

Collaboration with Tribal, State and  
Federal Agencies in providing  
effective Victim Services



**Dukes of Hazzard Theory to Law Enforcement**

Once it crosses the jurisdictional line I can't do anything about it!



## Another Option:

**Working together to combat crime  
across jurisdictional lines**



## Federal Agencies

- FBI
- BIA
- DEA
- ATF
- US Postal
- IRS
- Inspector Generals (DOI, HUD, DOD, DOT, USDA)
- Homeland Security
- US Marshal

## State Agencies

- County Sheriffs
- City Police
- Oklahoma Highway Patrol
- OSBI
- OBNDD
- DA Investigators

## Tribes

- Police
- AG Investigators
- Gaming Regulators
- Tax Revenue Agents
- Auditors



## Joint Resources Available

- NCIC (inc. P.O. verification)
- Tag Verification (Tribal & State)
- SOT Teams
- Bomb Squads
- Swift Water Rescue
- Dive Team
- K9s
- Laboratories
- Drug Task Forces
- Casino Surveillance Video
- Surveillance Equipment
- Domestic Violence Specialists
- Sexual Abuse/Rape Specialists
- DARE/ School Education
- Firing Ranges
- Intel

## Cross-Commissions/Deputations

- BIA SLEC
- Cross-Commissions Tribal – State/City/County
- FBI
- DEA
- US Marshal

## BIA SLEC

- Allows tribal, state, county or municipal officers to arrest or investigate matters under the jurisdiction of the BIA
- Does not grant broad federal authority
- Must be approved by Tribe
- U.S. Attorney Offices Provide Training

## Cross-Commissions

- Approved by Tribe and State Governor
- Parameters set out in contract
- Generally allows individual cross-commissions not a blanket commissioning

## DEA and FBI

- Muscogee (Creek) Nation was the first tribe to enter into a cross-commission agreement with the DEA
- Agency shares in forfeiture
- Cherokee Nation Deputy Marshal member of FBI Violent Task Force



**United States v. Steven Keeling**

25 years BOP federal  
15 years DOC state



## Law Enforcement

- Tulsa County Sheriff
- Bixby Police Department
- FBI
- Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthouse
- OSBI Laboratory
- United States Attorney – NDOK
- Tulsa County District Attorney

## United States v. Taylor

### Abusive Sexual Contact of Minor Under 12 Years of Age in Indian Country

- State of Kansas Law Enforcement
- Cherokee Nation Child Welfare Services
- Cherokee Nation Marshals
- Mayes County District Attorney
- United States Attorney – NDOK
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Child Abuse Network

## Two Options

**Work against each other**



**Work together**



## Responding to Tribal Crime Victims

- Outreach to DV/SA advocates within each tribal community
- Outreach to Tribal court clerks, judges, and law enforcement
- Development and implementation State-Tribal Victims Services Roundtable Discussions
- Resource table at conferences in Indian Country

## Responding to Tribal Crime Victims

State-Tribal Victims Services Roundtable Discussions:

- Informal meetings with open agenda
- Hosted by tribes at tribal facilities
- Bring together state and federal victims' services personnel with tribal victims' services programs

## Challenges to Providing Victims' Services

- Each of the Indian nations is unique. However, all of the tribes in Oklahoma share the common challenge of providing services to their citizens in a checkerboard .
- Oklahoma's 38 federally recognized tribes are not reservation- based tribes.
- Cross deputization agreements and memorandums of understanding between tribal, state, and local agencies exist to close service gaps. However, those agreements are voluntary and do not exist in every part of the state.

## Other Challenges to Providing Victims' Services

### Access to Victims Assistance Grants

- Staff members within tribes who were tasked with writing grants often do not feel adequately trained to create the funding request.
- The contract grant writer employed by a tribe often does not know about the community demographics and may commit the tribe and its resources to a service project that it cannot implement nor sustain.

## Responding to Tribal Crime Victims

### Increased Tribal VOCA Subgrant Awards from:

- ❖ 2 in 2008 and 2009
- ❖ 3 in 2010
- ❖ 4 in 2011, 2012, and 2013
- ❖ 8 in 2014 – this makes up 5% of our award total
- ❖ 12 in 2015
- ❖ 19 in 2016

## Other Challenges to Providing Victims' Services

Oklahoma statutes require many victims' services programs to be certified by one or more state agencies or organizations

- Certified programs must submit to the supervisory and compliance authority of the certifying agency.
- Tribal victims' service programs that would otherwise be able to serve non-Indian victims who are referred from state courts are limited to American Indian referrals from tribal court.
- Staff members for those programs receive the same training hours as their state counterparts in certified programs; however, they are not recognized as a certified program.

## Other Challenges to Providing Victims' Services

Much of Oklahoma is rural

- Most of the Indian nations have headquarters outside the larger metropolitan areas of Tulsa and Oklahoma City.
- Service providers are plentiful in the metro areas but resources available to victims are less accessible as one travels thirty to forty miles away.
- Victims' service providers are far fewer on the western half of Oklahoma.
- The cost or availability of time and transportation to access services.

## Other Challenges to Providing Victims' Services

Although tribal law enforcement, victim advocates, and shelter staff receive equal or greater training for their respective disciplines, they continue to struggle to gain recognition from their state counterparts as viable resources and partners. Still, many tribal governments in many areas of the state contribute significant financial resources and facilities for education, law enforcement, infrastructure, health care, and employment.

## Responding to Tribal Crime Victims: Best Practices

- Acknowledge that every tribe is unique with a unique story and collection of customs, traditions and challenges.
- Be consistent. Under promise and over deliver. This advice is particularly true in Indian Country. Historically, Indian people have been the recipients of numerous empty promises and breached agreements. It is important to be honest and consistent with regard to contacts, services offered and follow-up.
- Contact tribal people in their communities or at tribal facilities. By interacting with people in the environment where they live, the liaison will gain a better understanding of the resources available to them and the challenges that they face.
- Develop a champion or sponsor. In the event the tribal liaison does not have any contacts in Indian Country, he/she should develop a relationship with someone who is trusted and accepted in Indian Country and who can endorse the liaison while introducing the liaison to key community members.
- Eliminate electronic communication to the extent possible. Meet with tribal contacts face to face whenever possible or by telephone when it is not possible.
- Employ active listening in the field and advocate for policy changes based on problems identified by each community rather than perceived problems at the agency.
- Develop culturally specific materials for the crime victims' compensation program and distribute among the tribes.

## Responding to Tribal Crime Victims: Best Practices

- Ask for permission to post victims compensation information and other victim related brochures. Leave information in key locations such as social services buildings, courthouses, police departments, and health and wellness facilities. This is a pattern that will need to be continued annually.
- Provide a longer window of time between the notice of availability of funds and the deadline to submit proposals to allow the tribe's legal counsel and governing body sufficient time to review and approve grant proposals.
- Develop a toolkit for grant writers that would include tips on the importance of understanding the business practices and community demographics prior to writing the grant.
- Conduct regional grant-writing trainings specifically designed for tribal staff with no prior grant-writing experience.
- Address concerns that arise in the field, and have a mechanism for bringing parties together to solve issues that arise, specifically in the area of jurisdiction and the importance of collaboration between agencies.
- Assist communities in bridging the gap in services offered to victims within each tribe, state, federal and non-profit organization, for the common goal of improving services to crime victims in Indian Country.
- Focus on building relationships between all people, which is the key to successful best practices.

