



Update on U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) Tribal Engagement, including New Proposal Preparation Instructions

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Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships (January 26, 2021)



Charges executive departments and agencies with “regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials in the development of Federal policies that have tribal implications,” and strengthening the government-to-government relationship

- Agency heads shall submit to the OMB, **within 90 days**, a detailed plan of actions the agency will take to implement the policies and directives of Executive Order 13175.
- The plan shall be developed after **consultation** by the agency with Tribal Nations and Tribal officials

- **Action Plan was completed in April 2021 by a group of NSF volunteers, following the Director’s Town Hall with Tribal Nations and a written comment period**
- **Tribal Consultation and Engagement Working Group (TCEWG) was created in October 2021, to continue working with Tribal Nations**
- **Progress reports to OMB/White House in October 2021, October 2022, and October 2023**

Tribal Consultation and Engagement Working Group

The TCEWG was established in October 2021 to implement the Action Plan, continue to engage with Tribal Nations, and form recommendations

- Hosted a virtual engagement room
- Conducted a series of listening sessions
- Attended Tribal conferences

TCEWG charge renewed and expanded in 2023:

- Expand charge to include non-federally recognized Indigenous communities
- Increase outreach efforts
- Attend conferences with Tribal Nation attendees
- Establish a centralized website for NSF Tribal Engagement
- Add new policy to reflect what we heard
- Develop a draft Land Acknowledgment Statement



What we heard

During the TCEWG's extensive efforts to engage with and listen to Tribal Nations between 2021 and 2023, two main take-aways emerged:



“Nothing about us without us”

- Past research practices have harmed Tribal Nations
- Federally recognized Tribal Nations have interests and resources that are entitled to protection



More engagement and training is needed

- NSF doesn't have established relationships with many Tribal Nations
- Many Tribal Nations are not aware of NSF and how its mission is relevant to them



TCEWG accomplishments (so far)

- Increased engagement with Tribal Nations and other Indigenous communities
 - ✓ visited reservations in Montana (Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes) and Washington State (Lummi Nation)
 - ✓ engaged with Native Hawaiian communities through conversations and visits to various cultural sites
- Increased awareness of NSF through conferences highly attended by AI/AN/Native Hawaiians
 - ✓ Tribal Self-Governance Conference
 - ✓ National Indian Education Association
 - ✓ National Congress of American Indians
 - ✓ SACNAS
 - ✓ AISES
 - ✓ Native American Fish And Wildlife Society
- Developed new PAPPG language requiring Tribal Nation approval for proposals that may impact Tribal Nation resources or interests
- Developed language in the PAM to help implement the new PAPPG language
- Created a draft NSF Land Acknowledgment Statement
- Created the NSF website in support of Tribal Nations (<https://new.nsf.gov/about/tribal-engagement>)
- Began development of internal training to bring awareness of our responsibilities to Indigenous communities and provide guidance on the PAPPG requirement
- Worked with other federal agencies that have established relationships with Tribal Nations
- Provided annual reports to OMB on the NSF action plan since October 2021





Supporting Tribal Nations in Science and Engineering

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“ As NSF carries out its mission of funding basic research and education in all fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, we must also work to strengthen our nation-to-nation relationship with tribal nations.

- **Sethuraman Panchanathan**
Director, U.S. National Science Foundation

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PAPPG (NSF 24-1)

Summary of Changes

- Proposals that may impact the resources or interests of a federally recognized American Indian or Alaska Native Tribal Nation (Tribal Nation) will not be awarded by NSF without the prior written approval from the designated official(s) from the relevant tribe(s).
- For these purposes, references to “resources or interests of a Tribal Nation” are limited to resources and interests connected to Tribal Nation lands or those aspects of Tribal life that are within the domain of a Tribal Nation, (including, but not limited to, Tribal languages and subsistence rights on Tribal Nation lands) as opposed to individual Tribal Nation members.
- New Proposal Preparation Instructions:
 - New checkbox on the Cover Sheet to indicate if there are “Potential Impacts on Tribal Nations”
 - Proposers seeking funding for such proposals must provide at least one of the following at time of proposal submission:
 - (i) A copy of the written request to the Tribal Nation for the activities that require review and approval;
 - (ii) Prior to award, a written confirmation from the Tribal Nation(s) that review and approval is not required; or
 - (iii) A document providing the requisite approval.



FAQs on the new PAPPG language

Q1. Whose responsibility is it to ensure that the correct Tribal Nation individual/entity has responded to a PI's request for approval?

Q2. Will NSF develop a listing of what constitutes "Tribal Nation interests and resources?"

Q3. Does NSF have a recommended or required process for Tribal Nations to review and provide or deny approval of the research request?

Q4. Are non-federally recognized Indigenous communities covered under this new PAPPG language?

Q5. Is there a timeline for obtaining the approval?

Q6. How will an NSF Program Officer know whether the signatory on the approval letter is the designated official of the Tribal Nation?

