

Guidance for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Tribal Health Research Office (THRO) Strategic Plan Consultation

This document was prepared to aid tribal leaders and community participants in the upcoming NIH tribal consultation occurring on June 6th, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Alaska Time in Anchorage, AK. The agenda for the consultation can be found at: <https://dpcpsi.nih.gov/thro/consultationJun2017>. The recommendations and comments received from this consultation will be utilized to create the first strategic plan for the Tribal Health Research Office at the NIH.

National Institutes of Health

NIH's mission is to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability.

- The NIH invests nearly \$32.3*¹billion annually in medical research for the American people.
- More than 80% of the NIH's funding is awarded through almost 50,000 competitive grants to more than 300,000 researchers at more than 2,500 universities, medical schools, and other research institutions in every state and around the world.
- The NIH main campus is located in Bethesda, Maryland.
- The NIH is composed of 27 [Institutes and Centers](#) of which many have an organ- or disease-specific focus, and the Office of the Director which is responsible for setting policy and planning, managing, and coordinating NIH programs and activities.

The Tribal Health Research Office

Established in 2015, the [Tribal Health Research Office](#) is located in the [Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives](#) in the NIH Office of the Director. The Tribal Health Research Office functions are to:

- coordinate tribal health research-related activities across NIH
- serve as a liaison to and NIH representative on tribal health related committees and working groups
- coordinate and support the NIH [Tribal Advisory Committee](#)
- collaborate with NIH Institutes and Centers on the development of reports on tribal health topics
- manage information dissemination related to tribal health research coordination
- convene trans-NIH committees, workshops, meetings and other activities related to tribal health research and scientific priorities
- coordinate with NIH Institutes and Centers to leverage resources or develop initiatives to support tribal health research
- convene at least yearly Tribal Consultation sessions

The first half of the consultation will provide information about NIH and the THRO which will help inform the discussions. The second half of the consultation will focus on discussions with participants around five recommended priorities that were created from several communications to NIH leadership by the NIH Tribal Advisory Committee. The five major recommended priorities are:

1. Enhance Communication and Coordination

2. Build Research Capacity
3. Expand Research, and
4. Evaluate Progress
5. Cross-cutting areas of Cultural Competency and Community Engagement

Some suggested questions for the consultation:

- What are your communities' priorities related to the major recommendations previously stated and how can NIH help address those priorities?
- How can the THRO facilitate any of the major recommendations stated above in your communities?
- In the area of communications, what types of information could the NIH provide that would help your community? What information have you received in the past? How would you prefer to receive that information, e.g., e-mail, fact sheet, newsletter, e.g., [Honoring Health: Resources for American Indians and Alaska Natives](#) or [NIH News in Health](#)
- What do you see as the priorities for building research capacity in your community?
- Does building research capacity include research training, research infrastructure, providing support for senior American Indian/Alaska Native investigators so they can mentor junior researchers, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education to interest AI/AN students in science careers, or other activities?
- Which NIH efforts focused on AI/AN populations need to be better coordinated? What form might such coordination take?
- How can NIH better engage the AI/AN communities in the work of the THRO?
- In addition to written materials and communications, what do you see as the priorities for outreach by the THRO or other NIH staff?
- Based on your interactions with NIH staff and researchers in the field, how can the THRO help enhance cultural competency at the NIH?
- What priorities exist in your communities that are not captured in the major topics above?

ⁱ*This amount reflects the sum of discretionary budget authority of \$31,381 million received by NIH in FY 2016 under The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016, Public Law (P.L.) 114-113, \$780 million derived from PHS Evaluation financing, and mandatory budget authority of \$150 million for special type 1 diabetes research authorized per P.L. 113-93 and P.L. 114-10. [Details regarding current appropriations are available from the Office of Budget.](#)