



# National Resources For Tribal-State Collaborations



Tribal Law & Policy Institute  
[www.Home.TLPI.org](http://www.Home.TLPI.org)



# OVERVIEW OF THE RESOURCE

A planful approach to collaboration



## Crossing the Bridge: Tribal-State-Local Collaboration

William Thorne and Suzanne Garcia  
Tribal Law and Policy Institute  
February 2019

### I. Introduction

**How do we begin?** When meeting with people who are looking to establish a collaborative project with a tribal government or a Native group, this question often comes up: “How do we begin?” In some jurisdictions, the question may be more properly “How do we pick it up again?” because previous attempts at collaboration had died on the vine or ended badly.

*How can the collaboration overcome a history of inaction, animosity, and distrust?*

*Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) is a volunteer organization that seeks to provide a voice to children involved in the child*



# ▶ JOINT JURISDICTION COURTS

- Shared and / or pooled resources
- Joint bench officers for hearings
- Shared probation and supervision



# ▶ JOINT JURISDICTION COURTS (CONT.)

- At least 12 joint jurisdictional courts have been developed, with ten fully operational:
  - Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe- Cass and Itasca Counties (Minnesota)
  - White Earth Nation- Becker and Mahnomen Counties (Minnesota)
  - Saint Regis Mohawk (International: New York, USA and Canada)
  - Kenaitze Indian Tribe – Alaska Court System (Kenai, AK)
  - Hoopa Tribe- Humboldt County (California)
  - Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians- Eldorado County (California)
  - Yurok Tribe- Humboldt and Del Norte Counties (California)
  - Forest County Potawatomi and Forest County (Wisconsin)
  - Planning: Ho-Chunk Nation and Jackson County (Wisconsin)



# ▶ ICWA Courts

- 17 + ICWA courts
- Both PL 280 and exclusive jurisdiction states
- Judge led, team supported
  - Created or improved relationships with tribes
  - Teams visited reservation tribal courts
  - Hosted tribal teams
  - Standing advisory committees
  - Support of community and professional resources
    - School of social work, large and small non-profits, NCJFCJs



# ▶ LOOKING FOR SOLUTIONS

- Problem solving reminders
- **Don't make the "Perfect" the enemy of the "Good"**
  - What kind of supports can be put in place to make it satisfactory
  - Build in feedback loops
  - Perfection isn't achievable, but progress is





## WEBSITES

### Tribal-State Intergovernmental Collaboration [WalkingOnCommonGround.org](http://WalkingOnCommonGround.org)

Resources for tribal-state intergovernmental collaborations, including tribal-state agreements, promising strategies, and information on tribal courts.

Request for training and technical assistance may be submitted on the home page or by emailing: [WOCG@tlpi.org](mailto:WOCG@tlpi.org).

Home About Us ▾ Resources ▾ **Technical Assistance** Events News Funding ▾

# WALKING ON COMMON GROUND

RESOURCES FOR PROMOTING AND FACILITATING TRIBAL-STATE-FEDERAL COLLABORATIONS

## TRIBAL-STATE COLLABORATIONS

[Judicial](#) | [Law Enforcement](#) | [Community Corrections/Detention](#) | [Multiple Agency Agreements](#) | [Child Welfare](#) | [Other](#)

Upcoming Webinar: **Building and Sustaining Partnerships for Peacemaking Webinar**

Upcoming Webinar Building and Sustaining Partnerships for Peacemaking Webinar




# RESOURCES

## Tribal Law & Policy Institute Resources: Tribal-State Court Collaboration Publications

<https://www.home.tlpi.org/publications>

**PROMISING STRATEGIES:  
TRIBAL-STATE INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
COLLABORATIONS**

Tribal Law and Policy Institute  
February 2024




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[www.Home.TLPI.org](http://www.Home.TLPI.org)  
[www.WalkingOnCommonGround.org](http://www.WalkingOnCommonGround.org)

**PROMISING STRATEGIES:  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATIONS**

**Intergovernmental Collaborations to Heal, Protect,  
and Find Solutions:  
Joint Jurisdiction Courts 101**




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**Joint Jurisdiction Courts:  
Needs Assessment Findings**

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**Tribal-State Court Forums:  
An Annotated Directory, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**


Tribal Law and Policy Institute  
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**Why should we collaborate?** This is another common question. Is it based in altruism, wanting to help those in need of assistance? Is it because there are mandates that we cannot ignore? Is it because we have experienced some guilt at the exclusion of tribes from collaborative partnerships? Is it because we have been approached or invited and are tempted to join? Collaboration may be part of a larger requirement to consult with tribes on issues that affect them. Most federal agencies have consultation policies, and many require state and local agencies that accept federal funds to consult with tribes on how those funds are used. Many states also have consultation policies. **Consulting and then collaborating to implement the innovations and solutions that are suggested is an indication of meaningful consultation.**

In some cases, the motivation to collaborate is the necessity of finding a solution to a persistent problem. For example, in northern California, a tribal judge wrote a letter to the chief justice of the California Supreme Court about a public safety issue he was facing. That one letter began a process that has created an ongoing relationship between the state and tribal judges in California, which in turn has led to collaboration in a growing number of

**How can the collaboration overcome a history of inaction, animosity, and distrust?**

**Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)** is a volunteer organization that seeks to provide a voice to children involved in the child welfare system of this country—one child at a time. Resources are rarely enough to meet all the needs and a network of programs have been developed that really assist and share with other programs. More than a decade ago an effort was made to extend the program reach into Indian country. However, it was not that easy. After several years of attempting to partner with a county-based program, the neighboring tribal program gave up, observing that "they seem to let the bridge, connecting a handful of miles of roadway, prevent many of the non-Indians from coming onto the reservation. Almost like they were afraid." These people grew up in the same schools and lived close to each other, but the communities had almost nothing to do with each other.

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