

INDIAN AFFAIRS MANUAL

Part 1

Indian Affairs Directives System

Chapter 6

National Policy Memoranda (NPM)

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- 1.1 Purpose.** To establish policy for producing and issuing National Policy Memoranda (NPMs).
- 1.2 Scope.** Compliance with Indian Affairs (IA) policy is mandatory for IA employees.
- 1.3 Policy.** NPMs are temporary policies which provide interim guidance regarding the duties and responsibilities of IA employees. NPMs are valid for one year and can be extended for one year, after which the policies published in NPMs are incorporated into an Indian Affairs Manual (IAM) chapter, superseded, or cancelled.
- 1.4 Authority.**
- A.** The **Federal Records Act (44 U.S.C. 3101)**, requires the head of each Federal agency to provide proper documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures and essential transactions of the agency. Records should be designed to furnish the information necessary to protect the legal and financial rights of the Government and of persons directly affected by the agency's activities.
 - B.** The Public Information section of the **Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 552)** requires that the following information be made available to the public: descriptions of the organization, where and how information and decisions can be secured, what and how functions are performed, what requirements must be met to get benefits or services, and what procedures must be followed.
 - C.** **Departmental Manual 381 DM 1** requires that Indian Affairs provide proper documentation of its organization, functions, policies, and procedures.
- 1.5 Guidance.** The Indian Affairs Directives Handbook (1 IAM-H) provides instructions and examples to assist those who produce national policy memoranda, including templates and examples for formatting, producing a Clearance Record, and instructions for footnoting. The Handbook is on the IA intranet through the IA Directives System webpage: <http://inside.bia.gov/Org/AS-IA/ORM/DirectSys/index.htm> and on the Internet at <http://www.bia.gov/WhatWeDo/Knowledge/Directives/index.htm>. A copy may be obtained by contacting the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action, 2051 Mercator Drive, Reston, VA 20191.
- 1.6 Style.** NPMs should be written in plain language which is easily understood. Technical language and legal jargon should be avoided, and acronyms should be used sparingly and only after the complete words for the acronym have been spelled out the first time it is used in a document.
- 1.7 Responsibilities.**
- A. Deputy Assistant Secretaries; Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA); and the Director, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)** are responsible for ensuring that the

information in NPMs for the programs and functions within their authority is accurate and up-to-date.

B. Indian Affairs Offices (including Offices under the AS-IA, Central Office, Regional and Agency Offices, and Districts) that develop NPMs are responsible for ensuring that the policy and processes in the NPM conform to applicable statutes, regulations and policies, and that national policy is consistent with the directives contained in the IAM. The authoring Office is responsible for developing NPM content; circulating drafts for internal review and comment; preparing the Clearance Record for the NPM's surnaming; and ensuring the material is appropriately distributed in electronic or printed format. NPMs do not require a Transmittal Sheet since an NPM has the authorizing signature at the close of the memorandum.

C. Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action (RACA) provides guidance and assistance for developing national policy memoranda. RACA assigns a release number and document identification number; reviews memoranda for format and proper delegation of authority; and coordinates recommended changes or corrections with the authoring Office. When NPMs are final and signed by the appropriate officials, they are returned to RACA to stamp the document with date of issue, enter it into the records management system, and forward for publication to the IA Internet.

D. Signature Authority. National policy is established, amended, or ended only in writing and only by the Assistant Secretary, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, a Deputy Assistant Secretary, the Director, BIA, or the Director, BIE.

1.9 Definitions.

A. Clearance Record (Form DI 228). The Clearance Record is used during the final review and signature (surnaming) process to document concurrence by each reviewing official. Content should be carefully reviewed before a document is signed off. Instructions and examples for completing the Clearance Record are in the IA Directives Handbook.

B. Directive. A means of written communication that conveys policy, initiates or governs actions, conduct, or procedures.

C. Document Identification Number. The document identification number is the unique identification number for the type of directive being issued. Instructions for constructing the document identification number are in the IA Directives Handbook.

D. Indian Affairs (IA). Includes the Offices of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs (AS-IA), the BIE, and the BIA. The organization and functions of the components of Indian Affairs are described in 110 DM 8 and 130 DM 1 through 130 DM 12.

E. Proper Documentation. Identifying what information needs to be created or received to provide documented evidence of carrying out official responsibilities; managing the organization; and meeting the Department's legal responsibilities.