

Plan for Ongoing Specialized Training to Support the Enduring Commitment to State Consultation with Minnesota Tribes

By the Tribal-State Advisory Group on
American Indian Training and Consultation
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Challenge

Minnesota is home to 11 sovereign tribal nations which collectively represent the sixth largest employer in the state and the majority of the state's 61,000 American Indians. Tribal jurisdiction impacts thousands of acres of land within reservation boundaries and ceded territories. Employees of state agencies are mandated to consult with the tribes on matters of mutual interest, yet they have not been equipped with the knowledge or tools they need to implement such consultation. Expectations vary from one department to another, executive orders change with each administration, and loose definitions of consultation can lead to state-tribal disagreements.

The efficiency and effectiveness of employees within state government continually remain at stake.

Solution

Our hope is that cabinet-level leaders of multiple state agencies will support an enduring solution that transcends time, people and circumstances.

The Tribal-State Advisory Group on American Indian Training and Consultation is respectfully requesting executive endorsement to require ongoing specialized training of state employees in American Indian topics that are relevant to their jobs and departments. This action will provide consistency in expectations and processes that will foster a nurturing, productive environment for state employees.

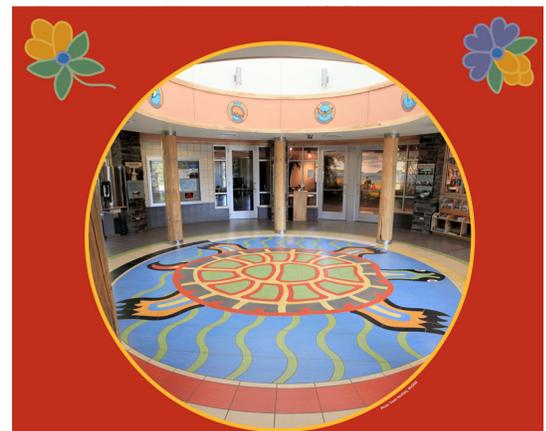
Vision

The vision of the Tribal-State Advisory Group on American Indian Training and Consultation is a community that values and promotes knowledge, understanding and respect for American Indian governance, history, and ways of life.

Mission

Our mission is to create training and education for Minnesota state employees about American Indian tribal governments, histories, cultures and traditions in order to:

- Empower state employees to work effectively with American Indians, and
- Promote authentic and respectful relationships between state agencies and American Indian tribes.



A successful partnership between the Grand Portage Band, MnDNR, and MnDOT resulted in the construction of a new 5,800-square-foot combination State Park Visitor Center, year-round MnDOT Safety Rest Area, and ExploreMN Travel Information Center.

Goals

- Educate state employees about Indian people and governments;
- Create partnerships;
- Build respectful relationships between the state and tribes; and
- Create an enduring commitment by the state to learn about tribal governments.

Intended outcomes

- **More effective state employees:** Employees will be empowered with the knowledge and processes needed to do their jobs. Complex questions will be answered through training.
- **Greater efficiencies in state government:** Improved consultation processes will save time and money.
- **Lasting solution to a long-standing problem:** State officials have long grappled with how to properly communicate and interact with tribes. Now they will have a long-term solution and access to reliable answers.
- **Benefits to state projects:** Joint powers partnerships with individual tribes on projects related to roads, natural resources, and a wide variety of other projects can bring additional funding to important state priorities and quicken the pace of completion.
- **Better relationships with tribes:** Delayed or poorly executed consultation has led to misunderstandings and frustration between tribes and the state. Well-handled, well-informed consultation will only improve the state's relationship with the tribes.
- **Continuing education opportunities for state employees:** Participation in the training could become an opportunity for employees to attain a specific certification or meet continuing education requirements.

Support for the ongoing specialized training plan

- The Tribal-State Advisory Group on American Indian Training and Consultation is committed to leading the development and implementation of this plan.
- The advisory group consists of representatives from the following agencies:
 - Minnesota Department of Transportation
 - Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
 - Minnesota Department of Human Services
 - Minnesota Historical Society
 - Minnesota Indian Affairs Council
 - University of Minnesota Duluth – American Indian Studies Department
 - Indian Land Tenure Foundation
 - Minnesota Humanities Center
 - Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
 - White Earth Nation
 - American Indian Policy Center
- The plan is supported by the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (resolution signed April 30, 2012).