COALITION for TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY

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Indian Country Data on IMPACTS of ADMINISTRATION ACTIONS

All presidential transitions bring with them changes in personnel, policy, and procedure. Such is the case with the second Trump Administration. The net effect of the rapid changes taking place has been a lack of reliable information about certain aspects of federal agency operations that Tribal Nations, Tribal citizens, and Tribal communities rely upon to make informed decisions.

This document contains a summary of the data available on impacts of actions taken by the Trump Administration on federal programs serving Indian Country and details the challenges in obtaining and analyzing data on how Indian Country is being impacted by the Administration's actions. This document will be updated periodically to ensure continued accuracy.[1]

SECTION 1 - Federal Funding of Indian Country Programs and Services

SIGNIFICANCE

Tribal Nations are inherently sovereign and are responsible for providing essential government services to their citizens and communities as well as creating spaces for economic opportunity and self-sufficiency. The federal government's funding obligations for Tribal programs are not discretionary budget items subject to political negotiations and shifting priorities. They are legally binding obligations for which Tribal Nations paid-in-full with our lands and resources.

Yet, the federal government has never fully funded its trust and treaty obligations. *All* federal funding flowing to Indian Country delivers on trust and treaty obligations—whether it funds services provided by the federal government to Indian Country or it funds Tribal Nations and Tribal-serving entities to deliver services to Native communities, and whether the funding is available only to Indian Country or is made available to other entities but can also be accessed by Indian Country.

Any disruptions in delivering federal funding, services, or preferences to Indian Country breaches the government's legal obligations, undermines the government-to-government relationships between the United States and Tribal Nations, and impacts millions of people—Native and non-Native alike—who rely on Tribal programs for services related to education, health, economic development, public safety, and more.

DATA FROM INDIAN COUNTRY

Scope of federal grant funding to Indian Country

Since 2018, the federal government has obligated funding to **over 1,700** Tribal governments, Native nonprofits, and Native-owned businesses spanning almost every state in the country. "These grants and cooperative agreements were distributed by nearly a hundred federal agencies and spanned over **750 programs**."[2]

Scope of federal grant cuts to Indian Country

"In the four months following January 20, 2025, federal agencies quietly canceled at least 693 grant programs representing **$16.7 billion** in congressionally-allocated funding commitments, or over **42.2%** of the **$39.6 Billion** [allocated total]. An analysis of program descriptions uncovered … **105 different terms** that appear to have been flagged for scrutiny. [The most frequently flagged term in cancelled programs was] 'Tribal' [with] **31%** of [canceled] programs containing the word."[1]

Examples of direct impacts to Indian Country:

- **Overview:** Since January 2025, Tribal Nations have experienced funding freezes or rescissions impacting: construction of cultural centers,[2] evacuation shelters,[3] and bridge repairs;[4] conservation projects such as riverbank stabilization;[5] safety projects related to water quality;[6] food sovereignty and food distribution programs;[7] tribal business development services;[8] and energy infrastructure production;[9] in addition to many other programs and services.
- **Example:** A Native American Fish and Wildlife Service (NAFWS) survey found that "**60% of Tribes** responded that they experienced freezing of grants or other federal funding, and **26%** faced total cancelation of federal funding."[10]
- **Example:** As of April 2025, "[m]ore than **22 tribes** and nonprofits across the country from Alaska to the Midwest, have had around **$350 million** in federal funding for key infrastructure projects frozen, often without notice."[11]
- **Example:** As of July 2025, in Minnesota, "nearly **$697 million** in outstanding payments to Minnesota" Tribal Nations remained unpaid.[12]

DATA SOURCES

The Administration has not released a comprehensive list of funding streams or programs that it has, at one point in time or another, frozen, unfrozen, terminated, or otherwise modified. Some data on the Administration's federal funding cuts has been produced by the U.S. Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE),[13] and general data related to past federal funding levels for Indian Country exists in the form of the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Native American Crosscut.[14] Yet, information specific to the impacts of

various Administration actions on federal programs serving Indian Country has been limited to piecemeal sources found on federal government websites, a handful of news reports, and information gathered directly from Tribal Nations and Tribal-serving organizations.

DATA CHALLENGES

There is a historical and ongoing lack of complete data on federal funding for Indian Country across federal agencies, and therefore Indian Country lacks a baseline dataset from which to measure impacts. The OMB Native American Crosscut only captures a specific moment in time, is both over and under inclusive, and was last in 2024.

In terms of assessing which federal programs have faced funding impediments during this Administration, although some big-picture information can be gleaned from DOGE data and, in some instances, by examining specific agency websites, to the extent data does exist, it is not comprehensive. Additionally, it quickly becomes outdated as the Administration continues to freeze, unfreeze, terminate, reinstate, and otherwise continually modify federal funding streams impacting Indian Country. Complicating data collection efforts further, the Administration has, on occasion, revoked all funding in a specific area only to reinstate funding for certain awardees while not doing so for others. In certain instances, federal funding has been frozen until awardees decided whether to make changes to the scope of their work and/or the terms of their agreements, and the outcomes of these largely individualized interactions is typically not made public. Additionally, information that has traditionally been public regarding awardees has been removed from many government websites and, frequently, even federal agency staff tasked with servicing a particular funding stream are unclear on the status of specific awards or awardees. Oftentimes, Administration officials are asking Indian Country for data on impacts of the Administration's own actions on Indian Country, evidencing that the Administration is not clearly tracking the effects of its mandates. Similarly, while Congress, in its role providing oversight of the executive branch, has produced occasional data points for specific funding streams, as of yet Congress has not released any comprehensive accounting with respect to the status of federal funding streams.

Indian Country has made efforts to collate its own data. Yet, the consistently changing landscape of federal funding combined with the challenges associated with trying to get overwhelmed Tribal Nations and Tribal organizations to respond to inquiries and surveys results in fragmented data that is, largely, anecdotal in nature. Additionally, there are concerns by some that providing data may be interpreted as criticism of current actions and make them a target in the future.

SECTION 2 - Federal Workforce for Indian Country Programs and Services

SIGNIFICANCE

Indian Country is not opposed, in principle, to reducing federal government waste and improving federal government efficiency. However, actions to achieve the Administration's goals must not interfere with the United States' fulfillment of its trust and treaty obligations. Reductions in federal staffing, furloughs, and the failure to fill staffing vacancies due to hiring freezes impact Tribal Nations in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:

- **Impacts on direct services** provided by the United States to Tribal communities, such as those related to health, public safety, natural resources, education, etc.;
- **Loss of long-term relationships** between federal staff and specific Tribal Nations;
- **Creation of delays** in responding to time-sensitive Tribal correspondences;
- **Creation of delays** in providing critical technical assistance, particularly with respect to grant administration, compliance, and reporting; and
- **Lack of personnel** with the requisite clearances and expertise to review or approve federal funding drawdowns and expenditures by Tribal Nations and Tribal-serving organizations.

DATA FROM INDIAN COUNTRY

Impacts of RIFs

Reductions in force (RIFs) at the federal government level directly impact on-the-ground operations in Indian Country. As one prominent Tribal Nation leader put it: "These are real jobs that our society depends on. These are cops, nurses in clinics, people who manage our forests and fisheries."[15]

Impacts of Unfilled Vacancies

Vacancies in various offices serving Indian Country have resulted in a variety of problems, including: executive orders "being implemented inconsistently" across federal offices serving Tribal Nations;[16] the need for "Tribes … having to reinforce their position as a political entity" with many relationships "starting at ground zero again";[17] instances where offices relied upon by Tribal governments have "had no communication" for extended periods of time;[18] and Tribal Nations being locked out of critical federal funding distribution mechanisms without warning.[19]

Combined Impacts of Reducing the Size of the Federal Government

The combination of federal workforce reduction efforts combined with hiring freezes has the potential to impact many other areas, such as federal support for the hiring and onboarding of federal police and firefighters,[20] the ability of Tribal Nations to engage in overdose prevention services,[21] and, in areas where federal government dollars are critical to creating jobs, such changes have the potential to "destroy whole regional economies in rural areas around the country."[22]

Exemptions for Indian Country Matter

In February 2025, Secretary Kennedy exempted Indian Health Service (IHS) employees from RIFs and **protected approximately 950 employees** who were, initially, terminated before that decision was rescinded. The effort to protect employees serving Indian Country allowed IHS to provide continuity in health care and life-saving services to Tribal communities across the nation. Indian Country applauds the effort to exempt IHS employees and urges the Administration to similarly exempt all employees serving Indian Country from future workforce cuts and acknowledges the exceptional positive impact such a directive would have on the millions who rely on Tribal programs and services.

DATA SOURCES

Currently, the most comprehensive data on the federal workforce is the data produced by the U.S. Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).[23] However, this data is not comprehensive, and communication with the agency has proven largely ineffective. Additional data on changes to the federal workforce has been limited to what is reported by news sources.

DATA CHALLENGES

There is no baseline data on which federal employees are serving Indian Country and the Administration is not fully tracking the impacts of its mandates—including the degree to which the federal government is losing employees who serve Indian Country. While DOGE data exists, the public data is not in a state that allows Indian Country to easily determine the impacts across federal agencies to our communities. The DOGE data also reports only

reductions in force numbers and is not updated when the Administration chooses to undo DOGE efforts by re-hiring individuals or filling vacancies with new employees. With respect to Indian Country, useful data is largely limited to what can be collated from individual Tribal Nations and Tribal-serving organizations, and any information that the federal government is willing to self-report. CTS has made requests for Indian Country specific information from a large number of federal agencies serving Tribal Nations, Tribal citizens, and Tribal communities, but at the time of the most recent update to this fact sheet, CTS has received no actionable data. Additionally, to the extent the federal government shutdown results in additional workforce changes, a location for centralized reporting on such changes does not currently exist, forcing Indian Country to once again try to piece together the state of the federal workforce serving Tribal Nations, Tribal citizens, and Tribal communities.

SECTION 3 - Additional Challenges

As a general matter, the speed with which the Administration has made changes to policies, regulations, and organizational structures has not been accompanied by clear, easy-to-locate information on the impacts generally or to Indian Country specifically.

While not an exhaustive list, other areas where accessing reliable data in real time has proved challenging includes:

- Projects where National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) reviews have been expedited / waived;
- General Service Administration lease terminations;
- National Monument designation reviews;
- Instances where preferences properly provided to Native people in furtherance of trust and treaty obligations, such as related to government contracting, are misclassified as race-based and eliminated; and
- Instances of planned regulatory review pursuant to agency RFIs (e.g., 90 FR 21504 (May 20, 2025).

ENDNOTES

1. *While this document does not provide data on impacts of the federal government shutdown, impacts similar to those identified in this document are occurring across Indian Country due to the shutdown.*
2. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/a-federal-grant-freeze-could-disrupt-over-24-billion-to-native-american-communities-and-undermine-us-obligations-to-tribes/
3. https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/hidden-scale-federal-grant-program-cancellations-how-124-zoe-kendall-o9qkc/
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5. https://www.minnpost.com/national/washington/2025/07/report-minnesota-tribes-waiting-on-nearly-700-million-in-federal-funding/
6. https://www.npr.org/2025/04/14/nx-s1-5342539/federal-funding-freeze-halts-native-american-projects
7. https://grist.org/politics/its-demoralizing-trumps-climate-funding-freeze-has-left-tribes-and-community-groups-in-limbo/
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9. https://insideclimatenews.org/news/31082025/passamaquoddy-tribe-drinking-water-problems-maine/
10. https://www.hcn.org/articles/trumps-funding-freeze-of-indigenous-food-programs-may-violate-treaty-law/; https://grist.org/politics/its-demoralizing-trumps-climate-funding-freeze-has-left-tribes-and-community-groups-in-limbo/
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14. https://www.opb.org/article/2025/04/15/federal-funding-freeze-harms-native-communities/
15. https://www.minnpost.com/national/washington/2025/07/report-minnesota-tribes-waiting-on-nearly-700-million-in-federal-funding/
16. https://doge.gov/savings
17. https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2025-Native-American-Funding-Crosscut-Report_508.pdf
18. https://stateline.org/2025/03/04/for-indian-country-federal-cuts-decimate-core-tribal-programs/
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22. https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2025/03/22/northwest-tribes-sound-alarm-about-cuts-to-health-care-education-and-other-key-services/
23. https://stateline.org/2025/03/04/for-indian-country-federal-cuts-decimate-core-tribal-programs/
24. https://nativenewsonline.net/health/cdc-s-tribal-overdose-prevention-team-gutted-in-federal-workforce-cuts
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