



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

**MAY 23 2023**

Dear Tribal Leader:

I invite you to submit a Letter of Intent to be considered for inclusion in the Tiwahe Initiative demonstration project. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is seeking to add two new demonstration sites to the Tiwahe Initiative and is seeking Letters of Intent from interested Tribes and Tribal Organizations.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, the BIA launched the Tiwahe Initiative as a pilot program to support tribes and Tribal organizations in their efforts to improve the health and well-being of families and Tribal communities. The Tiwahe Initiative is made up of several Human Services and Public Safety and Justice program components, which work together to protect and promote the development of prosperous and resilient Tribal communities.

Tiwahe is an extensive and bold approach to furthering Indian Self-Determination and Self-Governance. The Tiwahe model is effective because it allows Tribes to create their own potential by building communities of hope through cultivating culture and connection. Tiwahe provides freedom to design programs and integrate services within Tribal culture and tradition to produce powerful outcomes beneficial to Tribal communities and families living there. Thus, it allows flexibility in the administration of key Tribal programs, supports Tribal economic self-sufficiency, and strengthens Tribal cultural connections. Tiwahe fosters systemic change in the delivery of services to children and families through the integration of Tribal practices, customs, values, and traditions. Tiwahe offers Tribal organizations the flexibility to design programming and services to address the gaps and needs of its communities. Tiwahe focuses on improving collaboration and coordination across six core programs: Social Services, Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) programs, Tribal Courts, Pathways to Wellness – Recidivism Reduction, Housing, and Job Placement and Training. Funding for the FY 23 expansion may be used to support programming or planning under the Social Service and/or ICWA program areas.

Enclosed is the Selection Framework, which should guide your development of the Letter of Intent, as well as the Selection Criteria, in which the reviewers will use to assess Letters of Intent. The Letters of Intent will be reviewed by members from the current demonstration sites and by BIA representatives to determine inclusion in the Tiwahe Initiative demonstration.

Letters of Intent should address the following:

- Background of the Tribal Organization.
- Description of the issues that the Tribal Organization would use Tiwahe funding to address. What are the Tribal Organization's priorities?
- Description of how Tiwahe funding would be used to address the identified issues. What are the Tribal Organization's proposed outcomes? How would Tiwahe funding shape the future for the Tribal Organization's community and families?

**Letters of Intent may be submitted to Meghan Bishop, Policy Specialist to the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, by email at: [meghan.bishop@bia.gov](mailto:meghan.bishop@bia.gov) from June 1, 2023, through August 31, 2023.** You may also contact Ms. Bishop at (202) 208-7163 if you have any questions.

The Tiwahe Initiative Congressional Report is available at: <https://www.bia.gov/ois/tiwahe>. We strongly recommend reviewing the Congressional Report prior to submitting your Letter of Intent.

In addition, the BIA will hold a Letter of Intent solicitation-specific webinar for interested applicants on June 21, 2023, at 3 pm Eastern. Please register at: [https://doitalent.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_zzstTLXWQ9WJA\\_wjpJBjVw](https://doitalent.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_zzstTLXWQ9WJA_wjpJBjVw)

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bryan Newland".

Bryan Newland  
Assistant Secretary — Indian Affairs

Enclosures

# Tiwahe Initiative Selection Framework

## Description:

The U.S. Department of the Interior-Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is seeking Letters of Intent (LOIs) from Tribes or Tribal organizations (together, "Tribe") interested in participating in an expansion of the Tiwahe Initiative. Tiwahe, meaning "family" in Lakota, is about possibility. Launched in 2015, the Tiwahe Initiative includes 6 pilot Tribes representing a total of 61 Federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native villages. This innovative program empowers federally recognized Tribes to realize their potential by affording Tribes the flexibility to direct Tiwahe Initiative funding where it is most needed.

The Tiwahe Initiative is an extensive and bold approach to furthering Indian self-determination and self-governance. It allows flexibility in the administration of key Tribal programs, supports Tribal economic self-sufficiency, and strengthens Tribal cultural connections. The Tiwahe Initiative fosters systemic change in the delivery of services to children and families through the integration of Tribal practices, customs, values, and traditions. Additionally, the Tiwahe Initiative offers participants the flexibility to design programming and services to address the gaps and needs of their communities by focusing on improving collaboration and coordination across six core programs: Social Services, Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) programs, Tribal Courts, Law Enforcement - Recidivism Reduction, Housing, and Job Placement and Training. Funding for the FY 23 expansion may be used to support programming or planning under the Social Service and/or ICWA program areas.

The Tiwahe Initiative model is effective because it allows Tribes to create their own potential and provides freedom to design programs and integrate services using an outcomes-based approach, rooted in cultural values and traditions, to support well-being outcomes that meet the aspirations of American Indian and Alaska Native families. The Tiwahe Initiative should be understood as the sum of all its parts, including investment in a specialized workforce, research and development, data capability and information technology infrastructure, cross-agency Tribal partnerships, and funding and contracting systems that promote collaboration rather than competition.

Building off the success of the six pilot Tribal demonstration sites, the Tiwahe Initiative added two new Tribal demonstration sites and provided one-time, non-reoccurring planning funding to an additional 10 Tribes in 2023. To continue to expand the demonstration program, BIA will be adding an additional two demonstrations sites in 2023. BIA is soliciting LOIs from Tribes interested in joining this innovative and impactful Initiative. The selection process and selection framework are outlined below. Please address any questions or comments to Meghan Bishop, Policy Specialist to the Assistant Secretary — Indian Affairs at 202-208-7163 or via email: [meghan.bishop@bia.gov](mailto:meghan.bishop@bia.gov).

## Selection Process:

**LOIs are due by 11:59pm Eastern on August 31, 2023.** The Letters will be reviewed by representatives from BIA and current Tiwahe demonstration sites. The initial review by the selection team will be blind, ensuring that no applicant Tribe is unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged. **Please email the LOI along with the Tiwahe Face Sheet to Meghan Bishop, Policy Specialist to the Assistant Secretary — Indian Affairs at [meghan.bishop@bia.gov](mailto:meghan.bishop@bia.gov).**

## Selection Framework:

Letters of Intent should address the following:

- Background of the Tribe.
- Description of the issues that the Tribe would use Tiwahe funding to address including the Tribe's priorities?
- Description of how Tiwahe funding would be used to address the issue. What are the Tribe's proposed outcomes? How would Tiwahe funding shape the future for the Tribe's community and families?

## FAQ:

### **What level of readiness is required to be considered for inclusion in the Tiwahe Initiative?**

The Tribe should identify the goals and/or outcomes that they would like to achieve through participation in the Tiwahe Initiative. Additional considerations for selection may include Tribal leadership interest, community support for change, and the willingness of the Tribe to be an active partner in the Tiwahe Initiative. It is important that the LOI indicate how the Tribe's needs and outcomes/goals align with the mission and purpose of the Tiwahe Initiative as described in Appendix 3 of the 2021 Congressional Report Tiwahe Outcomes Framework at

<https://www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/dup/assets/bia/ois/dhs/4%20-%20Appendix%203%20-%20Tiwahe%20Outcomes%20Framework.pdf>

### **Does a Tribe need to present a comprehensive plan to be selected?**

No. Once selected, BIA and the current demonstration sites will work closely with the new Tribes to develop their comprehensive plan to address the Tribe's priorities.

### **How can the Tiwahe funding be used by the Tribe?**

Tiwahe Initiative funding can be used to sustain existing services and/or enhance services to children, youth, and families. Each Tribe is required to hire a Family Advocacy Coordinator (FAC) to ensure the approved Tiwahe Initiative plan is implemented by the participant and to work with the National Tiwahe Initiative Coordinator. The funding to hire the FAC will be provided through the Tiwahe Initiative allocation. Additionally, new Tiwahe Initiative demonstration sites will have the flexibility to utilize their allocation of funds to support the Social Service and ICWA Tiwahe Initiative components. Tiwahe Initiative funding is recurring and will be added to the Tribe's Tribal Priority Allocation base amount for Social Services and ICWA upon successful completion of the demonstration period.

### **What programs is Tiwahe currently supporting?**

The Tiwahe Initiative currently funds services involving six core programs - Housing, Social Services, Job Placement and Training, ICWA, Recidivism Reduction, and Tribal Courts. The BIA is requesting additional appropriations to expand the Tiwahe Initiative services to include a seventh program, Economic Development. If successful, this will support Tribes in developing and operating comprehensive, integrated economic and community development programs.

Information on the programs Tiwahe is supporting can be found in the 2021 Congressional Report at [www.bia.gov/ois/tiwahe](http://www.bia.gov/ois/tiwahe).

**Does the Tribe need to be self-governance to be eligible for the Tiwahe Initiative?**

No. Self-governance compact, self-determination contract, and direct-service Tribes are all eligible for the Tiwahe Initiative. The current Tiwahe Initiative demonstration sites include both self-governance compact and self-determination contract Tribes. Spirit Lake, currently a self-determination contract Tribe, began the pilot as a BIA direct-service Tribe. Self-determination contract Tribes will be required to have a statement of work and a budget justification, in addition to the Tiwahe Initiative Plan, to obtain Tiwahe Initiative funding. The BIA will work with self-determination contract Tribes to develop these additional documents.

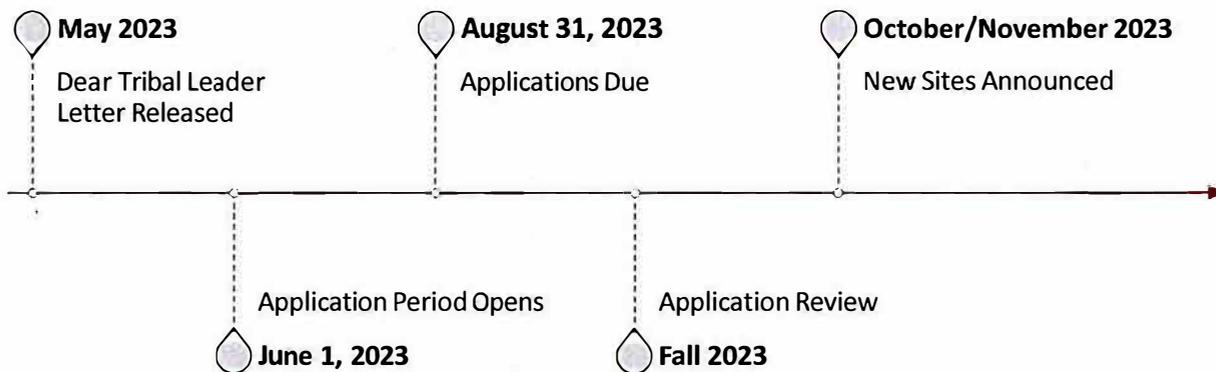
**Is a Tribal resolution required to be considered for the Tiwahe Initiative?**

No, not at the time the LOI is submitted. When the Tribes are selected, they will be sent a formal invitation to the Tiwahe Initiative. A Tribal resolution will be required at that time to become involved with the Tiwahe Initiative.

**Will the Tribe be required to submit a new LOI if the Tribe is not selected at this time?**

No. Letters of Intent provided subject to this round will be maintained on file. The BIA is requesting additional appropriations to further expand the Tiwahe Initiative. If the request is approved and the Tiwahe Initiative is expanded, the BIA will reach out to the Tribes with LOIs on file to confirm continued interest in becoming part of the program. Tribes may update their LOI at that time, if needed.

Timeline:



## TIWAHE SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS

This document serves as guidance for Tribes or Tribal Organizations (together “Tribe”) wishing to apply for Tiwahe. The below considerations were developed by the BIA and Tiwahe Demonstration Tribes to guide the review of the Letters of Intent. The considerations focus on Tribal Governance, Willingness to Implement the Tiwahe Framework, and Background and Demographics. Each consideration area is tied to findings from the 2021 Tiwahe Congressional Report<sup>1</sup>. No single consideration is dispositive for inclusion in Tiwahe. Instead, as stated in the Selection Framework FAQ:

*“The Tribe should identify their goals and/or outcomes that they would like to achieve through participation in Tiwahe. Additional considerations for selection may include Tribal leadership interest, community support for change, and the willingness for the Tribe to be an active partner in the Tiwahe Initiative.”*

### GOVERNANCE

#### Tribe’s Priorities

- Align with Tiwahe funding lines<sup>2</sup> and Outcomes Framework
- Drive a Common Agenda<sup>3</sup> across the Tribe’s departments utilizing Tiwahe funding lines
- Truly ready to make systemic change and implement new programming
- Overall vision statement

#### Tribal Governance and Transformation

- Willingness to challenge existing thinking and thought to traditional and cultural family well-being outcomes.<sup>4</sup>
- Active Partner and leadership of Tribal Council to drive transformation for Tiwahe.<sup>5</sup>
- Willingness to “break down silos that exist between programs and activities...”<sup>6</sup>
- Willingness to transform programs and activities “...in such a way that they help and enhance one another.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Tiwahe Report to the Congress, December 2021, <https://www.bia.gov/ois/tiwahe>

<sup>2</sup> Funding Lines – Social Services, ICWA, Tribal Courts, Job Placement Training (JPT), Housing (HIP)

<sup>3</sup> Common Agenda – Tribe’s departments, programs, and activities “...share...common goals and purpose...but ascertain the methods, actions, and outcomes in their own way.” (“Appendix 3: Tiwahe Outcomes Framework - Preface”, P2)

<sup>4</sup> Appendix 3: Tiwahe Outcomes Framework – Preface, P2

<sup>5</sup> Appendix 3: Tiwahe Outcomes Framework, P40 – “To be successful, the Framework requires the commitment and leadership of (Tribal Council and Leadership), Congress and Federal Government through a shared vision and willingness to achieve the strategies contained therein.”

<sup>6</sup> Appendix 3: Tiwahe Outcomes Framework – Preface, P2

<sup>7</sup> Appendix 3: Tiwahe Outcomes Framework – Preface, P2

## IMPLEMENTATION OF TIWAHE

### Key Principles Underpinning the Tiwahe Outcomes Framework

- Willingness to adopt and adapt the key principles underpinning the Tribe's implementation of Tiwahe.<sup>8</sup>

### Measuring Impact

- Willingness to implement infrastructure to support Tiwahe, including allocating human capital and complementing technology, given tribal context and resource availability.<sup>9</sup>
- Data collection and reporting practices to measure and reflect outcomes that matter to families.<sup>10</sup>
- Proposed outcomes by the Tribe.

### Capacity and Support

- Understands needs and gaps in Tribe's ability to build capacity and support the Tiwahe Outcomes Framework<sup>11</sup>
- Willingness and ability to evolve current systems to deliver on the Tiwahe Outcomes Framework<sup>12</sup>
- Finance/accounting systems that can utilize Tiwahe flexibilities to take advantage of flexible funding opportunities that Tiwahe espouses
- Can implement certain programming such as JPT
- Can implement culture into programming

## BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHICS

- Current demographics of the Tribe's members and those serviced or in need of service.
- Current social indicators in priority areas identified by the Tribe.
- Current partnerships among local, tribal, county, state, and federal providers to improve access to services for tribal children, youth, and families.
- Support of Tribal members and ability to communicate effectively with them.
- BIA Direct Service, 638, Self-Governance, other Tribal Consortia

<sup>8</sup> Appendix 3: Tiwahe Outcomes Framework, P14

<sup>9</sup> Appendix 3: Tiwahe Outcomes Framework, P11

<sup>10</sup> Appendix 3: Tiwahe Outcomes Framework, P10

<sup>11</sup> Appendix 3: Tiwahe Outcomes Framework – Preface, P2, "Challenges arose that required the Tiwahe pilot tribes to develop new skills in areas such as needs assessments and gap analyses to build capacity and support and to develop performance objectives and measures of success."

<sup>12</sup> Appendix 3: Tiwahe Outcomes Framework – Preface, P2, "Challenges arose that required the Tiwahe pilot tribes to develop new skills in areas such as needs assessments and gap analyses to build capacity and support and to develop performance objectives and measures of success."

# Tiwahe Face Sheet

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Tribe or Tribal Organization Name \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Point of Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Primary POC Email \_\_\_\_\_

Primary POC Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary Point of Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary POC Email \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary POC Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## Tribe or Tribal Organization Information

<b>BIA Region:</b>	Alaska	Eastern	Eastern Oklahoma	Great Plains
	Midwest	Navajo	Northwest	Pacific
	Rocky Mountain	Southern Plains	Southwest	Western
<b>Social Service Governance Type:</b>	OSG	638	Direct	None

## Tribe or Tribal Organization Mailing Address:

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_

## Tribal or Tribal Organization Leader Contact Information:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## Tribal or Tribal Organization Demographics:

Total Tribal Membership or Enrolled Citizens: \_\_\_\_\_

Has a Reservation:

Yes

No

PL-280:

Yes

No

477 Program:

Yes

No

Other: \_\_\_\_\_



Contact

Meghan Bishop, Policy Specialist



Phone

202-208-7163



Email

meghan.bishop@bia.gov

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_

Date Confirmation Sent \_\_\_\_\_

LOI No: \_\_\_\_\_