



UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.

USET Resolution No. 2003:042

QUALIFIED SOLICITOR TO BE LOCATED AT THE EASTERN REGIONAL OFFICE

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes Incorporated (USET) is an intertribal organization comprising twenty-four (24) federally recognized tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member tribe, as the Board of Directors comprises delegates from the member tribes' leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** acquisition and placement of lands into trust is a vital component for economic development of USET member Tribes in the Eastern Region; and
- WHEREAS,** the Eastern Region is provided Solicitor review activities for lands into trust acquisition by the Solicitor at the Atlanta Regional Office on a part-time basis ; and
- WHEREAS,** USET member Tribes believe that the increased economic development and increased requests for lands into trust warrants a full-time Solicitor in the Eastern Regional Office ; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED** that the USET Board of Directors does hereby request that the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs and the Solicitor of the Department of the Interior Affairs immediately place a full-time qualified solicitor on staff of the Eastern Regional Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Annual Board Meeting and EXPO, at which a quorum was present in Uncasville, CT Wednesday, October 30, 2002.

Keller George, President
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

Beverly Wright, Secretary
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

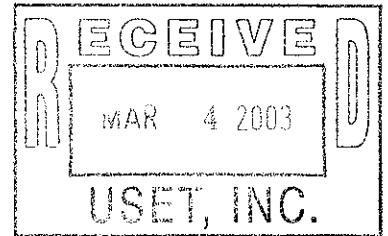


United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Eastern Regional Office
711 Stewarts Ferry Pike
Nashville, TN 37214

Office of the Regional Director



MAR 03 2003

Mr. James T. Martin
Executive Director
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.
711 Stewarts Ferry Pike, Suite 100
Nashville, TN 37214

Dear Mr. Martin:

This is in response to your memorandum dated November 10, 2002, about the USET Social Services Committee concerns regarding the BIA/ERO Social Work Office. We are surprised that the USET Social Services Committee, in the meetings and conference calls with the Regional Social Worker, did not bring up these concerns.

For clarity and understanding, we will address the following numbered items:

1. Comparison to other BIA Regions - Statistically, there is not enough data available for comparison purposes or to use as national averages because we are not getting the data needed from the tribal programs. Without this data, we cannot project our estimates of cases/clients/needs for future references. The other Regional offices and their tribal social services programs assist each other in completing their reports so they can use this data to justify their funding requests for shortfalls in the programs. They have developed mutual cooperation and they have strong support for their programs. The same can be achieved for both ERO/SS and the Tribal Social Services programs.
2. Lack of Funding - Your question on the dissemination of funds for the Social Services programs is based on pro-rata share; equal distribution of welfare assistance funds according to documented need and expenditures. The tribal data reports are reviewed by Central Office for increases or decreases of needs/clients. The Social Services programs have not received any additional funding and it is getting more difficult to maintain the current funding levels without the needed data to justify our programs.

(The ERO has funded the USET Bureau Information Office to assist the Eastern Tribes for liaison information purpose, which includes seeking program funding

for the tribes according to their needs. This type of resource for the tribes is not readily available in other regions and the Eastern Tribes should be working closely with this office to seek additional funding through federal, state sources or private foundations for their programs whether in social services, tribal court, domestic issues or for any specific purpose. We are faced with increased funding shortages each year and this affects our program services to the children and families who need it the most.

3. Lack of Communication - This is an issue that is very crucial to both the Tribes and the BIA especially in carrying out our contract responsibilities and there is no doubt that we should review our communication channels from time to time. We both lose when we start blaming or finger pointing. Even though the letter received is negative, we are not taking it as such because it can be used as opening the door to better communication through the ERO/SS involvement with the USET Social Services Committee meetings.
4. Response Time - Reasonable and timely responses are dependent upon the type of inquiry/issue/request made. It is understandable that this may have been a concern in the past when there were staff vacancies. However, when it became apparent that the workload demanded another staff member, every effort was made to hire a second social worker. It has been less than a year when the addition was made and the branch inquiries and correspondence have improved considerably. However, this office does not work independently on certain issues. For instance, policy clarification or a tribal request for waiver needs to be referred to Central Office for further action.
5. Training - We will providing a Social Services training again this year. The ERO/SS will be contacting the Tribal Social Services programs to coordinate a tentative date. Each tribe is also responsible in letting the ERO/SS know what type of training they would like to schedule during the fiscal year. The Branch of Self-Determination has on-going P.L. 93-638 contract training and the tribes can take advantage of the opportunity to learn more about contracting programs.
6. Federal Requirements & Laws/Regulations - Two of the basic regulations for the Social Services programs are the 25 CFR Part 20 and 66 BIAM Manual. Copies of these have been provided to the programs who have requested one.
7. Updates and Program Reviews - Any updates of the social services regulations or policies are sent out by Central Office to the Regions and then to the tribal programs. For instance, the most recent transmittal dated 12/31/02 to the Tribal Social Services Programs is the notification of the policy decision that due to persistent funding shortages in welfare assistance, Social Services disaster assistance will not be available through fiscal year 2003. The annual program reviews are intended to improve services and are intended to support each contract. A program should be prepared for a review at any time during the contract period and not just when notified that a review will take place. ERO/SS

is open to suggestions or recommendations for the review process on an individual basis with each tribe. The actual review is the same for all programs, the only differences are where it will take place and which program staff or tribal officials will be available during the review.

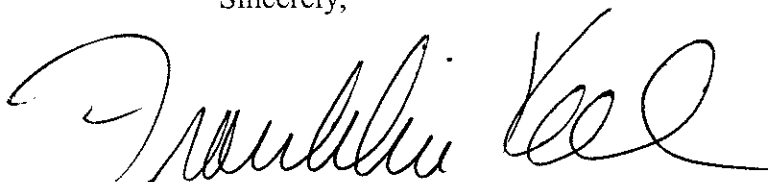
8. We agree that the 66 BIAM is an aged document; Central Office is currently updating it. Until there is a new manual, the Social Services programs are required to continue to adhere to the policies in the 66 BIAM.

As you are aware, the Eastern Regional Office has a government-to-government relationship with each tribe in this region and we communicate with them directly on all concerns and issues. We have the responsibility of assisting the tribal contractors to successfully administer the bureau programs for their tribal members. Each fiscal year, the tribes have the opportunity to identify their tribal programs as priorities for funding in what is called the Tribal Priority Allocation (TPA) process. If tribes nationally identify Social Services as a priority, any additional funding will be channeled to this program. Given this funding method, it is up to the tribes to give support for those Tribal Priority programs of their selection.

In summary, we acknowledge your concerns and note that special attention is being provided to these mentioned items. However, we do not believe that your letter accurately reflects the views of all the USET member tribes. Some committee members have indicated to us that they did not agree with its contents.

If any of the Tribal Social Services Programs have any difficulty contacting our Branch of Social Services, they can call Mr. Brian Pogue, Deputy Regional Director, directly at (615) 467-1664 (Office) or (615) 289-3214 (Cell).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Franklin Keel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "F" and a long, sweeping underline.

Franklin Keel
Director, Eastern Region

Cc: Karen Matthews, USET SS Committee