



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20201 | [www.acf.hhs.gov](http://www.acf.hhs.gov)

**Questions for the Record**

**House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Indigenous Peoples of the United States  
Reviewing the Trump Administration's Approach to the MMIW Crisis –September 11,  
2019**

**Questions from Rep. Gallego for Commissioner Hovland:**

1. As apparent in your testimony, ANA offers a couple of readily-accessible resources to Native communities on the topic of MMIW, such as the online Native Youth Toolkit on Human Trafficking.

- a. *How does ANA conduct outreach to relevant communities and organizations so that they know about these resources?*

**Response:** ANA developed the toolkit in partnership with our Administration for Children & Families (ACF) colleagues, including the Office of Trafficking in Persons (OTIP). This toolkit was informed by focus groups of tribal youth, federal grantees, and Native Americans who have experienced sex and labor trafficking.

ACF is working to distribute this toolkit and other resources in multiple ways. ANA and OTIP have printed and distributed hundreds of copies to native youth, community members, and tribal leaders during workshops, consultations, listening sessions, and other events throughout the U.S. and Pacific Islands, such as our Native Youth Town Hall in Albuquerque, NM this past July. ACF has shared this toolkit online via our own social media platforms and those of our partners (where the toolkit has received thousands of “likes”, shares, and clicks), blast e-mails, and on our website, where it has received more than 3,000 views.

As another example, this past summer ANA and OTIP worked with the Center for Native American Youth (CNAY), through the National Human Trafficking Training & Technical Assistance Center, to train Native youth leaders on human trafficking. As a follow up, CNAY is collaborating with these leaders to support their efforts to raise awareness in their communities using the Native Youth Toolkit on trafficking and soliciting ideas and input on how culture may be a protective factor in preventing trafficking among Native youth. The youth will work with CNAY remotely to create individual multimedia products that share their findings, which will inform the next cohort of our Human Trafficking Leadership Academy (HTLA).

- b. *Is ANA in the process of creating additional publicly-available resources for Native victims or organizations?*

**Response:** ANA is working with OTIP, the National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center, and external partners to develop *SOAR for Native*

*Communities (Stop, Observe, Ask, Respond)*, under the SOAR to Health and Wellness Program.

This training was borne out of OTIP's partnership with ANA. ANA felt there was a need for a training that spoke to not only American Indians and Alaska Natives, but also Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders on human trafficking from a public health framework and incorporated cultural considerations and trauma-informed care. ANA and OTIP worked with subject matter experts with both professional and lived experience from the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC), Indian Health Service, and Innovations Human Trafficking Collaborative to develop the training content. ANA and OTIP also had the training content externally reviewed by staff with the Tribal Law and Policy Institute, the American Indian Center of Chicago, National Council on Urban Indian Health, and members of the ACF Tribal Advisory Committee over the last year to ensure we were inclusive for urban Native communities.

Our objectives for this training include:

- Describe historic factors that contribute to the trafficking (both labor and sex trafficking) of Indigenous populations
- Describe trafficking in Native communities
- Identify indicators of trafficking in Native communities
- Describe trafficking resources relevant to Native populations
- Describe methods for honoring cultural practices while providing support to individuals who have experienced trafficking
- Explain ways to strengthen cross-jurisdictional collaborations to build comprehensive responses to trafficking in Native communities

Once finalized, ACF plans to have it freely available through our SOAR Online Learning Management System as well as available for in-person delivery upon request through our technical assistance provider. ACF will employ a variety of methods to promote this training as a resource.

**Questions from Rep. Grijalva for Commissioner Hovland:**

2. You highlight the Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) *Family Violence Prevention and Services Act* and the help that it has been in establishing vital victim services and awareness programs for tribal communities. Because 10% of the Act's appropriations go directly to tribes and to tribal organizations, such programs are reliant on the Act's annual funding.

- a. *Exactly how much money was available to tribes and tribal organizations this fiscal year?*

**Response:** The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) is statutorily mandated to support Native American Tribes (including Alaska Native Villages) and tribal organizations through an allocation of not less than 10 percent of the total appropriation (less amounts reserved under Section 312). The statutory purpose of these grants is to: 1) assist tribes in efforts to increase public awareness about, and primary and

secondary prevention of family violence, domestic violence, and dating violence; and 2) assist tribes in efforts to provide immediate shelter and supportive services for victims of family violence, domestic violence, or dating violence, and their dependents. The allocation for tribes in fiscal year (FY) 2019 is \$15,170,059.

The FY 2019 Consolidated Appropriations Act included \$5,000,000 in appropriations to the FVPSA Program, for the purposes of supporting Native American Tribes and tribal organizations. With this increase, the total amount allocated to tribes in FY 2019 is approximately \$20,170,059.

*b. What will the funding look like next year?*

**Response:** The Family Violence Prevention and Services/Domestic Violence Shelter and Supportive Services/Grants to Native American Tribes (including Alaska Native Villages) and tribal organizations applications are due February 28, 2020. The 2020 President's Budget provided level funding for the program, and ACF looks forward to working with Congress throughout the appropriations process.

*c. In your experience, has there been an expressed need for greater funding?*

**Response:** For the last two fiscal years, Congress has provided an additional \$5,000,000 in appropriations specifically for grants to tribes and tribal organizations. In FY 2018 and 2019, this increase enabled the FVPSA Program to increase tribal grant awards (83 of 142) from approximately \$17,000 to approximately \$46,000. The 2020 President's Budget provided level funding for the program, and ACF looks forward to working with Congress throughout the appropriations process.

**Questions from Rep. Haaland for Commissioner Hovland:**

3. You mentioned that HHS is leading the federal efforts on primary prevention, intervention, recovery, and healing as they pertain to the MMIW crisis.

*a. Are other federal agencies helping HHS to fulfill this mission?*

**Response:** Yes. Within HHS, the primary vehicle for coordinating Native American issues across the department is the HHS Intradepartmental Council on Native American Affairs (ICNAA), which has identified Human Trafficking/ Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls as one of its top priorities. Currently, the ICNAA is identifying a series of immediate, medium, and long-term outcomes to work towards addressing. This work is part of the continuing collaboration with offices at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Department of Interior to ensure that health and human services, as well as victim services, are thought about holistically with regards to MMIW.

*b. If they aren't currently, how could other agencies collaborate with HHS to implement programming related to MMIW?*

**Response:** HHS, led by ANA, is engaging in listening sessions, consultations, and other events across the federal government to help increase awareness, share resources, and learn from communities in order to develop responses to the issues around data and

programming. HHS continues to reach out to other federal agencies to include them in these critical conversations.

4. You highlight the recent establishment of the Human Trafficking Leadership Academy, where Native survivors of human trafficking and frontline professionals are given the opportunity to participate in monthly leadership training.
  - a. *Can you detail how this leadership academy was created (i.e. who was involved/consulted, was it a Native-driven community effort, etc.)?*

**Response:** This particular leadership academy included input and involvement from Native American perspectives. The project question for the HTLA Cohort 5, which examines culture as a protective factor for Native youth, was developed through input over time with the ACF Tribal Advisory Committee, a group of 26 tribal leaders (13 primary and 13 alternates) from across the country and through other tribal listening sessions held at various conferences and with discussions with Native American associations like the National Indian Health Board, the California Rural Indian Health Board and at ACF tribal consultation. It was further refined in partnership with the Center for Native American Youth, a national organization focused on Native Youth empowerment as well as Native American human trafficking survivors.. This cohort received more than 100 applications, the majority of them from individuals who identify as Native American, which speaks to the interest in these opportunities.

The HTLA is committed to developing and expanding survivor-informed services while also providing leadership development opportunities to survivor leaders and related professionals. Fellows work collaboratively to provide substantive recommendations that will inform research, policies, and programs that improve awareness, understanding, and assistance to survivors of human trafficking or those at risk of human trafficking.

The leadership training provided at monthly seminars over the course of 4 to 6 months is applicable to the fellows' current work and helps them grow in their chosen career. As they collaborate through a combination of in-person and virtual work, they also establish a trusted network among all the fellows that could last a lifetime. The final seminar includes a graduation ceremony and a presentation to federal stakeholders on findings and recommendations related to the project question.

- b. *Do you think replicating such a process is necessary in creating lasting and effective victim services programs in Indian Country?*

**Response:** ACF will have a better sense of the effectiveness of this process once we have completed the HTLA Cohort 5 in the spring of 2020. However, we do know that survivor-informed solutions are likely to resonate with the target audience and that programs and services in Indian Country must be tailored to the specific context and resources available in those specific communities.

5. Last month, staff members from the NIWRC, the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (AKNWRC), and the StrongHearts Native Helpline gathered in Seattle at a Tribal Grantee Meeting to discuss the MMIW crisis.

- a. *Does your agency currently offer similar annual conferences or strategic planning meetings for tribal programs funded under the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act?*

**Response:** The biennial FVPSA Tribal Grantee meeting was held August 12 through 16, 2019 in Seattle. The two and a half day meeting provided training, technical assistance, and mentoring for FVPSA-funded tribes and tribal organizations. The in-person meeting allowed for in-depth technical assistance focused on administrative and programmatic grant implementation. Attendees shared and heard from each other on promising practices and barriers to providing services that are unique to their communities, experiences, and programs. Listening sessions, facilitated dialogue, and presentations were utilized as mechanisms for training. NIWRC, AKNWRC, and StrongHearts Native Helpline representatives were in attendance at this meeting and collaborated with the FVPSA Program to raise the visibility of MMIW issues and the growing crisis. Speakers from the DOJ National Institute of Justice, in partnership with the University of North Texas Health Science Center, presented on NamUs, the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System. NamUs is a centralized database and resource center that assists law enforcement, medical professionals, and public users in resolving cases of missing, unidentified, and unclaimed persons. Also, a member of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians Community Domestic Violence Advocacy Program presented on this issue from the perspective of a surviving family member. Risk factors, data, challenges, and policy changes related to MMIW, as well as strategies for community members and individuals, were shared with meeting attendees.

In 2020, ACF will host a Native American Grantee meeting in February 2020 in Arlington, VA. ACF intends to host discussion on MMIW at the event and share resources. The FVPSA Program plans to hold a smaller peer-to-peer tribal grantee meeting tentatively scheduled for early March 2020.

- b. *Is HHS considering the proposal of an annual summit on the topic of MMIW amongst its many victim support services programs?*

**Response:** HHS cannot predict whether funding availability in outlying years would permit it (or its components) to hold an annual summit. However, ACF is seeking to integrate the topic into its various meetings and conferences whenever possible. The FVPSA Program will continue to include discussions of MMIW as part of its grantee meetings, but it currently does not have the funding to implement a separate summit, with 97.5 percent of FVPSA funding required to be allocated for grant awards and 2.5 percent allocated for program administration.