



**April 7–9, 2026 | Wild Horse Pass Resort & Casino | Chandler, Arizona**

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## **Monday, April 6 – Arrival & Welcome**

Registration (12:00–6:00 pm)

Check in and pick up conference materials.

*Location: Hotel Lobby*

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## **Tuesday, April 7**

All-Day Opportunities

**Registration (7:30 am – 5:00 pm)**

*Location: Hotel Lobby*

**Tribal Delegation Meetings (8:00 am – 5:00 pm)**

Private, pre-arranged meetings between Tribal Nations and federal agencies, including IHS and DOI, to discuss priorities, issues, and opportunities. Coordinated directly with IHS and DOI.

**DOI Self-Governance Database: Training & Technical Assistance (9:00 am – 5:00 pm)**

*Location: Ocotillo*

Drop in for hands-on support with the DOI Self-Governance Database. Federal staff will be available throughout the day to answer questions, provide demonstrations, and help participants use the system more effectively.

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**Breakfast Provided (8:00 – 9:30) – Event Lawn**

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## **Morning Breakouts (9:30 – 10:45 am)**

### **How Are Tribes Using Artificial Intelligence?**

*Location: Palo Verde A*

Hosted in partnership with Arizona State University's American Indian Policy Institute, explore how Tribal Nations are using AI to support governance, service delivery, data management, and communications. Speakers will share practical examples, lessons learned, and key considerations around data sovereignty, ethics, and capacity.

Traci Morris, Executive Director of the American Indian Policy Institute, Arizona State University

Mari Hulbutta, Director of Data Stewardship, Chickasaw Nation (invited)

Paula Starr, Chief Information Officer, Cherokee Nation

### **Speaking With Impact: Advancing Tribal Priorities in Washington**

*Location: Acacia C&D*

Learn practical strategies for engaging Congress and the Administration, shaping clear messages, and navigating political change while advancing Tribal priorities and Self-Governance goals.

Kayla Gebeck, Principal, Giizhik Law

Mary Pavel, Partner, Sonosky, Chambers, Sachse, Endreson & Perry, LLP

Moderator: Nicholas Thayer, UNLV

### **Indian Health 101**

*Location: Palo Verde B*

Hosted in partnership with the National Indian Health Board (NIHB), a foundational overview of the federal-Tribal relationship in health care, including the legal basis for federal obligations and how those responsibilities are carried out today.

A.C. Locklear, CEO, NIHB

Jamie-Lee Marks, Vice President, Policy & Advocacy, NIHB

Garrett Lankford, Director, Federal Relations, NIHB

### **Using Tribal Authorities to Lead Public Land Stewardship (Tribal Only Session)**

*Location: Acacia A*

Hosted in partnership with Native Americans in Philanthropy, examine how Tribes are using ISDEAA and other authorities to lead co-stewardship and co-management of public and ancestral lands. Panelists will share strategies, challenges, and lessons learned.

Shawn Watts, Supreme Court Justice, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, & Executive Director, Tribal Stewardship and Sovereignty Network

Rachel Brown, Senior Advisor for Conservation and Strategic Partnerships, Native Americans in Philanthropy  
Natalie Landreth, Partner, Nashoba Consulting  
Nada Culver, Partner, Nashoba Consulting  
Sam Kohn, Partner, Kaplan Kosch, LLP

### **Self-Governance: Lessons from Recent Tribal Transitions**

*Location: Cholla*

Hear directly from Tribal leaders who have recently negotiated Self-Governance agreements. The session focuses on planning, readiness, negotiations, and practical lessons for Tribes considering new or expanded authorities.

Bobby Gonzalez, Chairman, Caddo Nation of Oklahoma  
Victoria Kitcheyan, Councilmember, Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska  
Michele Scott, Councilor, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation

Moderator: Candice Skenandore, Self-Governance/Grants Director, Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut

### **Assuming BIA Probate Functions: Tribal Innovation, Regional Service Models, and Lessons Learned**

*Location: Palo Verde C*

This session will highlight how Tribal Nations are exploring new approaches to address challenges within the BIA probate program. Presenters will share perspectives on Tribal efforts to strengthen service delivery, reduce delays, and improve support for families navigating trust estate matters, as well as lessons learned from working with federal partners.

Jason Carrizosa, Chief Administrative Officer, Morongo Band of Mission Indians  
Rachel Mendoza, Probate Supervisor, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community  
Kelly Rael, Special Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior

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## **Late Morning Breakouts (11:00 –12:00 pm)**

### **Negotiation and Mediation: Indigenous Approaches to Resolving Conflict**

*Location: Palo Verde A*

This session explores negotiation and mediation skills grounded in traditional Indigenous dispute-resolution practices, transformative theory, and Tribal approaches to relationship-based problem solving. Learn how these methods emphasize listening, respect, balance, and long-term relationships—offering alternatives to adversarial, win-lose negotiation models.

Participants will gain practical insights into how Tribal techniques can be applied in governance, intergovernmental negotiations, workplace conflict, and community decision-making, strengthening collaboration while honoring Tribal values and sovereignty.

Shawn Watts, Supreme Court Justice, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, & Director, Mediation & Negotiation Clinic, University of Kansas School of Law  
Candice Skenandore, Self-Governance/Grants Director, Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut  
Karen Fierro, Self-Governance Director, Ak-Chin Indian Community

### **Understanding Tribal and Residual Shares**

*Location: Palo Verde B*

This session will provide an overview of Tribal and residual shares and how they are calculated, allocated, and managed within Self-Governance and Self-Determination frameworks. Presenters will explain why these distinctions matter, how they affect funding levels and program operations, and common issues that arise in negotiations and implementation.

Lindsay King, Chief Strategy Officer, Osage Nation Health System  
Terra Branson-Thomas, Senior Policy Advisor, Clause Law, PLLC

Moderator: Aidan McNulty, UNLV

### **Self-Governance Across the Federal Government – General Overview of Self-Governance Implementation Across Several Agencies**

*Location: Acacia A*

The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA) has demonstrated long-standing success through its application at the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Health Service (IHS). However, efforts to expand self-governance to other federal agencies have taken varied paths, each with distinct opportunities and challenges. This session will explore recent efforts to expand and use self-governance agreements at the U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as well as ongoing efforts to expand self-governance to more than 20 non-IHS programs within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Jay Spaan, Executive Director, Tribal Self-Governance  
Kayla Gebeck, Principal, Giizhik Law

### **Developing a Social Media Strategy: Measuring Impact and Navigating the Algorithm**

*Location: Acacia C&D*

Learn how to design intentional social media strategies, understand platform algorithms, and track meaningful metrics to strengthen digital engagement.

NUNA Consulting

## **Strengthening Tribal Health Through Strategic Revenue Management**

*Palo Verde C*

A case study on how strategic third-party billing and revenue management can expand services, improve sustainability, and support Tribal health system growth.

Lisa Schlosser, Sr. Director Patient Accounts, Oyate Health Center, Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board

Sunny Colombe, Sr. Vice President/Chief Financial Officer, Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board

## **21st Century Planning: Building Strategic Plans That Actually Work**

*Location: Acacia B*

Participants explore how to co-design governance and program plans that reflect tribal values while meeting federal compliance requirements. The session covers goal-setting, priority alignment, and building measurable outcomes — with examples drawn from health, social services, and education departments.

Charles Dayton, Tribal Strategy

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## **Lunch Break (12:00 – 1:30 pm)**

Lunch is on your own, and attendees are encouraged to explore the variety of dining options available throughout Wild Horse Pass. On-site choices include Fullhouse Café, Ling & Louie's Asian Bar and Grill, a food court with FatBurger and Rizzo's pizza, and a food truck located on the event lawn.

Additional dining options are available within a short drive or by delivery, including restaurants at the Phoenix Premium Outlets, Rudy's Country Store and Bar-B-Q, and other nearby locations. Please plan accordingly and enjoy the break before afternoon sessions resume.

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## **Afternoon Breakouts (1:30–2:45 pm)**

### **Accounting for Self-Governance Funds: How Compacts Differ from Grants**

*Location: Acacia C&D*

This session provides a focused overview of how Self-Governance funding differs from grants from an accounting and compliance perspective. Speakers will discuss the statutory basis for Self-Governance funding, how it flows through compacts and funding agreements, and why applying grant-based rules can undermine flexibility and efficiency.

Participants will leave with a clearer framework for proper financial treatment of Self-Governance funds.

Linda Austin, Chief Operations Officer, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo  
Lawrence Barton, Treasurer, Oneida Nation

### **Section 105(l) of ISDEAA: Tribal Implementation and Federal Perspectives**

*Location: Palo Verde A*

This two-part breakout session will provide a comprehensive look at Section 105(l) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA) and its role in supporting Tribal Self-Governance.

1:30 – 2:00: The first panel will focus on the importance of Section 105(l) for Tribal Self-Governance and will share Tribal experiences negotiating and implementing 105(l) lease agreements, including strategies for facility planning, documentation, reimbursement, and aligning leases with broader health and governance priorities.

Geoff Strommer, Partner, Hobbs, Straus, Dean & Walker, LLP

2:00 – 2:45: The second panel will bring together federal representatives responsible for reviewing, negotiating, and executing 105(l) agreements to discuss agency processes, policy considerations, and opportunities to improve coordination and timeliness.

Chris Poole, Area Director, Indian Health Service  
Cody Seeton, Chief, Office of Tribal Leases, Indian Affairs, DOI

Moderator: Candice Skenandore, Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut

### **Core Concepts: Communication Training Based on Tribal Values**

*Location: Acacia A*

Southcentral Foundation (SCF), an Alaska Native customer-owned health system, operates the Nuka System of Care, which emphasizes strong relationships between providers and customer-owners. Through its three-day Core Concepts training—rooted in Alaska Native values of storytelling and listening—SCF has achieved high customer and employee satisfaction and partnered with other Tribal organizations, including Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority and the Great Plains Tribal Leaders Board, to adapt the training for their own use.

April Kyle, President and CEO, Southcentral Foundation  
Casey Cooper, CEO, Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority  
Jerilyn Church, CEO, Great Plains Tribal Chairmen’s Health Board

### **Federal Indian Law 101: Understanding the Tribal–Federal Relationship**

*Location: Palo Verde B*

An introductory overview of Tribal sovereignty, the federal trust responsibility, and

government-to-government relations. Designed for federal staff and partners seeking a practical foundation for working effectively with Tribal governments.

Larry Roberts, Attorney General, Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut  
Derrick Beetso, Professor of Practice & Executive Director, Indian Gaming and Self-Governance, Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, Arizona State University

Moderator: Sam Phillips, ASU

### **Self-Governance at the Department of the Interior (DOI): A Primer from the DOI Office of Self-Governance**

*Location: Palo Verde C*

The Department of the Interior's (DOI) Office of Self-Governance (OSG) staff will provide an orientation to Self-Governance, as authorized under Title IV of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.

Matt Kallappa, Acting Director, OSG, DOI  
Vickie Hanvey, Program Policy Analyst, DOI

### **Recent Medicaid, Medicaid Updates and Other ACA/IHC Hot Topics**

*Location: Cholla*

This session will address breaking updates on high priority "hot topics" in Medicare, Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act/Indian Health Care Improvement Act (ACA/IHCIA), and One Big Beautiful Bill Act Implementation. Topics include administrative priorities in Medicaid, Medicare Reform, updates on Tribal Sponsorship opportunities, and resources available for Tribal Nations.

Cyndi Ferguson, ACA/IHCIA Project Lead, Governmental Relations Advisor, Hobbs, Straus, Dean & Walker, LLP  
Elliott Milhollin, Partner, Hobbs, Straus, Dean & Walker, LLP  
Elizabeth Bailey, Governmental Relations Advisor, Hobbs, Straus, Dean & Walker, LLP

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## **Late Afternoon Breakouts (3:15–4:45 pm)**

### **3:15 – 4:00: Telling Your Own Story: Demonstrating the Power of Self-Governance**

*Location: Acacia A*

This session explores why controlling the narrative matters and how Tribal Nations can use storytelling as a strategic tool to demonstrate the real impact of Self-Governance. Presenters will discuss how stories—grounded in lived experience, data, and community values—can shift perceptions, influence decision-makers, and strengthen support for Tribal-led solutions.

Participants will learn practical approaches for identifying and sharing stories that reflect Tribal priorities, protect sovereignty, and highlight success, helping Tribes move beyond deficit-based narratives and clearly communicate the power of Self-Governance to policymakers, partners, and the public.

Jeremy Charles, Writer, Director, Producer, Pursuit Films

#### **4:00 – 4:45: Public Health Campaigns: Developing an Effective Message**

*Location: Acacia A*

This session will focus on how health systems can design public health campaigns that resonate with their communities and reflect Tribal values, culture, and priorities. Presenters will share strategies for developing clear, culturally grounded messages, choosing the right communication channels, and tailoring outreach to reach different audiences within the community.

Participants will also explore how to assess what’s working, adapt messaging based on feedback and data, and build trust through consistent and authentic communication—supporting more effective public health outcomes and community engagement.

Meredith Raimondi, Senior Vice President of Policy and Communications, National Council of Urban Indian Health

#### **Self-Governance’s Impact on Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community**

*Location: Acacia C&D*

Tribal Self-Governance has empowered Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (SRPMIC) to create a “Community of Caring” model that is focused on improving the “5 Determinants of Health” of our clients and patients. Our current goal is to increase the average age of mortality of our Community Members from 52 years of age to 57 years of age within the next 5 years. We call this our “5 in 5” Initiative. The presentation will inform others how Tribal Self-Governance has empowered SRPMIC HHS to hire over 200 Community Members within the last three years and create a sustainable health and wellness deliverable model that will improve the health and wellness of seven generations.

Joseph Remitera, Health and Human Services Director, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community

#### **Changes to Contract Support Costs Policy After San Carlos Apache**

*Location: Palo Verde A*

This session will examine recent changes to Contract Support Costs (CSC) policy following the Supreme Court’s decision in *San Carlos Apache Tribe v. Becerra* and what those changes mean for Tribes operating under ISDEAA agreements. Presenters will provide an overview of how CSC policies have been updated, how agencies are interpreting and implementing those changes, and key issues Tribes should be aware of moving forward.

The discussion will focus on practical implications for funding, negotiations, and compliance, helping Tribes better understand how to protect their CSC entitlements and plan for future Self-Governance and Self-Determination agreements.

Rena Macy, Acting Director, Office of Indian Self-Determination and Self-Governance  
Lloyd Miller, Partner, Sonosky, Chambers, Sachse, Miller & Monkman LLP

Moderator: Aidan McNulty, UNLV

### **Building Tribal Workforce Capacity**

*Location: Palo Verde C*

This session will explore strategies Tribal Nations are using to recruit, retain, and grow a strong workforce capable of supporting Tribal Self-Governance and long-term community health priorities. Presenters will discuss use of Intergovernmental Personnel Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding with IHS, approaches to workforce development, training, and succession planning.

Melanie Fourkiller, Director of Self-Governance and Health Policy, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Debbie Danforth, Comprehensive Health Division Director, Oneida Nation

### **Understanding the Federal Appropriations Process**

*Location: Palo Verde B*

This session provides an overview of the federal appropriations process and how funding decisions are made from the President's budget request to final congressional action. Presenters will explain key steps, timelines, and decision points, and highlight where and how Tribal Nations can engage effectively.

Tyler Scribner, CEO, Tribal Sovereign Data

Elizabeth Carr, Cedar Rock Alliance

Elizabeth Malerba, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs, United South and Eastern Tribes

Moderator: Nicholas Thayer, UNLV

### **Using a Consortium Approach for Expanding Tribal Administration of BIA's Realty Program**

*Location: Cholla*

Learn about the experiences of Tribes considering a consortium approach to assume administration of BIA's realty program in one Region.

Robert Smith, Chairman, Pala Band of Mission Indians

Sam Kohn, Partner, Kaplan and Kirsch, LLC

## 5:15 – 6:15 pm:

Seven Directions Focus Group (INVITE ONLY)

*Location: Acacia B*

*Description: TBD*

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## Wednesday, April 8

### All-Day Opportunities and Side Events

#### **DOI Self-Governance Database: Training & Technical Assistance (9 am – 5 pm)**

*Location: Ocotillo*

Drop in for hands-on support with the DOI Self-Governance Database. Federal staff will be available throughout the day to answer questions, provide demonstrations, and help participants use the system more effectively.

#### **Self-Governance 101 for Philanthropy – INVITE ONLY SESSION (9:30 –11am)**

*Location: Cholla*

Tribal Self-Governance and Native Americans in Philanthropy are partnering to offer a session designed for philanthropic partners to deepen their understanding of Tribal Self-Governance authority and the role of Tribal governments.

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### **Plenary Session in the Showroom (9a–12p)**

8:30 – Plenary Session – Doors Open

*Location: Showroom*

8:55: **Posting of Colors** – Ira H. Hayes American Legion Post 84

**Opening Prayer** - Thurman “TJ” Loretto, 2nd Lt. Governor, Pueblo of Jemez

9:00: **Welcome and Digital Sovereignty Discussion**

Governor Stephen Lewis, Gila River Indian Community  
Moderator: Traci Morris

9:20: **Turning Change into Opportunity: A Tribal-Federal Leadership Exchange**

Mark Cruz, Senior Advisor to the Secretary  
Clayton Fulton, Chief of Staff, Indian Health Service  
Dr. Kim Hartwig, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Indian Health Service

Hosts:

Anthony Hillaire, Chairman, Lummi Nation

Michele Scott, Councilor, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation

Melanie Fourkiller, Director of Self-Governance and Health Policy, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

**9:50: Updates from the Department of the Treasury**

Fatima Abbas, Director, Office of Tribal and Native Affairs, U.S. Department of the Treasury

W. Ron Allen, Tribal Chairman/CEO, Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe

Host:

Tyson Johnston, Councilmember, Quinault Nation

Heather Washington, Director of Self-Governance, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community

**10:10: Tribal Co-Stewardship of the Mendenhall Glacier Visitors Center – *For Our People* Premiere and Panel Discussion**

Richard Peterson, President, Tlingit and Haida Tribes of Alaska

Hosts:

Jeremy Charles, Pursuit Films

Sahar Khadjenoury

**10:35: Working Together: Administration Updates and the Future of Tribal Self-Governance at the Department of the Interior**

William “Billy” Kirkland, Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior

Kennis Bellmard, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Economic Development, Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior

Jason Bruno, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Management, Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior

Hosts:

W. Ron Allen, Tribal Chairman/CEO, Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe

Tehassi Hill, Chairman, Oneida Nation

**11:00: Philanthropy & Tribal Nations: Building Strong Partnerships to Advance Sovereignty**

TBD

Melanie Fourkiller, Director of Self-Governance and Health Policy, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and Treasurer, Tribal Self-Governance  
Jay Spaan, Executive Director, Tribal Self-Governance

Host: Erik Stegman, CEO, Native Americans in Philanthropy

**11:15: Connecting With Our Youth Suicide Prevention Program – For Our People  
Premiere & Panel Discussion**

Jerilyn Church, CEO, Oyate Health Center, Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board  
Keaton Widow, Program Manager, Connecting with Our Youth Program

Hosts:

Heather Washington, Director of Self-Governance, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community

Jeremy Charles, Pursuit Films

11:35: Fireside Chat - TBA

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## **Lunch (12:15 – 2 pm)**

*Location: Palo Verde A,B,C with additional seating on the Event Lawn*

Lunch will be provided, offering a chance to step away from sessions and enjoy time together in a more informal setting. Attendees will also be treated to a live musical performances by Connor Chee and Lil Mike and Funny Bone.

*Connor Chee*

Award-winning pianist and composer from the Navajo Nation, celebrated for blending classical piano with traditional Navajo musical themes. A prodigy who began piano lessons at age six, Chee made his Carnegie Hall debut at just 12 years old. Chee's albums earned multiple Native American Music Awards.

*Lil Mike & Funny Bone*

Lil Mike & Funny Bone also known as Mike Bone are the two Native American rappers from America's Got Talent. They have spent years on stage developing their skills not just as rappers but as performance artists & motivational speakers.

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## **Afternoon Breakouts (2:00 – 3:00 pm)**

### **Q&A with Federal Leadership**

*Location: Palo Verde A & B*

Following the plenary updates from federal leadership, we invited leaders to join this session for an opportunity to continue the discussion and dialogue. Participants will have the chance to ask questions, explore shared priorities, and discuss solutions to common challenges.

Designed to go beyond what time allows during the plenary session, this Q&A creates space for more detailed conversation, practical clarification, and direct engagement with federal leadership—supporting transparency, problem-solving, and stronger Tribal–federal collaboration.

Panelists:

Mark Cruz, Senior Advisor to the Secretary

Clayton Fulton, Chief of Staff, Indian Health Service

Dr. Kim Hartwig, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Indian Health Service

### **Public Safety in Indian Country**

*Location: Cholla*

This session will provide an overview of public safety efforts in Indian Country and the federal programs that support Tribal law enforcement and justice systems. OJS will discuss current priorities, available resources, and opportunities for Tribal Nations to strengthen public safety through partnerships, self-governance, and expanded Tribal control of justice services.

Charles Addington, Acting OJS Director, Department of the Interior

### **Tiwahe Initiative Update**

*Location: Acacia C&D*

This session will provide an update on the Tiwahe Initiative, highlighting current priorities, recent developments, and lessons learned from implementation. Presenters will discuss how the initiative supports Tribal efforts to strengthen families, promote self-sufficiency, and coordinate services in ways that are responsive to community needs.

TBD

### **BIA Division of Energy and Mineral Development: Services and Resources for Tribal Energy & Mineral Development**

*Location: Acacia A*

This session will provide an overview of Tribal Energy Resource Agreements that offer Tribes an opportunity to assume key functions associated with energy development, and the services offered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Division of Energy and Mineral Development (DEMD) to support Tribal Nations with energy and mineral development interests. Presenters will highlight available resources, including direct technical

assistance and grant programs designed to help Tribes evaluate opportunities, build capacity, and make informed decisions aligned with Tribal priorities.

Johnna Blackhair, Deputy Bureau Director, Trust Services, BIA  
Jennifer Reimann, Acting Branch Chief, Energy and Mineral Capacity Development,  
Division of Energy and Mineral Development, BIA

### **Afternoon Breakouts (3:15 – 4:30 pm)**

#### **Tribal Listening Session: Self-Governance & Non-BIA Programs**

*Palo Verde C*

A listening session focused on Self-Governance opportunities in non-BIA programs.

#### **Q&A with Federal Leadership**

*Location: Palo Verde A & B*

Following the plenary updates from federal leadership, we invited leaders to join this session for an opportunity to continue the discussion and dialogue. Participants will have the chance to ask questions, explore shared priorities, and discuss solutions to common challenges.

Designed to go beyond what time allows during the plenary session, this Q&A creates space for more detailed conversation, practical clarification, and direct engagement with federal leadership—supporting transparency, problem-solving, and stronger Tribal–federal collaboration.

Panelists:

William “Billy” Kirkland, Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior  
Kennis Bellmard, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Economic Development, Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior  
Jason Bruno, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Management, Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior  
Bryan Mercier, Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

#### **Updates from the Department of Veterans Affairs (3:15 – 5:00)**

*Location: Acacia C&D*

A panel of leaders from the Veterans Health Administration and the Indian Health Service will provide updates regarding programs and services for Native Veterans as well as partnerships with Tribal governments and Tribal health programs, then will conclude with a workshop on reimbursement agreements. Time will also be available to engage in questions and answers from the audience.

#### **Overview of the Department of Justice’s Drug Diversion Control Program**

*Location: Acacia A*

TBD

## **Indian Health Service: EHR Modernization Update**

*Location: Cholla*

Mitchell Thornbrugh, Chief Information Officer and Director of IHS Office of Information Technology, Indian Health Service

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## **Evening Reception (5:30 – 9:00 pm)**

### **Heard Museum Evening Reception (Ticketed)**

Join us for a special evening reception at the Heard Museum, one of the nation's most significant institutions dedicated to Native art, culture, and history. Transportation will be provided from Wild Horse Pass to the museum in Phoenix, offering attendees a unique opportunity to experience this landmark cultural space together.

Guests will enjoy dinner, private access to museum galleries, live musical and traditional dance performances, and demonstrations by local Native artists. This immersive evening celebrates the richness and diversity of Native cultures in the Southwest and highlights the Heard Museum's longstanding role as a steward and storyteller of Indigenous voices and creativity.

Tickets for this reception are available for purchase and are limited in number. Attendees are encouraged to secure tickets early to take part in this memorable cultural experience.

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## **Thursday, April 9**

### **All-Day Opportunities**

#### **Beading and Fringing Workshop (8:30 am – 4:00 pm)**

*Location: Cholla*

This all-day Beading and Fringing Workshop offers attendees the opportunity to stop by at their convenience for hands-on, one-on-one instruction and time to work on a beading or fringing project. Whether you are new to beading and fringing or looking to refine your skills, instructors will be available throughout the day to provide guidance, answer questions, and share techniques.

#### **DOI Self-Governance Database: Training & Technical Assistance (9:00 am – 5:00 pm)**

*Location: Ocotillo*

Drop in for hands-on support with the DOI Self-Governance Database. Federal staff will be available throughout the day to answer questions, provide demonstrations, and help participants use the system more effectively.

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## **Morning Breakouts (9:00 – 10:00 am)**

### **Updates from IHS and DOI Offices of Self-Governance**

*Location: Palo Verde A*

This session will provide updates from the Indian Health Service Office of Tribal Self-Determination and Self-Governance and the Department of the Interior Office of Self-Governance on current priorities, recent developments, and upcoming initiatives affecting Tribal Self-Determination and Self-Governance.

Rena Macy, Acting Director, OSD, IHS

Matt Kallappa, Acting Director, OSG, DOI

Milo Booth, Director, Office of Tribal Government Affairs, DOT

### **Self-Determination in Action: Federal Contracting as a Tool for Native Self-Determination**

*Location: Palo Verde B*

Native participation in federal contracting has become a powerful—yet often underrecognized—tool for advancing Tribal self-determination. Hosted in partnership with the Native American Contractor’s Association (NACA), this panel will offer a high-level overview of how Tribally owned federal contracting enterprises promote economic sovereignty, build institutional capacity, and generate sustainable revenue that can be reinvested in Tribal priorities and community well-being.

Panelists will also examine recent attacks on Native federal contracting and the broader implications for Tribal Nations, particularly how these efforts undermine Tribes’ ability to offset chronic federal underfunding of essential programs operated under self-determination authorities. Grounded in lived experience and Tribal leadership, the discussion will highlight why federal contracting remains a critical component of modern Tribal self-determination and Nation-building.

Quinton Carroll, Executive Director, NACA

TBD

### **From Transition to Transformation: CSKT’s Self-Governance Journey**

*Location: Acacia A*

This session features a conversation with officials from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) reflecting on their transition into Tribal Self-Governance, including early challenges, key decisions, and how obstacles were addressed over time. Panelists will discuss how Self-Governance has evolved into a foundation for Tribal leadership and expanded control across areas such as health, natural resources, forestry, law enforcement, courts, culture and language revitalization, 477 programs, and the conveyance of the SKQ Dam and National Bison Range. Grounded in lived experience, the

discussion highlights Self-Governance as a long-term systems-building journey rooted in sovereignty and a forward-looking vision.

Michael Dolson, Chairman, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Ruth Swaney, Budget Director and Self-Governance Coordinator, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Patricia Hawkins, Budget Specialist, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

### **From Federal Obligation to Indigenous Innovation: Building the Future of Native K–12 Education**

*Location: Palo Verde C*

Native education is entering a new era - one where federal obligation meets Indigenous innovation. The National Fund for Excellence in American Indian Education, a Congressionally chartered foundation, is leading efforts to strengthen the Bureau of Indian Education by aligning federal resources with tribal sovereignty and community leadership. This session explores how Native educators, tribes, and federal partners are reimagining K–12 education through language revitalization, food sovereignty, school leadership, and youth workforce initiatives. Together, these efforts demonstrate that the future of Native education will be designed by Native communities and rooted in culture, accountability, and self-determination.

Heath Clayton, Lead Executive Officer, National Fund for Excellence in American Indian Education

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## **Plenary Session (10:15 am – 12:00 pm)**

### **10:15: Working Together: Administration Updates and the Future of Tribal Self-Governance at the Department of Transportation**

James Crawford, Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs, Department of Transportation

Hosts:

W. Ron Allen, Tribal Chairman/CEO, Jamestown S'klallam Tribe

Tyson Johnston, Councilmember, Quinault Nation

### **10:35: Increased Self-Determination over Food Programs: *For Our People* Premiere and Panel Discussion**

Melissa Gower, Senior Advisor, Policy Analyst, Chickasaw Nation

Hosts:

Kayla Gebeck, Principal, Giizhik Law

### **10:55: Technology, Sovereignty, and Service: Inside the Choctaw Nation's Drone**

## **Program**

James Grimsley, Executive Director – Advanced Technology Initiatives, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Host: Melanie Fourkiller, Director of Self-Governance and Health Policy, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

### **11:10: Integrating Traditional Stories into Behavioral Health – For Our People Premiere and Panel Discussion**

Angie Wilson, CEO, Klamath Tribal Health & Family Services  
Devery Saluskin, Recovery Support Supervisor

Hosts:

Heather Washington, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community  
Sahar Khadjenoury

### **11:35: Turning Change into Opportunity: A Tribal-Federal Leadership Exchange**

Kim Kovol, Principal Deputy Director, Administration for Native Americans

Hosts:

TBD

### **11:55: Prediction Markets: A forward-looking Analysis of Key Legal Trends Poised to Influence Tribal Gaming**

Danielle Finn, Director of the Indian Nations Gaming and Governance Program,  
William S. Boyd School of Law, University of Nevada – Las Vegas

TBD

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## **Lunch Break (12:15– 1:30 pm)**

Lunch is on your own, and attendees are encouraged to explore the variety of dining options available throughout Wild Horse Pass. On-site choices include Fullhouse Café, Ling & Louie’s Asian Bar and Grill, a food court with FatBurger and Rizzo’s pizza, and a food truck located on the event lawn.

Additional dining options are available within a short drive or by delivery, including restaurants at the Phoenix Premium Outlets, Rudy’s Country Store and Bar-B-Q, and other nearby locations. Please plan accordingly and enjoy the break before afternoon sessions

resume.

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## **Afternoon Breakouts (1:45 – 2:45 pm)**

### **DOT Non-Typical Funding Opportunities**

*Location: Acacia A*

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) will provide an overview of current funding streams, eligibility requirements, and priorities across DOT agencies. The discussion will highlight key Tribal transportation programs, including the Tribal Transit Program administered by the Federal Transit Administration and the Tribal Transportation Program administered by the Federal Highway Administration, while also introducing additional DOT resources that Tribes may be able to leverage. Designed to be practical and informative, the session will help Tribes better understand how to access, align, and plan for transportation funding to support community priorities.

James Crawford, Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs, Department of Transportation  
Milo Booth, Director, Office of Tribal Government Affairs, Department of Transportation  
Ocfuske (O.J.) King, Tribal Affairs Specialist, Department of Transportation

### **Advancing Tribal Sovereignty Through Partnership: Tools, Strategies, and Opportunities with the Coalition of Tribal Sovereignty**

*Location: Palo Verde C*

Explore the role of the Coalition of Tribal Sovereignty (CTS) in advancing Tribal sovereignty through coordinated advocacy, education, and practical tools designed to strengthen the Tribal–federal relationship.

Mark Cruz, Senior Advisor to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
A.C. Locklear, CEO, National Indian Health Board  
Jay Spaan, Executive Director, Tribal Self-Governance  
Kitcki Carroll, Executive Director, United South and Eastern Tribes  
Elizabeth Carr  
Ricki McCarroll, NUNA Consulting

### **Using Pre-Award/Startup Funding to Start or Expand Your Own Health Clinic and Pharmacy**

*Location: Palo Verde A*

This session will highlight how several Tribal Nations have successfully used the Pre-Award/Start-Up program to fund and expand new clinics, health programs, and Tribal pharmacies. Tribal panelists will walk through the process step by step, sharing candid lessons learned, challenges encountered, and strategies that helped move projects from planning to implementation.

Through real-world examples, the discussion will show how Pre-Award/Start-Up funding has supported greater Tribal independence in healthcare delivery, improved health outcomes, and created new revenue opportunities tied to Tribal health systems, gaming, and broader economic development.

Sarab Boga, Facility Director, Miccosukee  
Doug Weaver, Director of Finance, Mississippi Band of Choctaw  
Gov Quanchello, Picuris Pueblo  
Forest Tahdooahnipa, Chairman, Comanche Nation

Moderators:

Karen Knight, Partner, Face Rock Enterprises  
Martha Knight

### **Community Health Aide Program: Successes, Lessons Learned, and the Path Forward**

*Location: Acacia B*

This session will highlight the success of the Community Health Aide Program (CHAP) and its growing role in expanding access to care for Tribal communities across the country. Presenters will share how Tribes have used the program to strengthen local health systems, address workforce shortages, and deliver culturally grounded care—particularly in rural and underserved areas.

The discussion will also look ahead to the future of CHAP, including opportunities for expansion, policy considerations, and strategies to support long-term sustainability. Participants will gain insight into how the program continues to evolve and how Tribal Nations can build on its success to meet emerging health needs.

Tasha R. Mousseau, Vice President, Wichita and Affiliated Tribes  
TBD

### **Cross-Generational Leadership**

*Location: Acacia C&D*

Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, Gen Z... oh my! Today's workplace is a beautiful, buzzing beehive of generational diversity, and that can either be a source of strength or tension. This session explores how to lead across generations with respect, understanding, and savvy. We'll tackle the stereotypes, lean into the superpowers of each age group, and talk about real strategies for leading with empathy and adaptability in a multi-generational world.

Bryan Harris, Tribal Specialist, Paradigm Shift

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### **Late Afternoon Breakouts (3:00 – 4:15 pm)**

**NIHB Strategic Planning Session (3:00 – 5:00)**

*Location: Palo Verde A*

TBD

### **Leveraging PRC Funds to Expand Access Through Marketplace Insurance**

*Location: Palo Verde B*

Tribal Nations face ongoing challenges in ensuring access to comprehensive healthcare for their citizens. One innovative approach is Tribal Sponsorship—using Purchased/Referred Care (PRC) funds to purchase health insurance for eligible patients. This strategy not only expands coverage but also reduces financial barriers, improves continuity of care, and supports long-term sustainability.

In this session, we will share the Oyate Health Center’s experience implementing Tribal Sponsorship, including practical steps, compliance considerations, and lessons learned. Attendees will gain actionable insights into how this model strengthens Tribal sovereignty, aligns with Self-Governance principles, and positions Tribes to adapt to a rapidly changing federal healthcare landscape.

Nico Sheppard, Sr. Director of Patient Services, Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board  
Sunny Colombe, Sr. Vice President/Chief Financial Officer, Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board

### **Understanding Impacts to Self-Determination and Self-Governance from Changes in the Budget Process**

*Location: Palo Verde C*

Explore impacts from an evolving federal budget process and discuss opportunities for improvement.

Kyle Key, Chickasaw Nation  
Tyler Scribner, CEO, Tribal Sovereign Data

Moderator: Sam Phillips, ASU

### **Tribal Pharmacy Consortia and Fair Access to Drug Pricing**

*Location: Acacia C&D*

This session will highlight the creation of Tribal Procurement Partners, a Tribal Pharmacy Consortium formed in response to rising wholesale drug prices. Presenters will share key findings from the consortium’s formation, including disparities in pricing and attention given to Tribal pharmacies compared to the private sector, and gaps in transparency around wholesaler contracts.

Through real-world lessons learned, the session will explore how collective purchasing, shared knowledge, and stronger contract awareness can help Tribal pharmacies improve

negotiating power, increase transparency, and protect Tribal health systems from escalating costs—demonstrating how collaboration can strengthen Self-Governance in practice.

Jeff St. Louis, CEO, Native Purchasing Group

Thomas Siepka, RPh., MS FACHE, CEO, HCI – Healthcare Consultants, LLC

### **United in Purpose: Leveraging the Power of Partnership**

*Location: Acacia B*

As Tribal health systems continue to strengthen and expand services for their communities, leaders are exploring partnerships with philanthropic organizations as an additional source of support. This panel—featuring leaders from an Urban Indian Organization and two Tribally owned and operated health systems—will discuss the opportunities, benefits, and practical considerations of working with Direct Relief, one of the nation’s largest providers of charitable medicines and medical assistance. Presenters will highlight how philanthropic partnerships can enhance access to medications, emergency response resources, grant funding, and other tools that support improved health outcomes in Indian Country.

Kimberly Dutcher, Government Relations Advisor, Direct Relief

Cameron Chase, Director of Health, Tunica Biloxi Tribe

Megan Mackiernan

### **DOI Wildland Fire Program: Implications for Tribal Nations**

*Location: Acacia A*

This session will provide an overview of recent changes within the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Wildland Fire Program and examine the implications for Tribal Nations engaged in fire management, fuels reduction, and natural resource stewardship.

Aaron Baldwin, Division Chief of Wildland Fire Management, National Interagency Fire Center

Juliette Jeanne, Wildland Firefighting Administrator Branch Chief

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