

May 19, 2016

Dear Tribal Leader:

How the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) delivers benefits and services for Veterans is growing and changing rapidly. In this environment of change, VA is more committed than ever to fulfilling its tribal consultation policy, which includes strengthening VA's relationship with tribes and consulting with tribal governments on all VA policies and actions that may impact tribes and Veterans across Indian Country.

VA wants to ensure that the needs of American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans and the priorities of tribal governments are part of these changes, now and in the future. To that end, VA is seeking input from tribal leaders **on the top 3 to 5 priorities that tribes have for serving Veterans in Indian Country**. Once identified, these priorities may be used to assist with the collaborative development of **an Indian Country Veterans Affairs policy agenda**, which will inform tribal governments, VA, members of Congress, and other Veteran-serving partners in coming years.

To gather this input, VA plans to hold two tribal consultation sessions in 2016.

The first consultation will take place **Wednesday, June 29, 2016, at 5:15 p.m.** at the Spokane Convention Center, at 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, WA 99201. This session is held **in conjunction with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Mid-Year Conference**, taking place June 27–30, 2016, in Spokane, WA.

The second consultation will be scheduled later this year. VA will send a second letter to confirm this session when the date and time are finalized.

VA also invites written comments on the consultation topics, particularly for tribal leaders and representatives who may be unable to attend the consultation meetings in person. Written comments may be submitted as follows:

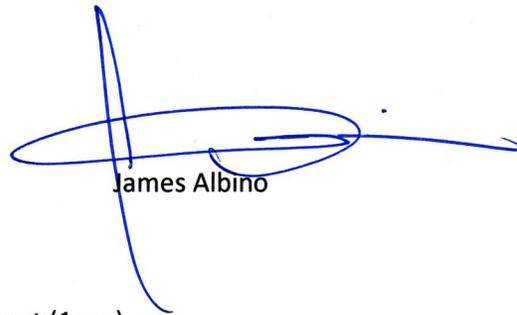
Email: tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov

Mail: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (075F)
810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 915G
Washington, DC 20420

Written comments should be submitted **no later than October 7, 2016**. For questions, please contact VA's Office of Tribal Government Relations at 202-461-7400 or at the email address above.

VA will compile all 2016 testimony received into a tribal consultation report to be disseminated in 2017. VA wishes to thank tribal leaders for their continued support, input, and engagement as we continue our work to honor and serve American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop that crosses itself, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right and a vertical stroke extending downwards from the bottom of the loop.

James Albino

Enclosures: Priorities for Veterans fact sheet (1 pg.)