



Talking Points: U.S. Department of Justice Consultation on Plan to Establish Bureau of Justice Grants

About the Proposal

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) plans to consolidate the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), and the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) into a single grantmaking component, the Bureau of Justice Grants (BJG), “to reduce bureaucracy, create efficiencies, and reduce administrative costs.”¹ DOJ is currently seeking stakeholder feedback on the consolidation and plans to notify Congress in August and begin execution in September.

Purpose of the Tribal Consultation

The Department of Justice issued a [Dear Tribal Leader](#) letter on June 30, 2026, to invite Tribal Nations to participate in a virtual government-to-government consultation on the DOJ’s plans to consolidate OVW, the COPS Office, and OJP into the Bureau of Justice Grants. The Department also released a [framing paper](#) with additional information and consultation questions.

About the National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center

The [National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center](#) (NIWRC) is a Native-led nonprofit organization that provides national leadership to promote safety for Native women and communities by supporting culturally grounded grassroots advocacy and strengthening Tribal sovereignty. For the past 15 years, NIWRC has provided technical assistance, training, resources, research, and policy recommendations to Tribal Nations, victim services programs, and advocates to strengthen the response to and prevent violence against Native people and ensure safety in our communities.

Consultation Sessions (virtual)

- August 5, 2026, 3:00-5:00 pm ET
- August 6, 2026, 2:30-4:30 pm ET
- Register by August 3, 2026 - [Register Here](#)

Written comments

Due by September 4, 2026, by email at OTJ@usdoj.gov or by mail to Office of Tribal Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20530-0001.

¹ U.S. Department of Justice. (2026). *Bureau of Justice Grants: FY 2027 president's budget request*. <https://www.justice.gov/jmd/media/1434626/dl>

Talking Points to Consider:

- Congress created OVW as a “separate and distinct office within the Department of Justice, not subsumed by any other office”²—a structure reaffirmed in statute to ensure Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funds are efficiently administered to communities for resources and support in providing survivors a specialized, coordinated response. OVW and its staff provide subject matter expertise, institutional knowledge, and federal prioritization and investment in addressing domestic and sexual violence.
- The Director of OVW, as the head of an independent office, currently holds authority over grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts awarded by the office. Placing OVW under a BJS Assistant Attorney General would dilute that statutory authority and add a new layer of sign-off between Tribal grantees and decision-makers.
- OVW has a strong government-to-government relationship with Tribal Nations – built into law and practice and grounded in the federal trust responsibility – including in its VAWA-mandated annual Tribal consultation on enhancing the safety of Native women and improving the federal response to violence in Indian Country, as well as in its role administering funding tied to Special Tribal Criminal Jurisdiction (STCJ). A generalized grants bureau does not have the same statutory relationship or the institutional expertise built by OVW over several decades. Instead, it risks diluting national leadership in advancing these issues and burying them among competing priorities.
- OVW staff – who remain engaged with the full life cycle of a grant – develop longstanding relationships with grantees and have a deep understanding of VAWA and violence in Indian country. OVW staff can refine programs and adapt in real time to provide practical, informed guidance to law enforcement, prosecutors, and victim service providers. Restructuring risks staffing changes, new internal processes, and systems changes – all of which historically cause disruption to grant timelines, on which victim services and survivors rely. Given the specialized nature of the work and programs administered by OVW, especially those serving American Indians and Alaska Natives, it is essential for the office to remain independent. Consolidating OVW with any other office risks weakening the enforcement of VAWA and reducing victim-centered services, which are crucial for the safety of American Indian and Alaska Native people and communities.
- Meaningful Tribal consultation requires the federal government to engage with Tribal Nations *before* decisions are made, and that engagement must include genuine dialogue, room for questions, and openness to alternative approaches. The Department announced its intention to proceed with the OVW-BJS consolidation before formally consulting with Tribal Nations, and the framing paper questions ask how consolidation and BJS grant administration should work, not whether Tribal Nations support consolidation in the first place. DOJ notes in the framing paper that Tribal Nations have “consistently expressed support for reducing application steps, clearing budgets more quickly, and simplifying performance reports.” However, Tribal leaders have just as consistently warned that

² 34 U.S. Code § 10442

consolidating OVV funds and programs risks diverting resources away from lifesaving victim services programs to other priorities. Support for a simpler grants process is not support for eliminating OVV's independence. Consultation that only asks how to implement a decision that has already been made is not meaningful consultation; instead, it circumvents the dialogue that trust, harm prevention, and the government-to-government relationship rely on. Any effort to consolidate OVV with another office cannot proceed without congressional approval and must include extensive, good-faith consultation with Tribal leaders on how to reduce bureaucracy and improve efficiency without putting public safety and victim services at risk.

Recommendations and Questions for DOJ:

- Maintain OVV's independent, statutorily protected status. Any restructuring must keep OVV as a "separate and distinct office within the Department of Justice, not subsumed by any other office." Preserve the Director's final authority over VAWA grants, per 34 U.S.C. §§ 10442, 10444.
- Put Tribal funding protections in writing, including guaranteed set-asides, dedicated Tribal grant managers, and no disruption to funding and grant timelines. "Intended" is not a legal guarantee.
- Release the cost-benefit analysis for this consolidation with a specific explanation about how it will reduce the burden on Tribal grantees without disrupting services to Indian country.
- Incorporate testimony from the 2026 21st Annual OVV Tribal Consultation before proceeding. The DOJ should include a direct question regarding Tribal support for the proposed consolidation in the framing paper for the 21st Annual Government-to-Government Violence Against Women Tribal Consultation, to be held in September 2026. The Department should pause all further actions related to this consolidation until the October 12, 2026, written testimony deadline has passed and all Tribal feedback has been fully received and meaningfully considered.
- Share the final B/G structure and underlying legal analysis of how it complies with 34 U.S.C. § 10442 with Tribal Nations *before* the DOJ notifies Congress.
- How will OVV's statutorily-mandated annual government-to-government Tribal consultation be conducted and staffed under B/G? How will the consolidation affect the OVV Deputy Director for Tribal Affairs position under 34 U.S. Code § 10453?