Association 2026 Winter Training Institute](#)

March 2-5, 2026 (Phoenix, AZ)

[Spring Training for Judges: Decision-Making, Leadership & Team Dynamics](#)

March 15, 2026-March 18, 2026 (Albuquerque, NM)

[National Association for Court Management 2026 Mid-Year Conference](#)

March 15, 2026-March 18, 2026 (Minneapolis, MN)

[Nation Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges 2026 National Conference on Juvenile Justice](#)

March 24, 2026-March 26, 2026 (Appleton, WI)

[Court Safety and Security Conference National Criminal Justice Training Center](#)

March 29, 2026-April 1, 2026 (Oklahoma City, OK)

[National Indian Child Welfare Association 44th Annual Protecting Our Children Conference](#)

March 30, 2026-April 1, 2026

[California Association of Collaborative Courts CACC Conference 2026](#)

April 7, 2026-April 10, 2026 (Prescott, AZ)

[2026 AADCP Treatment Court Conference](#)

April 7-9, 2026 (New Orleans, NV)

[Empowering Change: Innovative Response Strategies for Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence](#)

April 9, 2026-April 10, 2026 (Scottsdale, AZ)

[Federal Bar Association Indian Law 2026 Conference](#)

April 9-12, 2026 (Glen Ellen, CA)

[Centering Ourselves for Leadership Conference \(Judges Only\)](#)

April 15, 2026 (San Francisco, CA)

[Save the Date: Bay Area ICWA Symposium](#)

(*Registration link available in late January 2026 and [workshop proposal form](#) available until January 15, 2026. Email Vida Castaneda at vida.castaneda@jud.ca.gov for additional questions or details about the event.)

April 21-23, 2026 (Las Vegas, NV)

[National Missing and Unidentified Persons Conference](#)

April 30, 2026-May 2, 2026 (Location TBD)

[California Judges Association 2026 Spring Conference](#)

May 5-7, 2026 (Las Vegas, NV)

[NADEC 26 The National Conference on Drug-Endangered Children](#)

June 10-12, 2026 (Garden Grove, CA)

[Partnerships for Well-Being Institute-Navigating the Tide: Connecting Our Child, Youth & Family-Serving Systems for a Stronger Future](#)

July 12-16, 2026 (Omaha, NE)

[National Association for Court Management 2026 Annual Conference](#)

July 19-22, 2026 (Nashville, TN)

[National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges 89th Annual Conference](#)

July 20-23, 2026, (Nashville, TN)

[RISE26, the Annual Training Conference National Association of Drug Court Professionals](#)

August 16-19, 2026 (Wilmington, DE)

[National Association for Presiding Judges and Court Executive Officers 2026 NAPCO Leadership Conference](#)

September 27, 2026-October 2, 2026 (Nashville, TN)

[American Judges Association 2026 Annual Conference](#)

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](#).

[Continuum of Care Competition and Youth Homeless Demonstration Program Grants](#)

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Department of Housing and Urban Development

FR-6900-N-25

Deadline: January 14, 2026

The goal of the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) is to support the development and implementation of a coordinated community approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness and sharing that experience with and mobilizing communities around the country toward the same end. The population to be served by the demonstration program is youth ages 24 and younger who are experiencing homelessness, including unaccompanied and pregnant or parenting youth.

[2026 Tribal Transportation Program Safety Fund](#)

Department of Transportation

DOT Federal Highway Administration

2026TTPSF

Deadline: January 15, 2026

Eligible projects described in section 148(a)(4) are strategies, activities, and projects on a public road that are consistent with a transportation safety plan and that (i) correct or improve a hazardous road location or feature, or (ii) address a highway safety problem. TTPSF emphasizes the development of strategic transportation safety plans using a data-driven process as a means for Tribes to identify transportation safety needs and determine how those needs will be addressed in Tribal communities.

National Center on Child Maltreatment Fatality Data Practices and Reporting

Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families - ACYF/CB

HHS-2025-ACF-ACYF-CA-0074

Deadline: January 22, 2026

This funding opportunity will create a National Center to improve data collection and reporting about child maltreatment fatalities. Effective cross-agency coordination and understanding of child maltreatment fatality data can help states collect quality, comprehensive data. States, jurisdictions, and their partners, including tribes, can use that information to develop cross-agency intervention and system reform efforts. The National Center on Child Maltreatment Fatality Data Practices and Reporting will serve as a national resource in this effort and collaborate with agencies addressing this issue.

Mind and Body Interventions to Restore Whole Person Health via Emotional Well-Being Mechanisms

Department of Health and Human Services

National Institutes of Health

PAR-25-449

Deadline: June 8, 2028

The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) announces this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to solicit applications for research on how mind and body interventions through psychological and/or physical inputs (e.g., mindfulness meditation, yoga, acupuncture, massage, and other brain and/or body based interventions) impact mechanisms of emotional well-being (EWB) and their associations with whole person health (WPH), consistent with the NIH priority to address the health needs of the American people and improve their well-being.

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: HKTribal@hcd.ca.gov.

Standing Announcement for Tribal Title IV-E Plan Development Grants

Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families - ACYF/CB

HHS-2025-ACF-ACYF-CS-0067

Deadline: January 12, 2026

The purpose of this funding opportunity is to provide one-time awards to eligible applicants for developing plans to implement the Tribal title IV-E foster care, adoption assistance, and guardianship assistance programs. Each recipient must submit a plan to the Department of Health and Human Services within 24 months of the project start date. Funds under this NOFO may be used for the cost of developing a title IV-E plan under section 471 of the Social Security Act (the Act) to carry out a program under section 479B of the Act.

Indian Housing Block Grant Competitive Program (IHBG-COMP) for FY2025

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Department of Housing and Urban Development

FR-6900-N-48

Deadline: January 15, 2026

The Indian Housing Block Grant Competitive Program (IHBG-COMP) provides competitive grant opportunities to eligible IHBG formula recipients under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) to carry out eligible affordable housing activities for the benefit of low-income Tribal families.

Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program

Department of Health and Human Services

Centers for Disease Control – NCIPC

CDC-RFA-CE-26-0061

Deadline: April 14, 2026

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.

NAGPRA Repatriation Grants

Department of the Interior

National Park Service

P25AS00474

Deadline: June 1, 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.