

The Rick Smith Injury Prevention Award

2026

Background:

Injuries are the leading cause of death for American Indians and Alaska Natives from ages 1-54 years, and the third leading cause of death overall. To address injuries CAPT Richard (Rick) J. Smith III created the Indian Health Service (IHS) National Injury Prevention Program. CAPT Smith joined the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) in 1966 and began his career with IHS in 1970. During his time in the USPHS, CAPT Smith was a tireless advocate of injury prevention in Indian Country. CAPT Smith was the recipient of numerous awards including the Johns Hopkins University Injury Prevention Center Award for Excellence (1990), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Public Service Award (1997), USPHS Distinguished Service Medal (1998), and Surgeon General's Exemplary Service Medal (1993). CAPT Rick Smith is a pioneer of injury prevention and it is an honor to name this award on his behalf.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Rick Smith Injury Prevention Award is to recognize the performance of individuals or groups whose special efforts and contributions in the field of injury and violence prevention have resulted in a significant impact and led to improved public health for American Indians/Alaska Natives. This award is sponsored by the IHS, Division of Environmental Health Services, Injury Prevention Program.

Eligibility:

IHS (Environmental Health or Injury Prevention Specialists), Tribal (Injury Prevention Coordinators, Law Enforcement, Community Health Representatives, etc.), and non-Tribal individuals (State partners, non-IHS federal partners etc.) and groups (coalitions, workgroups, teams, etc.) who significantly contributed toward the reduction of injuries or advancement of injury and violence prevention in American Indian/Alaska Native populations are eligible for the Rick Smith Injury Prevention Award.

Criteria:

Nominee(s) should have developed or implemented injury prevention projects or programs that contributed toward the reduction of injury risks, injury rates, or injury disparities in American Indian/Alaska Native communities. The work of the nominee(s) may address either unintentional or intentional injuries and the performance recognized by this award may include significant one-time events or they may be injury prevention efforts implemented over time and completed in the award year.

Nominations should include:

- Work completed in the calendar year
- Description of injury prevention contributions and their overall reach
- Innovation and use of effective strategies
- Inclusion of data in supporting need and results for projects/contributions
- Use of evaluation components
- Impact/influence on the program or community
- Level of involvement by the nominee(s)

Data Sharing:

Please check one of the boxes below for data sharing. Permission(s) for sharing tribe-specific data must accompany the nomination for option 3. A checked box is required for award consideration.

Check one:

- 1 ☐ There are no data in the write-up.
- 2 ☐ Data in the nomination write-up can be shared publicly.
- 3 ☐ Tribe-specific data in the nomination write-up can be shared publicly. Permission is attached.
- 4 ☐ Please redact all data in the nomination write-up prior to sharing publicly.

Nominations:

Candidates or group candidates should be nominated by supervisors, colleagues, or program managers. Nominations should not exceed two pages (single spaced, 12-point font, 1 inch margins). Narratives should be written following the format below or using the provided PDF Fillable Document and should meet the award criteria. Nominations must be submitted to CDR Molly Madson at molly.madson@ihs.gov by **COB February 5, 2027** and a committee will make a selection.

The Rick Smith Injury Prevention Award Format

Introduction:

Name of Person or Group Nominated: _____

Duty/Work Location: _____

Nominator: _____

Section 1: Background (20 points)

Describe the injury prevention problem or issue that was addressed and why the work was needed.

Section 2: Innovation and Methods (30 points)

Describe the effective or innovative strategies, methods, or process used, and any adaptations. This could include the number of people who benefited, were affected, or reached by the program.

Section 3: Evaluation and Impact (40 points)

Describe the degree of community change, influence, or impact as a result of the work. Show results with data used/collected, the evaluation methodology, any successes and challenges that were overcome. This could include data analysis, intervention implementation, and measurable changes that resulted from the work (policy change, increased knowledge, rate changes, etc.)

Section 4: Involvement (10 points)

Describe the involvement level of the person or group nominated and if/how they collaborated with other programs.

The Rick Smith Injury Prevention Award Format - Fillable

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