

REMARKS

OF

THE HONORABLE KAROL V. MASON
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OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

AT THE

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE
NATIVE AMERICAN ISSUES SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

ON

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COLUMBIA RIVER-HOOD RIVER, OR

I'm delighted to be here with the Associate Attorney General, whom I'll have the pleasure of introducing in a moment. I know he'll talk about the Department's many efforts to support tribes, and I'm proud that my office – the Office of Justice Programs – is a central part of that work.

Our role at OJP is to help communities improve their ability to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. A huge piece of that is our work to support tribal criminal and juvenile justice efforts. We have a vast array of programs and activities designed to address crime in Indian country, ranging from programs to help tribal youth and aid child victims to funding for substance abuse prevention and tribal corrections. Our focus is on not only increasing the funding and training available to tribes, but ensuring that our resources are accessible to tribal applicants.

Three years ago, when I was serving as Deputy Associate Attorney General, I oversaw the development of our Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation, or CTAS. CTAS consolidates many of our competitive tribal programs under a single solicitation so that applicants only have to submit one application for all the tribal programs that are included. This includes not only programs in OJP, but those in DOJ's COPS Office and Office on Violence Against Women, as well.

The Associate Attorney General will have more to say about CTAS, but I'd just like to mention that this is an ever-evolving funding instrument designed specifically to address feedback from tribal leaders. We're constantly looking for ways to make our grant process more flexible and more responsive to tribal needs. In that spirit, we have consulted with tribal leaders and practitioners to find ways we can improve, and in the last two years, we have:

- Opened the solicitation and application process earlier in the year, in December.
- Extended the announcement period to provide more time to tribal applicants.
- Developed Qs-and-As to describe the nine purpose areas.
- Developed a template for applicants to follow.
- Added a strategic planning program to assist tribes in developing applications. As part of this, we've added an online grant-writing tool to guide applicants through the grants process.

So we're constantly looking to make sure tribes are aware of and know how to access our resources. And we're ready to hear your ideas for FY 2014. We'd love to hear your thoughts today, and for those of you who'll travel to Bismarck, North Dakota next month for the Interdepartmental Tribal Justice, Safety, and Wellness Session, we will solicit your comments there, as well.

Giving tribes maximum access to our funding and other resources is, I believe, a critical part of our mission and one the Attorney General, the Associate Attorney General, and I are personally committed to. And I hope that we can count on all of you to let us know what you think we could be doing to make our programs even more responsive to the tribes you serve.

Now I'm very pleased to introduce the man, after the Attorney General, most responsible for the Department's work with tribes.

Since he came in as Acting Associate Attorney General in March of last year, Tony West has made the Department's work in Indian country a top priority, coordinating not only the grant programs, but the full portfolio of services, including our civil rights activities, the work in our Environment and Natural Resources Division, and of course all the work being done by our U.S. Attorneys.

The leadership he's provided in our work with tribes has been simply amazing, and I was thrilled that he was confirmed to his post by the Senate in July. It's my privilege to introduce the Associate Attorney General, Tony West.

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