



Department of Veterans Affairs
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON DC 20420

March 17, 2021

Dear Tribal Leader,

This letter serves as written notification of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) tribal consultation on tribal consultation. The written comment period will close April 20, 2021. Tribal leaders or their designee will also have the opportunity to participate in one of six joint agency virtual tribal consultation sessions held in collaboration with the Department of Treasury, Social Security Administration and the U.S. Small Business Administration on April 6, 7 and 8, 2021, (see link below for the notification letter). *It is important to note that although the deadline for written comments is listed in the March 8, 2021, interagency correspondence as Friday April 9, 2021, VA will accept written comments on VA's tribal consultation policy until April 20, 2021.*

The VA tribal consultation policy was established on February 4, 2011, in accordance with Executive Order 13175. On January 26, 2021, the Presidential Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships directed each federal agency to consult with Tribal Nations and Tribal officials on a detailed plan of actions each agency will take to implement the policies and directives of Executive Order 13175. This detailed plan will be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). An agency official will coordinate implementation of the plan and provide progress reports to the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy and the Director of OMB.

This is the first time the VA tribal consultation policy is being reviewed since it was established. VA, over the past 10 years, conducted tribal consultation annually in order to obtain and incorporate tribal input in policy, programmatic and legislative changes affecting how the agency serves Veterans. Recent legislation provided for the creation of a VA Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs, specifically the enactment of section 7002 of Public Law 116-315, the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020. Under the law, the VA Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs, among other things, will serve a role in the facilitation of government to government consultation between the Department and Indian tribes or tribal organizations, may offer recommendations regarding tribal consultation reports, may provide advice on appropriate strategies for tribal consultation and may make recommendations on the consultation policy of the Department on tribal matters.

VA requests that tribal leaders or their designee review the current VA tribal consultation policy and offer input that may be used to update the VA policy, including any recommendations for how to incorporate and reference the role of the VA Advisory

Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs. A draft of the proposed policy and implementation plan will be sent to tribal leaders and a notice posted in the Federal Register initiating tribal consultation and seeking comment this summer.

- The link to the interagency Dear Tribal Leader Letter announcing the 6 virtual tribal consultation sessions on tribal consultation [Dear Tribal Leader Invitation re: Joint Consultation on Tribal Consultation Policies \(treasury.gov\)](#)
- The link to the VA tribal consultation policy https://www.va.gov/TRIBALGOVERNMENT/docs/VA_Tribal_Consultation_Policy.pdf
- The link to the VA Tribal Consultation Directive [Directive 8603 20 Feb 2015.pdf](#)
- The link to the VA Tribal Consultation Handbook [Handbook 8603 20 Feb 2015.pdf](#)
- The link to section 7002 of Public Law 116-315, which requires VA to establish an Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs [Text - H.R.7105 - 116th Congress \(2019-2020\): Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#)

Please contact our office immediately if there is any problem with accessing the reference documents using the links provided and we will help you obtain the information. The direct contact is: David.Ward@va.gov, (202) 461-7445.

Written comments should be submitted to tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov no later than April 20, 2021.

VA values and respects the government to government relationship between the United States and tribal governments, and wishes to thank tribal leaders for their support, input, and engagement as we continue our work to honor and serve American Indian and Alaska Veterans.

Sincerely,



Kayla M. Williams