

## **STRENGTHENING THE COMMITMENT TO NATIVE AMERICAN, ALASKA NATIVE, AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN EDUCATION**

President Obama has made it a priority of the Administration to strengthen the relationship between the United States and tribal governments and to support tribal communities in improving the education of Native American students. On December 5, 2011, the President signed an executive order titled “Improving American Indian and Alaska Native Education Opportunities and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities,” which highlights his commitment to improving educational opportunities for Native American students from early education through college. The President’s fiscal year 2014 budget request reflects suggestions from the Native American community, particularly on issues related to Native American language and culture and increased tribal participation over education. The request includes support for the following initiatives:

- **\$105.9 million for formula grants to school districts and Indian tribes** to address the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of Indian students through activities such as after-school programs, tutoring, and dropout prevention. These funds support enrichment programs that benefit nearly 477,000 Indian students nationwide. Under the Administration’s proposal to reauthorize No Child Left Behind, more tribes would be able to access these funds and grantees would have greater flexibility to carry out Native language restoration and Native language immersion programs.
- **\$19 million for competitive grants to improve school quality** to States, school districts, Indian tribes and organizations, and institutions of higher education to improve school readiness and college preparation for Indian students and increase the number of Native American teachers, school leaders, and administrators.
- **\$5.9 million for national activities to support Native American schools**, including research into effective practices for improving outcomes of Indian students, data collection on the educational status of Indian students, technical assistance on implementing successful programs, and support for the Department’s tribal consultations to ensure that tribes continue to have a voice in the development of policies that impact Native Americans. The Administration’s national activities request also includes \$2 million to strengthen the role of tribal educational agencies (TEAs) through the State Tribal Education Partnership (STEP) program. In 2012, the new program funded four TEAs that, in partnership with States, are building their capacity to administer select ESEA programs in public schools on tribal lands. The fiscal year 2014 request would continue these awards.
- **\$34 million and \$33 million, respectively, for Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native student education programs**, which support projects that improve the educational achievement of Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native students.
- **\$1.2 billion for the Impact Aid program**, which provides assistance to school districts impacted by Federal activities, including school districts serving students living on tribal lands. This program gives districts flexibility in the use of these funds, while requiring them to consult with parents of Indian students and tribes about the education of their children.

- **\$25.7 million for tribally controlled colleges and universities, \$12.9 million for Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-serving institutions, and \$3.1 million for Native American-serving non-tribal institutions** to help these institutions improve and build their capacity to serve Native American students. With these investments, the Administration hopes to improve the college access and college completion rates of Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students.
- **\$8 million for tribally controlled postsecondary career and technical institutions** to provide high-quality career and technical education to Native Americans, including by training teachers, purchasing equipment, and providing services to students.
- **\$38 million for Indian tribes to provide vocational rehabilitation services** for Native Americans with disabilities who live on or near reservations. These funds help tribes build their capacity to provide culturally relevant services that help Native Americans with disabilities prepare for and engage in gainful employment, particularly those with the most significant disabilities.
- **In addition, ESEA flexibility has brought remarkable changes with direct benefits to Native students.** The performance of many American Indian students was previously not counted in school performance ratings. Under ESEA flexibility, states have taken steps to include the performance of more students in calculating school performance. For example, an adjustment in South Dakota has increased the number of schools accountable for reporting American Indian/Alaska Native achievement from 71 to over 300. States have also submitted plans for how to translate higher academic standards into practice for all students, especially for English Learners and students with disabilities. Given the disproportionately high English Learner and special education identification rates within the American Indian student population, these plans will have a significant impact by improving the college- and career-readiness of these students.