



**Homeland
Security**

Office of Partnership and Engagement
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

June 5, 2023

Dear Tribal Leader,

On behalf of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Office of Partnership and Engagement (OPE) is honored to invite you to participate in a Nation-to-Nation consultation on Tribal Equity, including how DHS can more equitably deliver outcomes for Tribal Nations through its policies, programs, and activities. The enclosed Framing Paper provides explanatory information and questions to facilitate the consultation. Immediately following verbal comments from the Tribal Nations during the tribal consultation, Alaska Native Corporations and tribal organizations will have an opportunity to provide comments. This consultation will be held virtually:

Tribal Equity: The 2024 DHS Equity Action Plan

Date: July 6, 2023

Time: 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm Eastern Time

Register at the following link:

<https://hq-dhs.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJItdOutqjoiHQw5JxPAHgapRGyudaT8vTs>

We also welcome written comments until the close of business August 7, 2023, via email to tribal.affairs@hq.dhs.gov with the subject line “Tribal Equity.”

The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs, Miriam Enriquez, will serve as the Department’s tribal consultation official and lead this effort. If you have any questions, please contact Laurel Iron Cloud, Senior Advisor and Acting Director for Tribal Affairs or Tricia Swartz, Senior Advisor for Tribal Affairs at tribal.affairs@hq.dhs.gov with the subject line “Tribal Equity.”

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Brenda F. Abdelall

Assistant Secretary for Partnership and Engagement

Enclosures:

Framing Paper
DHS Organizational Chart
DHS Equity Action Plan
E.O. 13985, E.O. 14091

DHS/OPE Consultation on Tribal Equity
July 6, 2023

Framing Paper

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was established in 2002, combining 22 different federal departments and agencies into a unified, integrated Cabinet agency. Today, DHS is comprised of operational and support components that employ more than 260,000 people with wide-ranging duties, all in furtherance of a unified mission to safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values. (See [DHS Organizational Chart](#), attached).

In delivering its mission, DHS and its components take seriously tribal sovereignty and the Federal Government's unique trust relationship and responsibility to protect and support Tribal Nations. DHS is honored to have strong Nation-to-Nation relationships and partnerships with federally recognized tribes who also share a commitment to security.

To produce better outcomes and continue to build trust and partnerships, DHS and its components are dedicated to advancing equity for all, meaning the consistent and systematic treatment of all individuals in a fair, just, and impartial manner, including communities historically underserved, discriminated against, and/or adversely affected. This commitment to equity includes American Indian and Alaska Native tribal entities and citizens of the same.¹

In furtherance of advancing equity, DHS will issue a 2024 DHS Equity Action Plan as a successor to the 2022 "[DHS Equity Action Plan](#)" (the 2022 Plan, attached) pursuant to Executive Orders [13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*](#) (E.O. 13985, attached) and [14091, *Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*](#). (E.O. 14091, attached).

As the Departmental lead for Tribal Affairs, the Office of Partnership and Engagement, in collaboration with the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL), intends to include Tribal Equity within the 2024 Plan and requests input from Tribal Nations on how DHS can more equitably deliver outcomes for Tribal Nations through its policies, programs, and activities. We invite input and present the following questions to facilitate discussion:

1. What changes in funding and grants administration across DHS and its components might further equity for Tribal Nations?
 - Examples might include changes to tribal set-asides, cost-sharing requirements, outreach and technical assistance, streamlining processes, multi-year funding, minimum funding thresholds, consideration of the sometimes higher costs of program delivery to rural and smaller communities, consideration of tribal ways of life and calendars; and other specific tribal concerns.
2. Are there existing DHS policies, procedures, or operational practices that may create inequitable outcomes for Tribal Nations and their members? What specific changes in

¹ For the full definition of "Equity" see Executive Orders 13985 and 14091, attached.

DHS policies, procedures, or operational practices, or in current legislation, do Tribal Nations believe are needed to ensure consistent, fair, and equitable treatment of Tribal Nations and their tribal citizens or members?

- Examples might include operations impacting tribal lands, support of tribal cultural traditions, disaster assistance for those engaged in subsistence fishing and/or hunting, removal of certain grant requirements, access to certain grant funding such as baseline emergency preparedness grants, or other changes and improvements in DHS processes and procedures.
3. Would increasing the types or frequency of DHS engagement and collaboration with Tribal Nations help to further equity?
- Examples might include more federal liaisons or increased presence of the same; citizens of Tribal Nations sitting on DHS advisory councils, committees, or within federal employment; resources such as written materials; increased access for certain Indigenous language interpreters or translation services; acknowledgements by DHS when tribal ideas, proposals, or images are used; or other opportunities for engagement and collaboration.
4. DHS held a listening session on November 29, 2022, on the “Handling of Sacred, Ceremonial, and Cultural Items,” and the results of the session will be considered for the 2024 Plan. Do federally recognized tribes have additional matters for DHS to consider regarding the screening or handling of items?
- An example might be additional information not provided during the prior listening session on improved and culturally appropriate screening and handling procedures during border crossings, airport travel and repatriations.
5. Do DHS policies, procedures, or operational practices create environmental justice/equity concerns for Tribal Nations and, if so, what are the concerns and how might DHS address such concerns?

DHS welcomes submission of written comments until the close of business on Monday, August 7, 2023, at tribal.affairs@hq.dhs.gov with the subject line “Tribal Equity.”