



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, DC 20240

OCT 31 2022

Dear Tribal Leader:

I invite you to submit a Letter of Intent to be considered for inclusion in the Tiwahe Initiative. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is looking to add two new pilot organizations to the Tiwahe Initiative and is seeking Letters of Intent (LOIs) from interested Tribes and Tribal organizations (together, "Tribes"). Enclosed is the "Selection Framework," which should guide your development of the LOI. The Selection Framework is based in large part on the valuable comments received during the Future of Tiwahe Consultation held on September 12, 2022, as well as written comments that followed. The LOIs will be reviewed by members from the current pilot organizations and by the BIA to determine inclusion in the Tiwahe Initiative pilot. **All LOIs may be submitted to Meghan Bishop, meghan.bishop@bia.gov from November 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022.**

The BIA launched the Tiwahe Initiative in fiscal year 2015 as a pilot program to support Tribes and Tribal organizations in their efforts to improve the health and well-being of families and Tribal communities. The Tiwahe Initiative is made up of several human services, public safety and justice program components that work together to protect and promote the development of prosperous and resilient Tribal communities.

The Tiwahe Initiative is an extensive and bold approach to furthering Indian self-determination and self-governance. The Tiwahe Initiative model is effective because it allows Tribes to create their own potential and provides freedom to design programs and integrate services within Tribal culture and tradition to produce powerful outcomes beneficial to Indian communities and families living there. This allows flexibility in the administration of key Tribal programs, supports Tribal economic self-sufficiency, and strengthens Tribal cultural connections. The Tiwahe Initiative fosters systemic change in the delivery of services to children and families through the integration of Tribal practices, customs, values, and traditions. Additionally, the Tiwahe Initiative offers participants the flexibility to design programming and services to address the gaps and needs of their communities by focusing on improving collaboration and coordination across six core programs: Social Services, Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) programs, Tribal Courts, Law Enforcement – Recidivism Reduction, Housing, and Job Placement and Training.

LOIs should address the following:

- Background of the Tribe or Tribal organization.
- Description of the issues that the Tribe or Tribal organization would use Tiwahe Initiative funding to address. What are the Tribe's or Tribal organization's priorities?
- Description of how Tiwahe Initiative funding would be used to address the identified issues. What are the Tribe's or Tribal organization's proposed outcomes? How would Tiwahe Initiative funding shape the future for the Tribe's or Tribal organization's community and families?

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The Tiwahe Initiative Congressional Report is available at <https://www.bia.gov/ois/tiwahe>. We strongly recommend reviewing the Congressional Report prior to submitting your LOI.

If you have any questions, please contact Meghan Bishop, Policy Specialist to the Assistant Secretary — Indian Affairs at (202) 208-4709 or via email: meghan.bishop@bia.gov.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Bryan Newland
Assistant Secretary — Indian Affairs

Enclosure



Tiwahe Initiative Selection Framework

Description:

The U.S. Department of the Interior – Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is seeking Letters of Intent (LOIs) from Tribes or Tribal organizations (together, “Tribes”) interested in participating in an expansion of the Tiwahe Initiative. Tiwahe, meaning “family” in Lakota, is about possibility. Launched in 2015, the Tiwahe Initiative includes 6 pilot Tribal organizations representing a total of 61 Federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native villages. This innovative program empowers federally recognized Tribes to realize their potential by affording Tribes the flexibility to direct Tiwahe Initiative funding where it is most needed.

The Tiwahe Initiative is an extensive and bold approach to furthering Indian self-determination and self-governance. It allows flexibility in the administration of key Tribal programs, supports Tribal economic self-sufficiency, and strengthens Tribal cultural connections. The Tiwahe Initiative fosters systemic change in the delivery of services to children and families through the integration of Tribal practices, customs, values and traditions. Additionally, the Tiwahe Initiative offers participants the flexibility to design programming and services to address the gaps and needs of their communities by focusing on improving collaboration and coordination across six core programs: Social Services, Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) programs, Tribal Courts, Law Enforcement – Recidivism Reduction, Housing, and Job Placement and Training.

The Tiwahe Initiative model is effective because it allows Tribes to create their own potential and provides freedom to design programs and integrate services using an outcomes-based approach, rooted in cultural values and traditions, to support well-being outcomes that meet the aspirations of American Indian and Alaska Native families. The Tiwahe Initiative should be understood as the sum of all its parts, including investment in a specialized workforce, research and development, data capability and information technology infrastructure, cross-agency Tribal partnerships, and funding and contracting systems that promote collaboration rather than competition.

Building off the success of the six pilot Tribal organizations, the Tiwahe Initiative will add two more pilot Tribes or Tribal organizations in 2023. The BIA is soliciting LOI from Tribes or Tribal organizations interested in joining this innovative and impactful Tiwahe Initiative. The selection process and selection framework are outlined below. Please address any questions or comments to Meghan Bishop, Policy Specialist to the Assistant Secretary — Indian Affairs at (202) 208-4709 or via email: meghan.bishop@bia.gov.

Selection Process:

LOIs are due on December 31, 2022. The LOIs will be reviewed by representatives from BIA and current pilot Tribal organizations. The review by the selection team will be blind, ensuring that no applicant Tribe or Tribal organization is unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged. Please email the LOI to Meghan Bishop, Policy Specialist to the Assistant Secretary — Indian Affairs at meghan.bishop@bia.gov.

Selection Framework:

LoIs should address the following:

- Background of the Tribe or Tribal organization.
- Description of the issues that the Tribe or Tribal organization would use Tiwahe Initiative funding to address including the Tribe's or Tribal organization's priorities?
- Description of how Tiwahe Initiative funding would be used to address the issues. What are the Tribe's or Tribal organization's proposed outcomes? How would Tiwahe Initiative funding shape the future for the Tribe's or Tribal organization's community and families?

FAQ:

What level of readiness is required to be considered for inclusion in the Tiwahe Initiative?

Tribes or Tribal organizations should identify their goals and/or outcomes that they would like to achieve through participation in the Tiwahe Initiative. Additional considerations for selection may include Tribal leadership interest, community support for change, and the willingness of the Tribe or Tribal organization to be an active partner in the Tiwahe Initiative. It is important that the LOI indicate how the Tribe's or Tribal organization's needs and outcomes/goals align with the mission and purpose of the Tiwahe Initiative as described in Appendix 3 of the 2021 Congressional Report: Tiwahe Outcomes Framework at

<https://www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/dup/assets/bia/ois/dhs/4%20-%20Appendix%203%20-%20Tiwahe%20Outcomes%20Framework.pdf>.

Does a Tribe or Tribal organization need to present a comprehensive plan to be selected?

No. Once selected, BIA and the current Tribal organizations will work closely with the new Tribe or Tribal organization to help develop their comprehensive plan to address the Tribe's or Tribal Organization's priorities.

How can the Tiwahe Initiative funding be used by the Tribe or Tribal organizations?

Tiwahe Initiative funding resources can be used to sustain existing services and/or enhance services to children, youth, and families. Each Tribe or Tribal organization is required to hire a Family Advocacy Coordinator (FAC) to ensure the approved Tiwahe Initiative plan is implemented by the participant and to work with the National Tiwahe Initiative Coordinator. The funding to hire the FAC will be provided by the BIA's Division of Human Services, and not from the Tiwahe Initiative allocation. Additionally, new Tiwahe Initiative pilot sites will have the flexibility to utilize their allocation of funds to support any of the Tiwahe Initiative components that fit their needs, including Social Services, ICWA, Courts, Job Placement and Training, Housing, and Recidivism Reduction. Tiwahe Initiative funding is recurring and will be added to the Tribe's Tribal Priority Allocation base amount for Social Services, ICWA, Job Placement and Training, and Housing upon successful completion of the demonstration period.

What programs is the Tiwahe Initiative currently supporting?

The Tiwahe Initiative currently funds services involving six core programs – Housing, Social Services, Job Placement and Training, ICWA, Recidivism Reduction, and Tribal Courts. The BIA is requesting additional appropriations to expand the Tiwahe Initiative services to include a seventh program, Economic Development. If successful, this will support Tribes in developing and operating comprehensive, integrated economic and community development programs.

Information on the programs the Tiwahe Initiative is supporting can be found in the 2021 Congressional Report at www.bia.gov/ois/tiwahe.

Does the Tribe or Tribal organization need to be self-governance compact to be eligible for the Tiwahe Initiative?

No. Self-governance compact, self-determination contract, and direct-service Tribes or Tribal organizations are all eligible for the Tiwahe Initiative. The current pilot Tribal organizations include both self-governance compact and self-determination contract Tribes. Spirit Lake, currently a self-determination contract Tribe, began the pilot as a BIA direct-service Tribe. Self-determination contract Tribes will be required to have a statement of work and a budget justification, in addition to the Tiwahe Initiative Plan, to obtain Tiwahe Initiative funding. The BIA will work with self-determination contract Tribes or Tribal organizations to develop these additional documents.

Is a Tribal resolution required to be considered for the Tiwahe Initiative?

No, not at the time the LOI is submitted. When the Tribe or Tribal organization is selected, they will be sent a formal invitation to join the Tiwahe Initiative. A Tribal resolution will be required at that time to become involved with the Tiwahe Initiative.

Will the Tribe or Tribal Organization be required to submit a new LOI if it is not selected at this time?

No. Letters of Intent provided subject to this round will be maintained on file. The BIA is requesting additional appropriations to further expand the Tiwahe Initiative. If the request is approved and the Tiwahe Initiative is expanded, the BIA will reach out to the Tribes or Tribal organizations with LOIs on file to confirm continued interest in becoming part of the program. Tribes or Tribal organizations may update their LOI at that time if needed.

Timeline:

