

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH

Protecting Indigenous People

We accept and understand our responsibility to all humanity—to care for, protect, advocate for all, and work to right the wrongs that have, at times, been inflicted on others, even from our hands. “The duty of all Christians is to follow Christ; to come together week by week for corporate worship; and to work, pray, and give for the kingdom of God.”ⁱ We confess that the treatment of our indigenous brothers and sisters has a history of unfairness.ⁱⁱ

“Numerous treaties, statutes, and court decisions have created a fundamental contract between tribal nations and the United States: tribes ceded millions of acres of land that made the United States what it is today, and in return tribes have the right of continued self-government and the right to exist as distinct peoples on their own lands. And for its part, the United States has assumed a trust responsibility to protect these rights and to fulfill its solemn commitments to Indian tribes and their members. Part of this trust responsibility includes basic governmental services in Indian Country, funding for which is appropriated in the discretionary portion of the federal budget... The federal budget for tribal governmental services reflects the extent to which the United States honors its promises to Indian people.”ⁱⁱⁱ Congress appropriates funding for programs administered by the Departments of Justice, Interior, Commerce, Health and Human Services, and the Environmental Protection Agency. **We urge Congress to continue fully funding programs that protect and support American Indians and Alaska Natives.**

Department of Justice

Crime rates in tribal communities are among the highest in the nation, and American Indians and Alaska Natives experience rates of violent crime at 2.5 times the national average, a challenge made worse by non-tribal members committing crimes then fleeing reservations, as well as the jurisdiction of tribal law enforcement. Residents and visitors on tribal lands deserve the same safety and security as the rest of the United States.ⁱⁱⁱ **For Fiscal Year 2018, we request Congress to provide \$85.5 million dollars plus additional funding for tribal programs, Crime Victim Fund, and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).**

Department of Commerce (DOC)

The DOC administers the Minority Business Development Agency, Office of Native American Affairs, and certain fisheries management funds such as the Salmon Management Activities. **For Fiscal Year 2018, we request Congress to provide \$74.5 million dollars to fund DOC administered programs.**

Department of Interior’s Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

[BIA](#) provides services to 567 federally recognized American Indian tribes and Alaska Natives in the United States, representing 1.9 million people. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is responsible for the administration and management of 55 million surface acres and 57 million acres of subsurface minerals estates held in trust by the United States for American Indian, Indian tribes, and Alaska Natives. Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) provides education services to approximately 42,000 Indian students. **For Fiscal Year 2018, we request Congress to provide \$2.867 billion to fund BIA and its programs.**

United States Environmental Protection Agency’s State and Tribal Assistance Grants

These grants provide funding for programs that include financing for drinking water systems, improving hazardous waste site cleanup, educational outreach activities led by tribal leaders, implementation of air quality standards, and other areas to support and assure environmental compliance. **For Fiscal Year 2018, we request Congress to provide \$3.553 billion in funding.**

Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) Indian Health Service (IHS)

IHS is an agency within HHS whose goal is to ensure that comprehensive, culturally acceptable personal and public health services are available and accessible to American Indian and Alaska Native people. **For Fiscal Year 2018, we request Congress to provide \$5.04 billion to fund this program.**

Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts (IAIA) Development.

The mission of [IAIA](#) is dedicated to the preservation, study, creative application, and contemporary expression of American Indian and Alaska Native arts and cultures. **For Fiscal Year 2018, we call on Congress to fund this program at least at the 2017 level of \$15.2 million.**

Learn More:

[Indigenous Ministries of the Episcopal Church](#)

ⁱ The Book of Common Prayer, The Catechism, What Is The Duty of Christians?

ⁱⁱ [Environmental Justice with Indigenous People.](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies by the Testimony to the House [National Congress of American Indians.](#)

