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# White House Releases First-of-a-Kind Indigenous Knowledge Guidance for Federal Agencies

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Today, the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) jointly [released new government-wide guidance](#) and an accompanying [implementation memorandum](#) for Federal Agencies on recognizing and including Indigenous Knowledge in Federal research, policy, and decision making. This announcement coincides with the Biden-Harris Administration's 2022 Tribal Nations Summit and responds to a [2021 OSTP-CEQ memorandum](#) that called for development of the guidance with Tribal consultation and Indigenous community engagement, as well as agency, expert, and public input

Indigenous Knowledge is a body of observations, oral and written knowledge, innovations, practices, and beliefs developed by Tribes and Indigenous Peoples through interaction and experience with the environment. The Biden-Harris Administration has formally recognized Indigenous Knowledge as one of the many important bodies of knowledge that contributes to the scientific, technical, social, and economic advancements of the United States and our collective understanding of the natural world.

“As the original stewards of the natural environment, Tribes and Indigenous communities have expertise critical to finding solutions to the climate crisis and protecting our nation’s ecosystems,” **said CEQ Chair Brenda Mallory.** “The guidance released today will help ensure that their voices are included across the Federal Government for the collective benefit of our communities and the planet.”

“Federal decision making is best when informed by all forms of knowledge,” **said the President’s Science and Technology Advisor and OSTP Director Arati Prabhakar.** “This Guidance will help Federal agencies integrate Indigenous Knowledge in their work—from research, to environmental rulemaking, to co-management of lands and waters.”

To develop the guidance, OSTP and CEQ led a working group of more than 25 Federal departments and agencies. The White House [engaged](#) more than a thousand individuals, organizations, and Tribal Nations on elevating Indigenous Knowledge in Federal decision making. Engagement included Nation-to-Nation Consultation, meetings, and input from more than 100 Federally recognized Tribes, public listening sessions, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Roundtables, a Native and Indigenous Youth Roundtable, conference outreach, and dozens of individual meetings with others with experience and expertise on Indigenous Knowledge. In summer 2022, a draft of the guidance was released to Tribal Nations for consultation. Input from that consultation has shaped the final guidance.

“Tribes have long sought federal recognition of the value of their knowledge. With this new guidance, Indigenous Knowledge will be better recognized, considered, and included in decisions across the Federal Government,” **said Daron Carreiro, Senior Policy Advisor for Native Affairs at the White House Domestic Policy Council.** “This new guidance is a reflection of President Biden’s commitment to strengthening Nation-to-Nation relationships.”

Specifically, the White House guidance on Indigenous Knowledge will assist agencies in:

- Understanding Indigenous Knowledge
- Growing and maintaining the mutually beneficial relationships with Tribal Nations and Indigenous peoples needed to appropriately include Indigenous Knowledge
- Considering, including, and applying Indigenous Knowledge in Federal research, policies, management, and decision making

This guidance also identifies promising practices, based on agency experience and Tribal and Indigenous input, for collaborating with Tribal Nations and Indigenous peoples, as well as for considering and applying Indigenous Knowledge in implementing statutory and regulatory requirements, and respecting the decisions of Tribal Nations and Indigenous peoples on whether and how to engage in Federal processes.

Together with the guidance, OSTP and CEQ also released an implementation memorandum which tasks agencies with reporting on progress within 180 days, and announced the formation of a new interagency group under the National Science and Technology Council that will assist in coordination and implementation of the new guidance across agencies.

Complementing the White House guidance, several Federal departments and agencies release their own Indigenous Knowledge guidance this week, including the Department of the Interior, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

More information on the White House Indigenous Knowledge Initiative can be found [here](#).

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