

The Tribal Rights, Unity, Sovereignty, and Teaching (TRUST) Alliance: Stakeholder Survey regarding Department of the Interior's Workforce Optimization Initiative

The Tribal Rights, Unity, Sovereignty, and Teaching (TRUST) Alliance was formed in response to the Department of the Interior's Workforce Optimization Initiative for Indian Affairs. The TRUST Alliance is working to unify federally recognized tribes to oppose any plans to eliminate and reduce federal funds for education, health care, public safety, and other Interior tribal programs.

This survey is designed to gather information from Tribal programs and departments, schools, education departments, and service providers regarding the impacts of the U.S. Department of the Interior's **Workforce Optimization Initiative** and related federal directives. Your responses will help identify how changes in staffing, funding, and federal support are affecting Tribal operations, service delivery, and Tribal sovereignty in education. The information collected will be used to inform advocacy efforts, policy recommendations, and future consultations with federal agencies.

Your participation is vital. All responses will be kept confidential and used only for the purpose of strengthening Tribal programs, services, and education systems.

Skip to question 1

Section 1: Respondent Information

1. Name:

2. Tribal Affiliation:

3. Tribal Department/School of Employment:

4. Email:

Survey Questions

5. 1. Do you need more consultations with the Trump Administration/BIA/BIE/IHS/DOGE to understand and gather more information regarding the Administration's intentions with its Workforce Optimization Initiative?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe

6. 2. Have the Trump Administration's directives impacted the release of funding for your school or Tribal departments? (*Select one*)

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

7. 2a. If yes, please describe the impact: *(Open-ended response)*

8. 3. Has BIA/BIE/IHS or the Trump Administration recently provided or said it would provide any specific plans, computer software, or training to improve services or increase efficiency under its new Workforce Optimization Initiative? *(Select one)*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

9. 3a. If yes, what plans, software, or training have been provided or promised?
(Open-ended response)

10. 4. Are the needs of current operations and maintenance, teachers, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and other areas being met under existing staff resources and funding? *(Select one)*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes, all needs are being met
- ☐ Some needs are being met
- ☐ No, many needs are not being met
- ☐ No sure

11. 4a. If not, do you need additional, not less, staffing resources to fulfill these needs?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes, additional staffing is needed
- ☐ No, current staffing is sufficient
- ☐ Not sure

12. 4b. Please describe which areas are most impacted by staffing or funding shortages (e.g., transportation, food services, classroom instruction, facilities). *(Open-ended response)*

13. 5. Since January 20, 2025, has your department or school received any of the following related to federal grants, contracts, loans, or other funding sources? *(Select all that apply)*

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Termination
- ☐ Cancellation
- ☐ Reduction in funding
- ☐ Delay in funding
- ☐ Additional requirements to access funds
- ☐ Other notices affecting funding
- ☐ No changes or notices received
- ☐ Not sure

14. 5a. If you selected any of the above, please describe the amount of reduction, type of federal grant or funding affected, and the impacts of these changes. *(Open-ended responses)*

15. 6. Have you lost contact with any federal official responsible for funding transfers, technical assistance, or any other administrative duties? *(Select one)*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

16. 6a. If yes, what have been the impacts of losing this staff? (*Open-ended response*)

17. 7. Has your local, Regional, or Area BIA, BIE or IHS offices been closed or had staffing reduced due to Interior's Workforce Optimization Initiative? (*Select one*)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes, office closure
- ☐ Yes, staffing reduction
- ☐ No changes
- ☐ Not sure

18. 7a. If yes, how many staff were reduced and what have been the impacts of losing staff responsible for providing funding transfers, technical assistance, or any other administrative duties?

19. 8. Has the federal hiring freeze impacted your school or tribal department in your ability to provide services, including legally required services, like special needs education, to your stakeholders? *(Select one)*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

20. 8a. If yes, please describe these impacts in as much detail as possible. *(Open-ended response)*

21. 9. Has the federal travel freeze for BIE employees impacted your school or tribal education department in your ability to receive training and technical assistance? *(Select one)*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

22. 9a. If yes, please describe these impacts in as much detail as possible. (*Open-ended response*)

23. 10. How many staff in your school, Tribal department, or local BIA/BIE/IHS office have already been let go due to funding cuts or staff reductions?

24. 11. For next year's budget, do you anticipate impacts or are you planning to reduce next year's budget due to staffing and other funding cuts and the Interior's Workforce Optimization Initiative?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

25. 12. Has your Tribe or Department engaged in any 638 contracting or compacting? (*Select one*)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

26. 12a. If yes, were you provided sufficient funds to deliver all required programs and services? *(Select one)*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Partially
- ☐ Not applicable

27. 12b. Were you given the opportunity to include regional or national office positions and funding shares in your contract or compact? *(Select one)*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Not applicable

28. 12c. Does your Tribe or Department have supplement 638 contracts or compacts with other funding sources to meet service needs? *(Select one)*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Not applicable

29. 12d. Please describe any challenges or gaps in funding related to your 638 contract or compact. (*Open-ended response*)

30. 13. What is the current vacancy rate in your local BIA Agency or Regional office? (*Select one*)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 0% - No vacancies
- ☐ 1 - 10%
- ☐ 11 - 25%
- ☐ 26 - 50%
- ☐ Over 50%
- ☐ Not sure

31. 13a. How long have these positions been vacant? (*Select one*)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Less than 3 months
- ☐ 3 -6 months
- ☐ 6 - 12 months
- ☐ Over 1 year
- ☐ Not sure

32. 13b. Please list the types of positions that are currently vacant (e.g., finance officer, education specialist, facilities manager). (*Open-ended response*)

33. 14. What are some of the barriers your Tribe or Department faces in obtaining federal funding? (*Select all that apply*)

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Lack of communication or guidance from federal agencies
- ☐ Complex or burdensome application processes
- ☐ Limited staff capacity to manage applications
- ☐ Delays in funding approvals or disbursements
- ☐ Insufficient funding amounts
- ☐ Restrictions on allowable uses of funds
- ☐ Inadequate consultations or inclusion in decision-making
- ☐ Other: _____

34. 14a. Please describe any additional barriers or provide detail on those selected above: (*Open-ended response*)

35. 15. How would you describe the federal reporting requirements your Tribe or Departments must follow? *(Select one)*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Efficient and manageable
- ☐ Somewhat burdensome
- ☐ Very burdensome
- ☐ Not sure

36. 15. What would make reporting requirements more efficient for your Tribe or Department? *(Open-ended response)*

37. 16. Has your Tribe or local school received a grant through the Tribally Controlled Schools Act for the current year? *(Select one)*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

38. 16a. If yes, were you provided enough funds to deliver all required programs and services? *(Select one)*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Partially
- ☐ Not sure

39. 16b. If not, what services or staffing are not being provided due to insufficient funding? *(Open-ended response)*

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