



A MARSHALL PLAN FOR TRIBAL NATIONS: PROPOSAL SUMMARY

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Tribal Nations are inherently sovereign political entities that have been recognized and acknowledged by the United States through the U.S. Constitution, Treaties, federal statutes, and judiciary decisions by the Supreme Court. Through the exchange and taking of our lands and resources, the U.S. established solemn, legal agreements that established trust and treaty obligations to Tribal Nations and Native people. However, the U.S. has consistently failed to live up to these obligations—both by failing to deliver on the funding it owes to Tribal Nations in exchange for its resource takings, and by restricting Tribal Nations’ full exercise of our inherent sovereign governmental authorities.

What is a “Marshall Plan for Tribal Nations”?

At the end of World War II, the U.S. was willing to make a substantial investment in a Marshall Plan for European nations for the purposes of nation rebuilding. As the U.S. begins to discuss similar aid to Ukraine¹, the concept of a Marshall Plan-like investment for Tribal Nations draws on the same restorative justice, political, and economic principles that underlay the European Marshall Plan. Further, the federal government’s trust and treaty obligations make it morally and legally bound to make such an investment. In developing and implementing a Marshall Plan for Tribal Nations, all branches of the U.S. federal government, including independent federal entities, authorities, and agencies, must—

- Recognize and take responsibility for trust and treaty obligations arising out of its permanent occupation of Tribal homelands and our massive cession of resources that built the foundation of today’s America.
- Adopt a domestic diplomacy model that is based on mutual respect and recognizes the full exercise of Tribal Nations’ rights and authorities that inherently belong to us.

Key Recommendations in Developing a Marshall Plan for Tribal Nations

- Make a significant one-time payment (in addition to existing trust and treaty obligations to provide full and mandatory funding to Tribal Nations) on the U.S.’s debt to Tribal Nations to bring us up to a baseline of economic and social stability. As an example, in FY 2021 the U.S. appropriated just \$25.2 billion to Tribal Nations, while the U.S. invested at least 1-2% of Gross Domestic Product in just the first year of the European Marshall Plan. In total, the U.S. spent \$43 billion in historical dollars on the Plan, which amounts to over \$750 billion in today’s dollars.
- Establish a Commission comprised of Tribal Nations, federal partners, and others to determine funding distribution methodologies.
- Establish a cabinet-level U.S. Department of Tribal Nation Relations designated to carry out the diplomatic trust relationship with Tribal Nations and streamline and facilitate the delivery of federal funds.
- Evolve consultation to consent and standardize and codify consultation requirements on a Nation-to-Nation, Leader-to-Leader basis.
- Reforms to how federal funding is allocated and utilized by Tribal Nations, including:
 - Move funding for all Tribal Nation programs from discretionary to the mandatory side of the federal budget;
 - Eliminate grantmaking and competitive award models, program reporting requirements, and limitations on funding utilization;
 - Change the federal award process so that Tribal Nations receive funds directly;
 - Expand P.L. 93-638 contracting and compacting across the entirety of the federal government; and
 - Expand 477 Program capabilities across all federal programs to empower Tribal Nations to consolidate federal funds into a single plan with a single reporting requirement.

¹ As of April 2023, the U.S. has already provided \$113 billion in military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/whats-future-aid-ukraine>.