



STATE-TRIBAL CRIME VICTIM LIAISON DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM:

Tribal Outreach

To Establish Trust and Increase Awareness
of Victim Services



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NCJ 249582

December 2016

The mission of the Office for Victims of Crime is to enhance the Nation's capacity to assist crime victims and to provide leadership in changing attitudes, policies, and practices to promote justice and healing for all victims of crime.

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— PROBLEM STATEMENT —

Victims in American Indian communities in Oklahoma experience high rates of victimization, are underserved, and are unaware of available victim services.

Oklahoma's Tribal Communities

Oklahoma is home to the second largest American Indian population of any state in the Nation. Encompassing 38 federally recognized tribal headquarters and members of 67 tribes, American Indians (AI) live in all 77 counties in Oklahoma. The state's tribal communities experience alarmingly high levels of victimization, including high rates of violent crime. The AI homicide rate from 2004 to 2007 was, on average, 20 percent higher than the rate for other races in Oklahoma.¹

Compounding the issue of the high rate of victimization among Oklahoma's AI population is the limited access to direct services for these victims, who are often unaware of state and federal resources available to them. As a result,

many victims in tribal communities throughout the state are not informed about resources such as victim compensation, victim assistance, community programs, and victims' rights.

A Funding Opportunity Yields Results

In recognition of the high levels of violence experienced by Oklahoma's large AI communities, coupled with the scarcity of services provided to the state's AI victims and the lack of available resources, the Oklahoma District Attorneys Council, Victim Services Division, competitively applied for and received an Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) grant to provide outreach to AI victims in Oklahoma.

¹ Injury Prevention Service, Oklahoma State Department of Health, and Information Services Division, Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, 2014, *Violent Deaths in Oklahoma: Oklahoma Violent Deaths Reporting System, 2004–2010*, pp. 6–7. Oklahoma City: Oklahoma State Department of Health and Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, www.ok.gov/health2/documents/OKVDRS_Violent_Deaths_2004-2010.pdf.

This 3-year project—through which the Victim Services Division supported a State-Tribal Crime Victim Liaison—provided outreach to Oklahoma AI victims regarding tribal victim assistance, grant opportunities, and crime victim compensation, with markedly positive results that have continued beyond the end of the outreach project. Results include—

1. increased awareness of victim services funding available to AI communities in Oklahoma, including the establishment of tribal roundtables that are held six times annually.
2. a 567-percent increase in the number of Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) assistance funding applications from tribes in Oklahoma (from 3 in 2008 to 20 in 2016).
3. a 750-percent increase in approved victim services grant applications from tribes in Oklahoma (from 2 in 2008 to 17 in 2016).
4. a 6,473-percent increase in funding for services for AI victims in Oklahoma (from \$37,788 in 2008 to the equivalent of \$2,395,625 in 2016).

This *Oklahoma District Attorneys Council: State-Tribal Crime Victim Liaison Demonstration Program Report* discusses the activities of the Tribal Outreach Liaison to increase awareness of available victim services in the state, and explains how these efforts to engage tribes can serve as a model for states with a large

proportion of AI communities in need of improved access to victim services.

The Oklahoma State-Tribal Crime Victim Liaison Demonstration Program, initiated and administered by the state's Director of Victim Services Suzanne Breedlove and the Oklahoma District Attorneys Council, was funded through OVC's FY 2011 National Field-Generated Training, Technical Assistance, and Demonstration Projects as 3-year cooperative agreement number 2011-VF-GX-K023 under section 1404 (c)(1)(A) and (c)(3)(E)(ii) of the Victim Compensation and Assistance Act, as amended. It was evaluated by the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation.

High Rates of Victimization in American Indian Communities in Oklahoma

According to the National Institute of Justice, 84 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native women have experienced violence in their lifetimes. Men from these tribes do not fare much better—almost 82 percent have experienced violence. In the past year, for example, close to 40 percent of women and almost 35 percent of men with tribal affiliations experienced violence. Among these victims, 38 percent of the women and 17 percent of the men were unable to receive the services they needed.²

² A. B. Rosay, 2016, *Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men: 2010 Findings From the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey*, pp. 2–3. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, NCJ 249736, www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/249736.pdf.

AI communities in Oklahoma experience similar rates of violent crime. According to the Oklahoma State Department of Health, there were 27 violent deaths per 100,000 American Indian residents from 2004 to 2007. The AI homicide rate, on average, was 20 percent higher than the rate for other races in Oklahoma.³ Additionally, in a survey of 312 American Indian women from 29 tribes in Oklahoma, 39 percent of respondents reported being the victim of severe intimate partner violence.⁴

These high rates of victimization against AI communities in Oklahoma are even more alarming given that the state's AI population is the second largest of any state in the Nation. Oklahoma is home to 38 federally recognized tribal headquarters and members of 67 tribes. American Indians live in all 77 counties in the state, with 35 counties reporting that 10 percent or more of their population are American Indian individuals.⁵

Unlike other states with tribal nations, American Indian tribes in Oklahoma are not reservation-based. Instead, tribal land is scattered throughout the state in a checkerboard fashion [see map at Appendix A], often within yards or feet of city, county, or state land. Additionally,

much of Oklahoma is rural, and most of the Indian nations have headquarters outside the larger metropolitan areas of Tulsa and Oklahoma City. This unique demographic composition can result in ambiguity regarding which agency is responsible for law enforcement—and the jurisdiction whose law applies. Despite memorandums of understanding between tribal, state, and local agencies, Oklahoma has communities with large American Indian populations where law enforcement is sporadic or absent.

Outreach Plan and Project Implementation

The State-Tribal Crime Victim Liaison Demonstration Program established an outreach plan to improve tribal victim assistance, grant opportunities, and outreach to AI crime victims throughout the state. The Oklahoma District Attorneys Council, Victim Services Division, hired a State-Tribal Crime Victim Liaison, Brian Hendrix, to implement the plan (see Appendix B: Form Letter), which was divided into three phases from October 1, 2011, through September 30, 2014.

³ Injury Prevention Service, Oklahoma State Department of Health, and Information Services Division, Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, 2014, *Violent Deaths in Oklahoma: Oklahoma Violent Deaths Reporting System, 2004-2010*, pp. 6–7. Oklahoma City: Oklahoma State Department of Health and Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, www.ok.gov/health2/documents/OKVDRS_Violent_Deaths_2004-2010.pdf.

⁴ National Public Policy Office of the National Coalition against Domestic Violence, 2004, *Oklahoma Domestic Violence Facts*. Washington, DC. Retrieved September 2014 from www.ncadv.org/files/oklahoma%202.09.pdf.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, 2011, U.S. Census 2010. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce.



Phase 1

During Phase 1, the State-Tribal Crime Victim Liaison—

- met with various federal and Oklahoma state entities responsible for providing victim services;
- participated in community events and educational activities, which generated additional requests for presentations about victim compensation from community members;
- contacted leaders in the executive branch of each of Oklahoma’s 38 federally recognized tribes to inform them about the outreach initiative; and
- initiated state-tribal victim services roundtable discussions with tribal governments and service providers.

Phase 2

During Phase 2 of the outreach project, the Liaison—

- held 16 additional roundtable discussions;
- expanded outreach activities to include visits to tribal courts to inform the court clerk, judge, and tribal law enforcement officers of the crime victim compensation program;
- visited tribal and state programs that experienced personnel, funding, or leadership changes;

- maintained contact with advocates and coordinators in tribal victim services programs; and
- conducted a grant-writing workshop to help tribal program staff learn about and improve their ability to apply for victim services funding, and facilitated followup trainings on the grant application process.

Phase 3

During Phase 3 of the outreach project, the Liaison—

- held 16 more roundtable discussions focused on specific victim services topics;
- set up resource tables at domestic violence, sexual assault, child protection, law enforcement, and legal training conferences hosted by tribal programs and state associations; and
- conducted a second grant-writing workshop.

Challenges Unique to Tribal Communities in Oklahoma

The Victim Liaison’s outreach activities revealed numerous challenges in serving American Indian crime victims in Oklahoma, including limited access to services, lack of partnerships with the state of Oklahoma, certification limitations, and inexperience with the grant-writing process.



Limited Access to Services

Oklahoma's unique distribution of tribal communities results in large American Indian populations where law enforcement is sporadic or absent. Service providers are plentiful in the metropolitan areas, but resources are less accessible to victims who live outside the cities, where most of Oklahoma's Indian nations maintain their headquarters. Victims in rural communities face the challenges of finding the transportation they need to access services, paying for that transportation, and taking time off work or paying for child care. Victims in these communities may have difficulty in documenting that a crime has occurred, much less accessing services. Additionally, many victims in Oklahoma's tribal communities do not receive information about the local and state resources available to them, such as community programs, including domestic violence and sexual assault programs; and state victim compensation for costs, such as medical expenses and traditional healing and burial services. All individuals in these communities also may not know the rights they have as victims of crime.

Lack of Partnerships With the State

The State-Tribal Victim Liaison found that tribal law enforcement, victim advocates, and domestic violence shelter staff struggled to gain recognition from their state counterparts as viable resources and partners. These tribal service providers lacked contacts with

state entities with whom they could build relationships and establish partnerships to facilitate the provision of victim services. Moreover, the Oklahoma Indian Affairs Commission, which had provided information to the state's AI communities, was abolished in 2011. Still, many tribal governments in the state contribute significant financial resources and facilities for education, law enforcement, infrastructure, health care, and employment.

Certification Limitations

Oklahoma statutes require many victim services programs to be certified by one or more state agencies or organizations. Certified programs must submit to the supervisory and compliance authority of the certifying agency. However, Indian nations are recognized as sovereign entities, and tribal governments will not waive sovereign immunity so that programs can be certified through the state. Although staff members for these programs receive the same training hours as their state counterparts, their programs are not certified.

Inexperience With the Grant Application Process

The State-Tribal Victim Liaison found that very few tribes were applying for grant funds. In 2008, for example, Oklahoma tribes submitted only two applications for victim services funding. When tribes did seek funding, they applied almost exclusively for federal grants and seemed unaware of funding available



through state organizations such as the District Attorneys Council. Tribes submitted applications written by personnel unfamiliar with grant writing or by professional grant writers who did not understand the tribe's demographics and needs, which resulted in submissions that were written hastily and often incomplete.

Strategies Implemented During the State-Tribal Crime Victim Liaison Outreach Project

To implement the outreach project, the State-Tribal Victim Liaison used a process that established trust, instituted ongoing tribal roundtables and grant-writing workshops, and cultivated new opportunities for outreach.

Establishing Trust To Build Tribal Relationships

The State-Tribal Crime Victim Liaison was quickly recognized as a reliable contact, as were many of his state colleagues whom tribal service providers met at the roundtable discussions hosted by the program. As an enrolled member of the Muskogee (Creek) tribe with extensive knowledge of tribal cultures, Mr. Hendrix was able to build trust with each community. He understood the program's importance and was sensitive to the needs of tribal service providers and the victims they serve. The Liaison established personal relationships with tribal service providers and

clearly demonstrated his genuine interest in improving their ability to access victim services.



I am personally pleased with the work of Brian Hendrix. ... The information that I have is very useful for me and the population that I serve. I am thankful that he is so understanding and helpful to me. Thank you.

— Kay Mopope, Wichita and Affiliated Tribes



Service providers relied on the Victim Liaison for information about victim services available throughout the state and across tribes.

The Liaison was able to explain to his tribal contacts the eligibility requirements for victim compensation, provide them with information about accessing the state victim compensation program, and refer them to additional Oklahoma service providers.

When the Victim Services Division requested feedback from roundtable participants, many voiced, via email, their desire for the program to continue and, in particular, for the Liaison to remain in his position. After the end of the OVC grant, the state was unable to continue supporting the position. The Governor's office, however, saw an opportunity to elevate a recently vacated position to the cabinet level, and in 2014, due to his success in establishing relationships with tribal communities, Mr. Hendrix became the Deputy Assistant of Native



American Affairs for Oklahoma’s secretary of state.

Conducting Ongoing Roundtables

During Phase 1, the Liaison invited each of the four largest Indian nations on the eastern side of Oklahoma to host a roundtable discussion at a tribal facility of the program staff’s choosing. The Liaison divided the remainder of the state into four regions (northeast, north central, central, and southwest) to facilitate the ability of smaller tribes to host and participate in roundtables on a rotating basis. Additionally, the Liaison ensured that roundtable discussions during Phase 1 were informal meetings without an agenda or specific topic of discussion, which allowed service providers to network and begin building trust and partnerships.



Mr. Hendrix’s roundtable meetings allow tribal and state programs to interact, share information, and collaborate. ... This allows us to come together as a group and create solutions that are beneficial to all involved. In summary, Brian Hendrix is an asset to all tribal and state entities. He has been vital in promoting cooperation between the tribes and the state.

— Tamara Hudgins, Iowa Tribe



In Phase 2, after the roundtable process had been established and had gained credibility, the Liaison changed the format of the discussions to include a presentation from the host tribe regarding tribal history, customs, and traditions. These collaborative sessions gave tribal representatives an opportunity to meet other tribal leaders, victim services personnel, and their state counterparts and learn about VOCA and other victim services funding opportunities.



... [T]he sessions have been beneficial in promoting greater awareness of victims’ issues within the tribal structure. ... Through these sessions, we have developed a better coordinated response for victims.

— Karen Cunningham, Attorney General’s Office



Instituting Grant-Writing Workshops

The Liaison found that grant applications from Indian Country often were denied funding because they were incomplete, had unclear goals and objectives, or lacked key program requirements, such as match funding.⁶ To improve grant writing, the State-Tribal Crime Victim Liaison coordinated two grant-writing workshops that included an overview of the federal grant process and the Grants Division of the Oklahoma District Attorneys Council. Participants also received padfolios and flash

⁶ The match requirement for tribes was deleted in the new VOCA rule that became effective on August 8, 2016.



drives preloaded with victim compensation information, grant opportunities, and additional resources. The Liaison and other program staff also provided technical assistance to staff who later sought help for developing their applications for grant funding.

Cultivating New Opportunities for Outreach

Throughout the project period, the Liaison set up resource tables at domestic violence, sexual assault, child protection, law enforcement, and legal training conferences hosted by tribal programs and state associations. As a result, the Liaison was invited to present to Indian Child Welfare program staff, nontribal VOCA service providers, and community health service providers. The Liaison used recurring opportunities to set up resource tables and share information about victim compensation in Indian Country at the following events:

- Oklahoma Sovereignty Symposium
- Oklahoma Indian Child Welfare Association Annual Conference
- Oklahoma Sheriffs and Peace Officers Annual Conference
- Oklahoma Sheriffs' Association Annual Conference
- Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police Annual Conference

Results of the Project

The State-Tribal Liaison Outreach project resulted in several positive outcomes, including increases in Oklahoma tribes' awareness of available victim services funding, the number of victim services grant applications, and the number of funded victim services grant applications as well as increases in funding for direct victim services.

Increase in Awareness of Available Victim Services Funding

The State-Tribal Liaison Outreach project raised awareness of AI victim services funding opportunities in Oklahoma. During the project, the Liaison coordinated 34 tribal roundtable discussions for 577 victim services representatives, conducted 2 grant-writing workshops for 75 people, and developed a brochure about victim services available for AI victims in Oklahoma. The roundtables established during the project continued after the program ended on September 30, 2014. Six roundtables were held in both 2015 and 2016, with a focus on providing information about victim services funding opportunities, updated points of contact in state victim services offices, and additional victim service resources. The roundtables are a direct result of the outreach project—they offer opportunities for victim services collaboration among Oklahoma tribal, state, and federal providers. Additionally,



even though funding no longer supports the position of State-Tribal Victim Liaison, its value is ongoing. Brian Hendrix, now the Deputy Assistant of Native American Affairs for Oklahoma's secretary of state, continues to participate in the tribal roundtables, consult with the U.S. Attorneys' Offices about victim services in Indian Country, and identify funding opportunities to improve services for tribal victims in Oklahoma.

Increase in Number of Grant Applications

The number of grant applications submitted from Oklahoma tribes increased during the program period and into 2016. In 2008, the Victim Services Division received only three grant applications from Indian Country. In 2014, the Victim Services Division received eight grant applications from Oklahoma tribes, representing a 250-percent increase. In 2016, the number of applications monumentally increased to 20, representing a 567-percent increase from 2008.

Increase in Number of Funded Grant Applications

The number of grant applications from Indian Country that were approved by the Victim Services Division increased during the program period and into 2015. In 2008, the Victim Services Division funded only two grant programs from Indian Country. In 2015,

the Victim Services Division funded 12 grant programs from Indian Country, representing a 500-percent increase. In 2016, the Victim Services Division funded 17 applications, out of 20 submitted by Oklahoma tribes, representing a 750-percent increase from 2008.

Increase in Funding for Direct Services

In 2008, funding to various tribes in Oklahoma for services administered directly to AI victims in Oklahoma was only \$37,788. In 2014, funding to various tribes in Oklahoma for services administered directly to AI victims in Oklahoma had increased to \$277,386. In 2015, this funding had more than quadrupled to \$1,339,664, and in 2016 the funding amount increased even more steeply, to \$2,994,531 for a 15-month period, which is the equivalent of approximately \$2,395,625 over 12 months.

The Victim Services Division also conducted a formal evaluation of the Oklahoma State-Tribal Crime Victim Liaison Project. To access the evaluation report, please contact the Oklahoma District Attorneys Council, Victim Services Division, at victimsservices@dac.state.ok.us.



Recommendations

The Oklahoma State-Tribal Crime Victim Liaison Demonstration Program yielded many recommendations for improving Oklahoma tribal communities' access to victim services:

- Acknowledge that every tribe is unique, with its own story and collection of customs, traditions, and challenges.
- Be consistent and honest regarding points of contact, services offered, and followup.
- Contact tribal people in their communities or at tribal facilities. By interacting with people in the environment where they live, you will gain a better understanding of the resources available to them and the challenges they face.
- Develop a champion or sponsor. If you do not have any contacts with tribal service providers, develop a relationship with someone who is trusted and accepted and who can endorse you while introducing you to key community members.
- Eliminate electronic communication to the extent possible. Meet with tribal contacts face to face whenever possible, or by telephone if necessary.
- Be an active listener in the field and advocate for policy changes based on problems identified by each community rather than perceived problems at the agency.
- Develop culturally specific materials for the crime victim compensation program and distribute them among the tribes.
- Ask for permission to post victim compensation information and leave victim compensation brochures in key locations, such as social services buildings, courthouses, police departments, and health and wellness facilities. This is an activity that will need to be repeated annually.
- Provide a longer period of time, between the notice of availability of grant funds and the deadline to submit grant proposals, to allow the tribe's legal counsel and governing body sufficient time to review and approve grant proposals.
- Develop a toolkit for grant writers that includes tips on the importance of understanding the business practices and community demographics before writing the grant.
- Conduct regional grant-writing trainings designed specifically for tribal staff with no prior grant-writing experience.
- Address concerns that arise in the field, and have a mechanism for bringing parties together to solve issues that arise, specifically in the area of jurisdiction, and



stress the importance of collaboration between agencies.

- Assist communities in bridging the gap in services available to victims within each tribe and in each state, federal, and nonprofit organization, for the common goal of improving services to crime victims in Indian Country.
- Focus on building relationships between all people.

Conclusion

The State-Tribal Crime Victim Liaison Demonstration Program, and its State-Tribal Victim Liaison outreach project, found that Oklahoma’s large American Indian population faces numerous challenges to accessing victim services. The project resulted in significant increases in awareness of victim services funding opportunities, submission of victim services grant applications, approved victim services applications, and funding for direct services. Even though the project ended at the end of Fiscal Year 2014, its benefits for tribal access to victim services have lasted into 2016 and are ongoing. Each state with tribal nations

has its own geographic distinctions, distribution of unique communities, and service challenges. The recommendations identified by the State-Tribal Crime Victim Liaison Demonstration Program may be applied, and tailored where appropriate, to help improve tribal access to victim services.

For other victim-related information, or additional information about training and technical assistance from OVC, please contact us.

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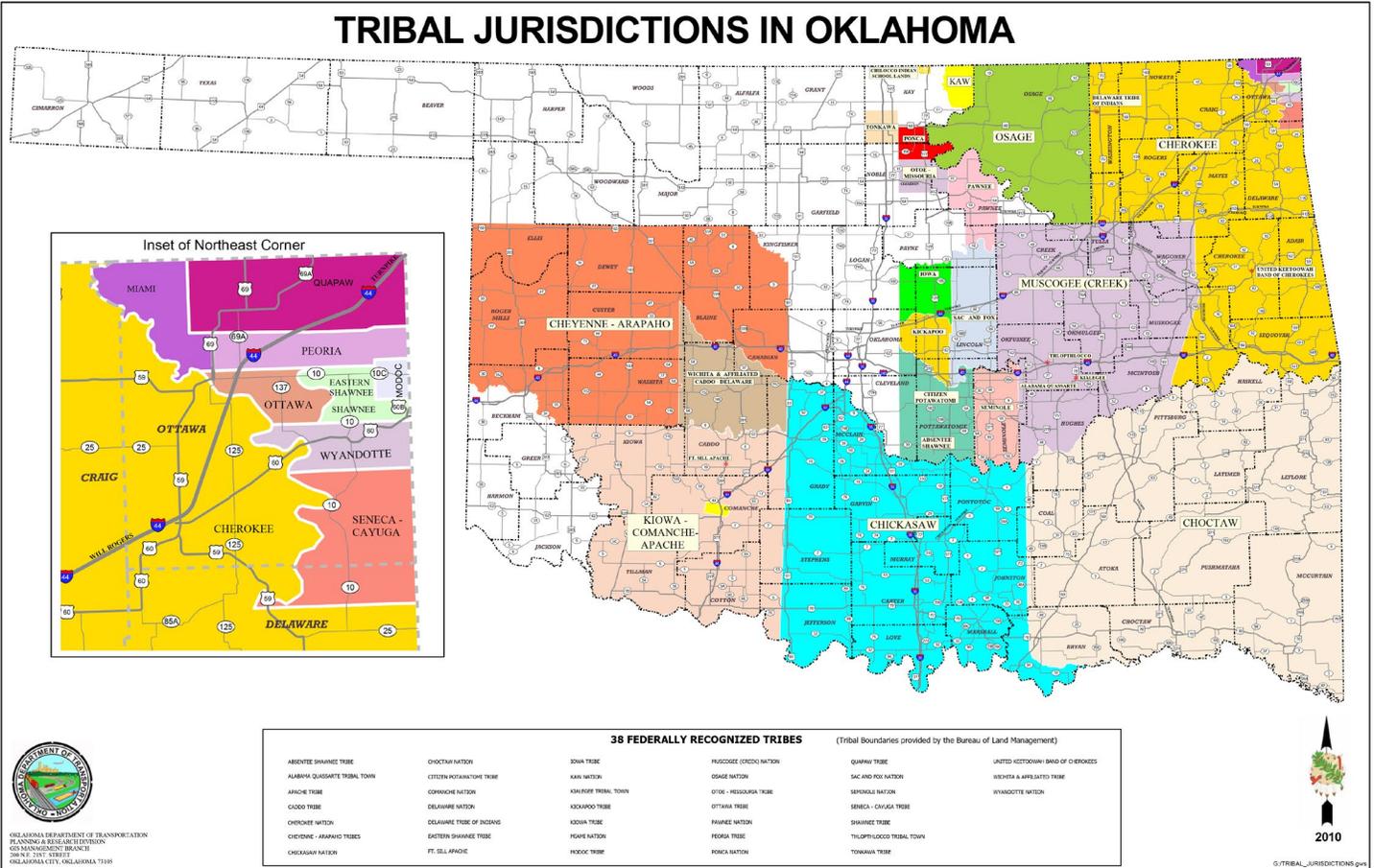
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Appendix A

TRIBAL JURISDICTIONS IN OKLAHOMA



Source: Oklahoma Department of Transportation, 2010: www.okladot.state.ok.us/maps/tribal/map_tribal_jurisdictions.pdf.



Appendix B – Form Letter

November 21, 2014

Governor
Absentee, Shawnee Tribe
2025 S. Gordon Cooper Drive
Shawnee, OK 74801

Dear Governor:

I would like to introduce Brian Hendrix, who is the new State-Tribal Crime Victim Liaison with the Oklahoma District Attorneys Council. Funding for the position is through a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime. The project, the only one of its type in the Nation, is a demonstration program dedicated to improving communication among tribal, state, federal, and local officials in order to enhance victim assistance and outreach services to tribal communities in Oklahoma. The purpose of the project is to enhance victim compensation and assistance outreach to Oklahoma's 38 federally recognized tribes.

In the coming months, Brian will be reaching out to victim services personnel and other leaders within each tribe to discuss ways to improve access to resources for violent crime victims. I hope that he can include a visit to the executive branch of Absentee Shawnee Tribe in his outreach activities. Our Victim Services Division is committed to serving all violent crime victims across the state and welcomes partnerships with tribal governments to serve all victims more effectively. Accordingly, please feel free to contact our office if you would like additional information or have suggestions for improving victim services in your community.

Very truly yours,

Suzanne McClain Atwood
Executive Coordinator
District Attorneys Council



