

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

VA Office of Tribal Government Relations

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

- VA Mission

“To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan.”

- Three Administrations

- Veterans Health Administration: VHA

- Veterans Benefits Administration: VBA

- National Cemetery Administration: NCA

Government to Government Relationship

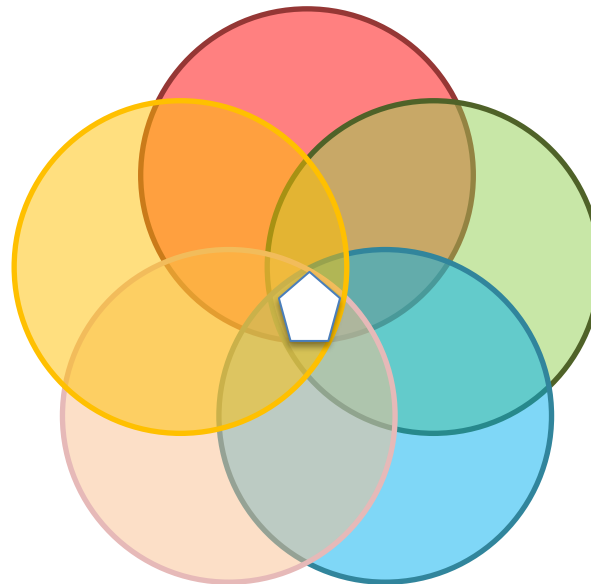
**American Indian/
Alaska Native Tribal
Governments**

**National Cemetery
Administration (NCA)**

**Office of Tribal
Government
Relations (OTGR)**

**Veterans Health
Administration (VHA)**

**Veterans Benefits
Administration (VBA)**



VA Office of Tribal Government Relations OTGR

- Secretarial level
- Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs
- Reinforces recognition of government-to-government relationship
- Stood up in 2011
- Facilitate movement of programs and services from VA Administrations to Indian Country through tribal government and tribal leaders

VA Organizational Chart

Doug Collins
Secretary

Paul Lawrence
Deputy Secretary

Chris Syrek
Chief of Staff

Curt Cashour
Assistant Secretary Office of Public & Intergovernmental Affairs

Marie Vulaj
Deputy Assistant Secretary Office of Public & Intergovernmental Affairs

Stephanie E. Birdwell, Director
Office of Tribal Government Relations

Veronica Duncan
OTGR
Executive Officer

Mary Culley
OTGR Specialist
Southern Plains /
Southeast Region

Kristi Woodard
OTGR Specialist
Western Region

L. HoMana Pawiki
OTGR Specialist
Southwest Region

VA Office of Tribal Government Relations (OTGR)

- **OTGR Specialists:**
 - **Collaborate with VA colleagues to expand governmental relationships with tribes that support priorities tribal leaders have for meeting the needs of tribal Veterans**
- **OTGR Goals:**
 - **Facilitate Increased Access to Health Care and Benefits**
 - **Promote Economic Sustainability**
 - **Implement Tribal Consultation Policy**

VHA

VA OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- OTGR Goal 1: Facilitate increased access to health care
 - VHA-IHS Memorandum of Understanding
 - Signed December 2022 (builds upon 2003 & 2010 versions)
 - The MOU addresses the partnership with Indian Health Service and Tribal Health Programs
 - Tribal Consultation
 - Operational Plan
 - Workgroups

VHA

VA OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- OTGR Goal 1: Facilitate increased access to health care
 - VHA-IHS/THP/UIO Reimbursement Agreement Program
 - The reimbursement program was first initiated in 2012 with IHS and THPs. In 2022, the program expanded to include UIOs. In 2023/2024 VA expanded the scope of reimbursements to also include Purchased/Referred Care (PRC) and contracted travel, in addition to direct care provided by I/T/U operated facilities.

Community Care

Community Care Home

Veteran Care

Family Member Care

For Caregivers

For Providers

For Payers

Publications

About VHA IVC

Support

Site Map

More Health Care

IHS/THP/UIO Reimbursement Agreements Program—Information for Providers

The VA Indian Health Services/Tribal Health Programs/Urban Indian Organization (I/T/U) Reimbursement Agreements Program (RAP) provides VA reimbursement to Indian Health Services (IHS), Tribal Health Programs (THP) and Urban Indian Organization (UIO) health facilities for services provided to eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans. The RAP works directly with I/T/U facilities and is seamless to the Veterans accessing their Native healthcare.

NOTE: This video has not been updated to reflect UIO inclusions.

Veterans can expect:
 - **Your Choice of Provider**
 Veterans can choose to receive care from an IHS, THP, or VA medical facility.

VHA

VA OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- OTGR Goal 1: Facilitate increased access to health care
 - VHA-IHS/THP/UIO Reimbursement Agreement Program

Kara Hawthorne, LCSW

ITU Reimbursement Agreement Program (RAP)

VHA Office of Integrated Veteran Care (IVC)

 (202) 347-3537 | kara.hawthorne@va.gov

[|Tribal.agreements@va.gov](mailto:Tribal.agreements@va.gov)

Claims Inquiries and issues:

vha13d01pomnwihsthpsupport@va.gov

RAP questions and support: tribal.agreements@va.gov

<https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/info-IHS-THP.asp>

- OTGR Goal 1: Facilitate increased access to health care
 - AI/AN Copay Exemption
 - The new benefit provides...
 - Retroactively reimburses eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans from copayments for health care and all urgent care visits received on or after January 5, 2022.
 - Eliminates copayment requirements for health care and all urgent care visits for eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans.
 - » Note: Copayments for domiciliary care, institutional respite care, institutional geriatric evaluation, and nursing home care are still required.

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- OTGR Goal 1: Facilitate increased access to health care
 - Copay Exemption
 - Who is covered by the new policy?
 - Veterans who meet the definitions of “Indian” or “urban Indian” under the Indian Health Care Improvement Act – including Veterans who are members of an American Indian Tribe, certain Veterans who are descendants of Tribal members, Alaska Native Veterans, and more.

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- OTGR Goal 1: Facilitate increased access to health care
 - Copay Exemption
 - **I'm currently enrolled in VA health care; how do I receive this benefit?**
 - Eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans seeking copayment exemption will need to submit **a copy** of the following:
 - » 1. Any **one** of the following official tribal documents, including, but not limited to:
 - Tribal Enrollment or Membership ID Card
 - Tribal Census Documentation
 - Certificate of Indian Blood issued by the Bureau of Indian Affairs
 - Documentation issued by a Tribe on official letterhead indicating individual affiliation
 - **AND**
 - 2. VA Form 10-334, Tribal Documentation For

VHA

VA OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- OTGR Goal 1: Facilitate increased access to health care
 - Copay Exemption
 - Copies of Veteran documentation and VA Form 10-334 can be mailed to:
 - VHA Tribal Documentation
 - PO Box 5100
 - Janesville, WI 53547-5100

Please do not mail original documents. Only copies should be mailed. If Veterans need to make copies of their documentation or need a printed copy of VA Form 10-334, they can request copies at their local VA medical center or clinic.

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- OTGR Goal 1: Facilitate increased access to health care
 - Copay Exemption
 - What if I have questions?
 - Please call: 800-698-2411 (TTY: 711). Available 24/7.

VHA

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[VA.gov home](#) > [Resources and Support](#) > [Copay Exemptions For American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans](#)

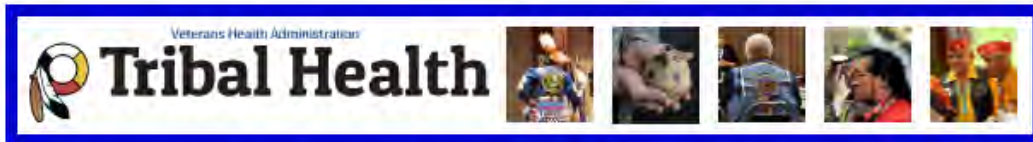
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Resources and Support All VA.gov

Enter a keyword, phrase, or question

Copay exemptions for American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans





Apply for the American Indian/Alaska Native Veteran Copayment Exemption

What is the copay exemption?

The law stating American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans do not pay copays for VA health care services and urgent care visits.

Who can receive the copay exemption?

American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care. Access the QR code on the right for more information.



How do I apply for the copay exemption?

Complete the following three steps:

1. Make a **copy** of only **one** of the following Official Tribal Documents, including, but not limited to:
 - Tribal Enrollment or Citizenship/Membership ID Card, or
 - Certificate of Degree of Indian or Alaska Native Blood issued by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or
 - Documentation issued by a Tribe on official letterhead indicating individual affiliation.
2. Fill out VA Form 10-334 and make a **copy**. The form can be found at <https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-10-334>.
3. Mail both documents to the address below:

VHA Tribal Documentation
PO Box 5100
Janesville, WI 53547-5100

Note: Copies can be made at your local VA medical center or clinic; printed copies of VA Form 10-334 are also available. Learn more about the copayment exemption here:
<https://www.va.gov/resources/copay-exemptions-for-american-indian-and-alaska-native-veterans/>

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Crisis Line
Dial 988 and Press 1
or text to 838255.



Office of
Tribal Government
Relations

VBA

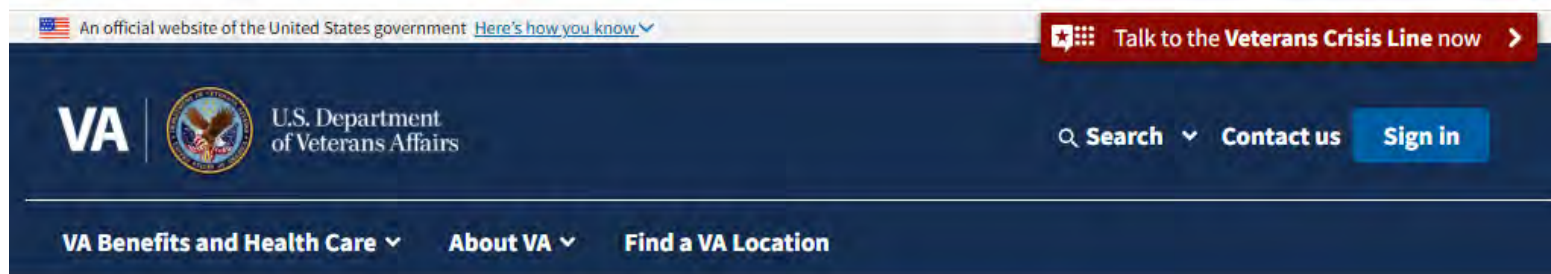
VA OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- OTGR Goal 2: Promote Economic Sustainability
 - G.I. Bill and VocRehab Resources
 - Dole Act outreach grants (information forthcoming)

VBA

VA OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- OTGR Goal 2: Promote Economic Sustainability
 - Native American Direct (home) Loan – NADL



[VA.gov home](#) > [Housing assistance](#) > [VA-backed home loans](#) > [Loan types](#) > [Native American Direct Loan](#)

Housing assistance

< [Loan types](#)

[Purchase loan](#)

[Native American Direct Loan](#)

[Tribes with Memorandums of Understanding](#)

Native American Direct Loan

If you're a Veteran, and either you or your spouse is Native American, our Native American Direct Loan (NADL) program may help you get a loan to buy, build, or improve a home on federal trust land. You may also get a loan to refinance an existing NADL and reduce your interest rate. Find out if you qualify for an NADL—and how to apply.

VBA

VA OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- OTGR Goal 2: Promote Economic Sustainability
 - Native American Direct (home) Loan – NADL

What if I have more questions?

You can contact an NADL coordinator by email at NADL@va.gov or by phone at [888-349-7541](tel:888-349-7541) (TTY: [711](tel:711)). We're here Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. ET.

Note: If you're a tribal government representative with questions about an MOU agreement for your trust land, you can contact us using the email or phone number provided here too.

VBA





























VA OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- OTGR Goal 2: Promote Economic Sustainability
 - GDX VA Data
 - Shows the amount of Comp and Pen Data by State and County which can be applied to Tribal communities as well.
 - <https://www.va.gov/vetdata/expenditures.asp>

VBA

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Expenditures Tables—Data for 1996 — 2023

- Fiscal Year 2023  **New**
- Fiscal Year 2022 
- Fiscal Year 2021 
- Fiscal Year 2020 
- Fiscal Year 2019 
- Fiscal Year 2018 
- Fiscal Year 2017 
- Fiscal Year 2016 
- Fiscal Year 2015 
- Fiscal Year 2014 
- Fiscal Year 2013 
- Fiscal Year 2012 
- Fiscal Year 2011 
- Fiscal Year 2010 
- Fiscal Year 2009 
- Fiscal Year 2008 
- Fiscal Year 2007 
- Fiscal Year 2006 
- Fiscal Year 2005 
- Fiscal Year 2004 
- Fiscal Year 2003 
- Fiscal Year 2002 
- Fiscal Year 2001 
- Fiscal Year 2000 
- Fiscal Year 1999 
- Fiscal Year 1998 
- Fiscal Year 1997 
- Fiscal Year 1996 

VBA

VA OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

FY23 Summary of Expenditures by State
Expenditures in \$000s

County/ Congressional District	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Compensation & Pension	Construction	Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment	Loan Guaranty#	General Operating Expenses	Insurance & Indemnities	Medical Care	Unique Patients**
ALAMEDA	46,791	\$ 670,776	\$ 234,967	\$ 889	\$ 38,906	\$ -	\$ 48,491	\$ 2,185	\$ 345,338	10,814
ALPINE	82	\$ 787	\$ 272	\$ -	\$ 6	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 509	17
AMADOR	2,889	\$ 40,181	\$ 22,160	\$ -	\$ 883	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 77	\$ 17,060	1,042
BUTTE	13,039	\$ 176,897	\$ 87,624	\$ -	\$ 7,704	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 328	\$ 81,241	4,482
CALAVERAS	3,735	\$ 54,987	\$ 27,624	\$ -	\$ 1,552	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 110	\$ 25,702	1,361
COLUSA	684	\$ 9,480	\$ 5,755	\$ -	\$ 430	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 70	\$ 3,225	242
CONTRA COSTA	39,424	\$ 581,362	\$ 262,237	\$ 4,151	\$ 31,686	\$ -	\$ 5,909	\$ 2,022	\$ 275,358	11,411
DEL NORTE	1,817	\$ 27,750	\$ 15,477	\$ -	\$ 265	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 36	\$ 11,972	734
EL DORADO	11,667	\$ 145,844	\$ 81,367	\$ -	\$ 5,173	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 447	\$ 58,858	3,424
FRESNO	34,120	\$ 670,127	\$ 290,061	\$ 247	\$ 24,856	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 948	\$ 354,015	13,624
GLENN	1,220	\$ 15,336	\$ 8,615	\$ -	\$ 340	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2	\$ 6,379	435
HUMBOLDT	7,229	\$ 127,003	\$ 53,663	\$ -	\$ 2,675	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 101	\$ 70,564	3,363
IMPERIAL	6,016	\$ 82,223	\$ 55,085	\$ -	\$ 3,251	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 35	\$ 23,852	2,031
INYO	1,338	\$ 12,287	\$ 7,671	\$ -	\$ 216	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 15	\$ 4,384	294
KERN	35,955	\$ 465,984	\$ 305,105	\$ -	\$ 26,437	\$ -	\$ 2,257	\$ 565	\$ 131,620	9,670
KINGS	8,050	\$ 132,721	\$ 81,520	\$ -	\$ 12,800	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 209	\$ 38,191	2,663

▶	Data Guide	State Level Expenditures	AK	AL	AR	AZ	CA	CO	CT	DC	DE	FL	GA	HI	IA	ID	IL	IN	KS	KY	LA	MA	MD	ME	MI
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VBA

VA OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- OTGR Goal 2: Promote Economic Sustainability
 - Veteran Service Officers/Organization (VSO)
 - If a Veteran wants to file a claim for a mental health or physical condition that is connected to their military service they can file a claim with VBA.
 - Those that can assist with filing a claim are:
 - An accredited attorney, claims agent, or Veterans Service Organization (VSO) representative. They can also assist in requesting a decision review.
<https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative/>
 - Each state has various avenues in offering VSO related services...

NCA

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- Facilitate Use of NCA (**N**ational **C**emeter**y** **A**dministr**ation**)
 - [Veterans Cemetery Grants Program](#)
 - Veteran Cemetery Grants on Tribal Lands
- Interment in VA funded state and national cemeteries.
- Memorial Benefits for Veterans

Tribal Consultation

VA OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- OTGR Goal 3: Implement Tribal Consultation Policy
 - VA established Tribal Consultation Policy in 2011
 - Tribal Consultation policy revisions were completed in 2024
 - VA has engaged in Tribal Consultation annually since that time.
 - The VA Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs
 - Statutorily created Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) committee that provides recommendations to the secretary and congress.

Tribal Communication

VA OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

va.gov/ADVISORY/Advisory_Committee_on_Tribal_and_Indian_Affairs.asp

- ▶ For Veterans
- ▶ For Family Members & Spouses
- ▶ For Employees
- ▶ For Business
- ▶ Forms & Publications
- ▶ Jobs
- Volunteer or Donate
- Public & Intergovernmental Affairs

Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs



Purpose

To provide advice and guidance to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs relating to Indian tribes, tribal organizations, Native Hawaiian organizations and Native American Veterans.

RESOURCES

- [ACMO Home](#)
- [VA Advisory Committees](#)
- [Federal Advisory Committees \(GSA Site\)](#)
- [Laws and Regulations](#)
- [Ethics](#)
- [Training, News, and Announcements](#)
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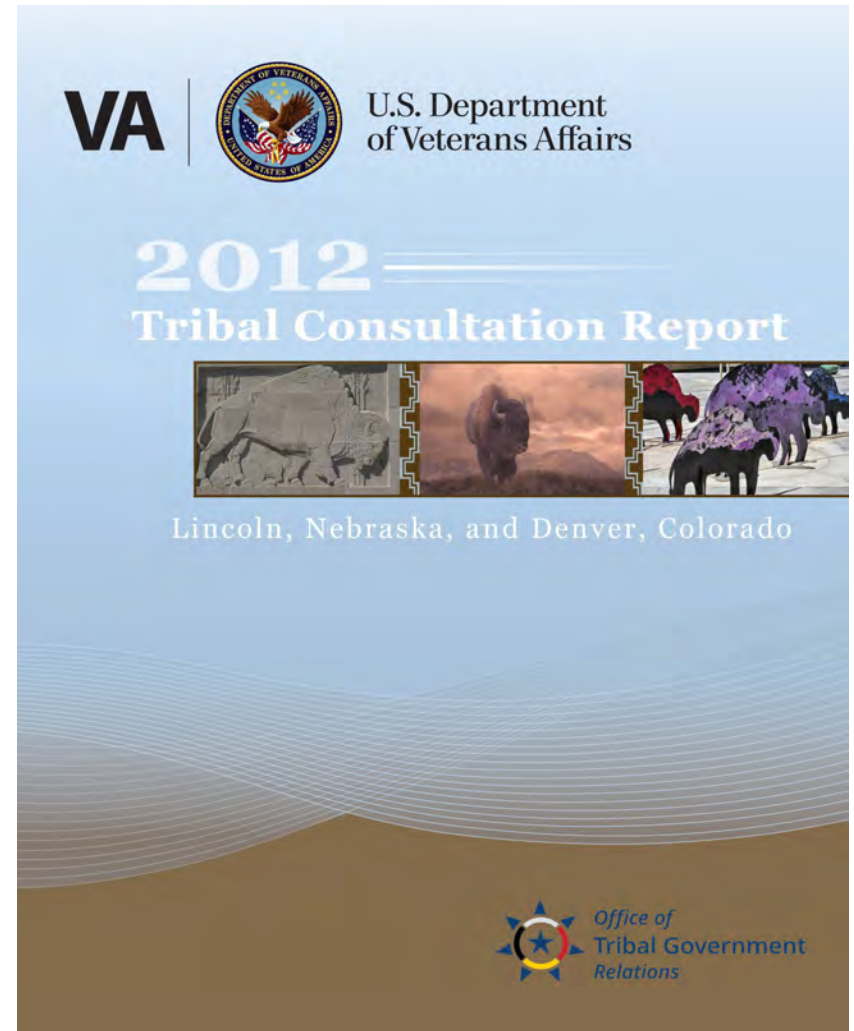
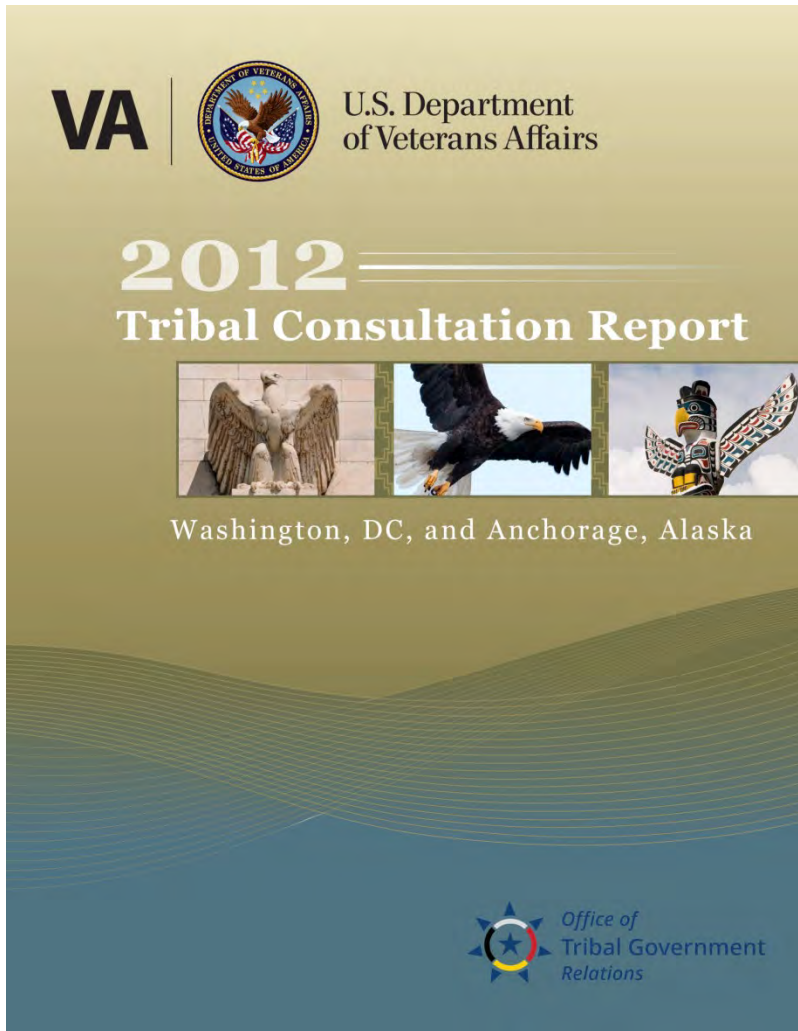


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VA Tribal Consultation Report FY2012

Available on OTGR website: www.va.gov/tribalgovernment



Tribal Communication

VA OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- OTGR Newsletter
- OTGR website:
<http://www.va.gov/tribalgovernment>
- VA Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs (TAC)
 - Federal Advisory Committee Act FACA

Pacific District Contact

VA OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

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VA OTGR Specialist

Pacific Region

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509-294-2258

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Tribal.Consultation@va.gov