



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Office of the Assistant Secretary, Suite 600
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

DEC 5 2011

Dear Tribal Leader:

The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (Public Law 112-34), which was signed into law on September 30, 2011, created a new Tribal Court Improvement Program (Tribal CIP). In keeping with the Administration for Children and Families' Tribal Consultation Policy, we are seeking your input to help ensure successful implementation of the program.

The new Tribal CIP will provide tribal courts with the opportunity to compete for grants totaling one million dollars per year to enable those courts to: (1) conduct assessments of how they handle child welfare proceedings and to make improvements based on those assessments, including providing for children's safety, permanence, and well-being as set forth in the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA); (2) ensure children's safety, permanence, and well-being needs are met in a timely and complete manner (through better collection and analysis of data); and (3) provide training to judges, attorneys, and other legal personnel and stakeholders in child welfare cases.

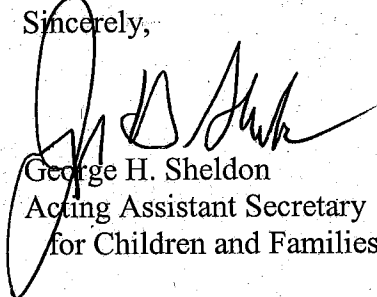
The law specifies that eligible applicants are the highest courts of Indian tribes or tribal consortia that: (1) are operating an approved title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance Program; (2) have been awarded a tribal implementation grant (indicating that they are seeking to implement a title IV-E plan); or (3) have a court responsible for proceedings related to foster care or adoption.

To seek consultation with tribes on the implementation of the Tribal CIP, we will hold two conference calls in January to seek input on key questions regarding the administration, scope, and duration of grant awards, as well as any other considerations for implementing the new program you may like to raise. You or your representatives are welcome to participate in these calls, which will be held on **Wednesday, January 11, and Thursday, January 12, 2012, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time** each day. Both calls can be accessed by calling 1-877-450-1348 and entering participant code 7744474. We encourage Indian tribes or tribal consortia to participate in one of these calls to learn more about the program and to share your thoughts on implementation. We have enclosed a list of questions for your consideration that will be discussed in the consultation.

Page 2 – Tribal Leader

If you are unable to participate in the calls or would prefer to submit comments in writing, please submit written comments electronically no later than Friday, January 20, 2012, to TribalCIP@acf.hhs.gov. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



George H. Sheldon
Acting Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families

Enclosure