

April 16, 2004  
(Broadcast #04-028)

**Tribes and BIA Meet on Budget Allocations** -- Tex G. Hall, President of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), and Jim Gray, Chief of the Osage Nation, co-chairs of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Tribal Budget Advisory Council, recently hosted a two-day meeting between tribal leaders and BIA leaders, including Assistant Secretary David Anderson, to establish funding priorities for the BIA's 2006 fiscal year budget. Participants left the April 14<sup>th</sup> meeting with a vision for a \$2.4 billion BIA budget for FY06, in opposition to the budget reductions that Bush officials have projected for tribal programs. At a meeting in March, Assistant Secretary Anderson announced that BIA programs would see a 2.4% cut in FY06, equivalent to a 3.6% cut and \$78 million when inflationary costs are accounted for.

The Budget Advisory Council recommended an increase to Tribal Priority Allocations of 7%, an estimated \$54 million, to address inflation and recent shortfalls. TPA is the primary funding source for most tribes in the provision of governmental services at the local level, and tribal leaders identify the persistent shortfall in TPA over the past decade as a severe impediment to tribes' ability to fulfill the goals of self-determination and self-governance. Other priorities set by the Advisory Council for requested 7% increases include Law Enforcement and Detention Centers, Contract Support Costs, Scholarships, funding for United Tribes Technical College/Crownpoint Institute of Technology, Tribal Courts, Social Services, ICWA, HIP, Economic Development, and Natural Resources.

The proposed FY06 reduction would represent the second major reduction to the BIA budget in the President's requests, as the FY05 request included \$52 million less for the Bureau, with education programs taking the largest hit, including school construction and repair, scholarships, early childhood development, and tribal colleges.

Tribal members of the Council also passed a resolution recommending a new Executive Order requiring the Office of Management and Budget to annually consult with tribes to develop a budget that fulfills the federal trust responsibilities of the United States to American Indians and Alaska Natives. The Executive Order should direct OMB to "consult with tribal governments of American Indians and Alaska Natives on a government-to-government basis prior to the submission of the budget for each fiscal year," the resolution states.

The Budget Advisory Council has long recognized that effective data collection, management, and reporting are critical to ensuring increased tribal funding in the budget formulation process. At the April 14 meeting, a newly formed committee for Managing Data/Reporting announced an action plan to streamline the data collection process and identify how data can reflect the degree to which Federal dollars for tribal programs are efficiently used.

The BIA will turn in its proposed budget to the Department of Interior's Office of Policy, Management, and Budget on May 14.

**April 27 Budget Strategy Meeting Correction** -- Change in location: *Holiday Inn Downtown, 1155 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005, Washington/Jefferson Room: 9 am – 3 pm*

This meeting will be for issue-specific tribal organization leadership and budget advisory council members, to develop a coordinated strategy on budget and appropriations development and advocacy from Indian Country. Agenda items will include brief reports from respective single issue organizations, discussion of various reports and overarching data sources necessary, formulation of a collective strategy for budget and appropriations advocacy, and planning for a broad public relations strategy to address appropriations shortfalls.