



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

MAR 16 2015

Dear Tribal Leader:

For American Indian children and Indian tribes, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978 is one of the most important laws to be passed in the modern era. This law's implementation, however, has never lived up to its promise. As part of our effort to promote the goals of ICWA, we have proposed a rule to improve compliance with ICWA. This proposed rule, Regulations for State Courts and Agencies in Indian Child Custody Proceedings, would add a new subpart to the Department of the Interior's (Department) regulations to specifically address ICWA implementation by state courts and child welfare agencies and complement the recently published revised *Guidelines for State Courts and Agencies in Indian Child Custody Proceedings* (Guidelines).

This proposed rule was drafted in response to written comments and those received at several listening sessions held during the Department's review of the BIA's Guidelines. We received many comments requesting that, in addition to updating the Guidelines, the Department promulgate regulations outlining minimum standards for compliance with ICWA. Additionally, the Attorney General's Advisory Committee on American Indian and Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence recommended in its November 2014 Report that the Department issue regulations to better implement ICWA and promote compliance.

We invite you to review the proposed rule at www.bia.gov and provide your comments at the scheduled consultation sessions listed below, or in writing to comments@bia.gov. Include "ICWA" in the subject line of the message. You may also mail or hand deliver your comments to Elizabeth Appel, Office of Regulatory Affairs & Collaborative Action – Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW., MS 3642, Washington, DC 20240.

CONSULTATION SESSIONS:

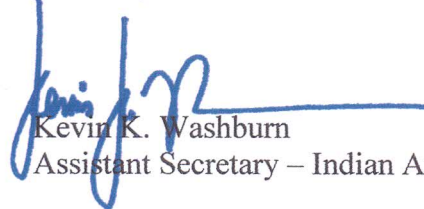
Date	Time	Location	Venue
Monday, April 20, 2015	3:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Pacific Time	Portland, Oregon	Hilton Portland & Executive Towers 921 SW Sixth Avenue Portland, OR 97204 (NICWA conference location)
Thursday, April 23, 2015	9 a.m.-12 p.m. Mountain Time	Rapid City, South Dakota	Best Western Ramkota Hotel 2111 N Lacrosse St Rapid City, SD 57701
Tuesday, May 5, 2015	9 a.m.-12 p.m. Mountain Time	Albuquerque, New Mexico	National Indian Programs Training Center 1011 Indian School Road, NW, Suite 254 Albuquerque, NM 87104*
Thursday, May 7, 2015	9 a.m.-12 p.m. Central Time	Prior Lake, Minnesota	Mystic Lake Casino Hotel 2400 Mystic Lake Blvd Prior Lake, MN 55372

Monday, May 11, 2015	1 p.m.-4 p.m. Eastern Time	Via teleconference	Call-in number: (888) 730-9138 Passcode: INTERIOR
Thursday, May 14, 2015	9 a.m.-12 p.m. Central Time	Tulsa, Oklahoma	Tulsa Marriott Southern Hills 1902 East 71st Tulsa, OK 74136

*Please RSVP for the Albuquerque meeting to consultation@bia.gov, bring photo identification, and arrive early to allow for time to get through security at this Federal building. RSVP is not necessary for the other locations.

We look forward to your comments on this proposed rule. Should you have any questions, please contact Ms. Rodina Cave, Senior Policy Advisor to the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, at (202) 208-7163 or Rodina_Cave@ios.doi.gov.

Sincerely,



Kevin K. Washburn
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs