

2012 NATIONAL SURVEY OF TRIBAL COURT SYSTEMS

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of Justice Programs (OJP) Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) is pleased to announce that it will conduct the 2012 National Survey of Tribal Court Systems (NSTCS). As the statistical agency for the Department of Justice, BJS is responsible for the collection, analysis, publication, and dissemination of statistical information on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operations of criminal justice systems at all levels of government. The Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 mandates BJS “establish and implement such tribal data collection systems as the BJS Director determines to be necessary.”^[1] On behalf of BJS, Kauffman & Associates, Inc. (KAI), a Native-owned research firm, will administer the survey.

Implementation of the NSTCS is part of a multifaceted effort by BJS to expand statistical activities related to tribal crime and justice issues. In support of BJS’s efforts, KAI will contact the approximately 200 to 300 federally recognized tribal justice systems in the United States and gather information about the following topical areas:

- **Tribal Court Administration**
(Governance, Authority, and Jurisdiction)
- **Tribal Court Operations**
(Management & Budgets)
- **Staffing**
- **Case Processing and Caseloads**
- **Prosecution**
- **Indigent Defense**
- **Sanctions and Sentencing**
- **Probation and Parole**
- **Information Systems Access and Data Entry**
- **Juvenile Justice and Delinquency**
- **Justice Functions**
(Law Enforcement, Corrections)

WHO: Each federally recognized tribe in the U.S. will be contacted to verify and determine the operation of a recognized judicial system. ^[2]

WHAT: Respondents will complete an automated instrument or paper version and submit to KAI.

WHEN: Tribal courts should expect to receive the survey materials in early 2013.

WHY: The NSTCS will provide long-term benefits for tribes, update the 2002 Census of Tribal Agencies, serve as an authenticated source for tribal court statistics, foster greater transparency in addressing the problems of crime and justice in Indian Country, and enrich tribal eligibility for justice program funding resources, prevention programs, and justice services.

WHERE: Tribes may find additional information on the NSTCS via the website: www.tribalcourtsurvey.org, by phone at 1-877-528-4025, or by email at NSTCS@kauffmaninc.com.

^[1] 42 U.S.C. § 3732(d)(2)

^[2] As defined in the Indian Tribal Justice Technical and Legal Assistance Act of 2000 (PL 106-559), the term “tribal court”, “tribal court system”, or “tribal justice system” means the entire judicial branch, and employees thereof, of an Indian tribe, including, but not limited to, traditional methods and fora for dispute resolution, trial courts, appellate courts, including inter-tribal appellate courts, alternative dispute resolution systems, and circuit rider systems, established by inherent tribunal authority whether or not they constitute a court of record. *This definition excludes CFRs (Courts of Indian Offenses) operated by the BIA and courts operated by the state or federal government. CFRs will be included in the 2012 NSTCS.*

