

# GAO's Work on Native American Issues

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**U.S. Government Accountability Office**

**2019 Pacific Northwest Intergovernmental Audit Forum**

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## **GAO reviews have covered a range of Native American topics**

- Human trafficking of Native Americans
  - Tribal justice programs
  - Indian education
  - Indian health care
  - Telecommunications on tribal lands
  - Roads on tribal lands
  - Indian housing programs
  - Federal disaster assistance for tribes
  - Indian energy development
  - Native American cultural resources
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## Examples of recent GAO tribal reports

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**DRINKING WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE:** Opportunities Exist to Enhance Federal Agency Needs Assessment and Coordination on Tribal Projects (GAO-18-309, May 15, 2018)

**NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURAL PROPERTY:** Additional Agency Actions Needed to Assist Tribes with Repatriating Items from Overseas Auctions (GAO-18-537, Aug. 6, 2018)

**TRIBAL BROADBAND:** FCC Should Undertake Efforts to Better Promote Tribal Access to Spectrum (GAO-19-75, Nov. 14, 2018)

**SUPERFUND:** EPA Should Improve the Reliability of Data on National Priorities List Sites Affecting Indian Tribes (GAO-19-123, Jan. 23, 2019)

**HIGH RISK SERIES:** Substantial Efforts Needed to Achieve Greater Progress on High-Risk Areas (GAO-19-157SP, Mar. 6, 2019)

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# Tribal Consultation on Infrastructure Projects (GAO-19-22)



United States Government Accountability Office  
Report to Congressional Requesters

March 2019

## TRIBAL CONSULTATION

Additional Federal  
Actions Needed for  
Infrastructure Projects

GAO-19-22

Objectives were to examine:

- (1) the extent to which selected federal agencies have policies for consulting with Indian tribes and ANCs on infrastructure projects and related activities;
- (2) key factors tribes and selected federal agencies identified that hinder effective consultation on infrastructure projects;
- (3) steps selected federal agencies have taken to facilitate tribal consultation.



# Uranium Contamination on the Navajo Reservation (GAO-14-323)



United States Government Accountability Office  
Report to Congressional Requesters

May 2014

## URANIUM CONTAMINATION

Overall Scope, Time  
Frame, and Cost  
Information Is Needed  
for Contamination  
Cleanup on the  
Navajo Reservation

Objectives were to examine:

- (1) the extent to which the agencies achieved the targets set in the 5-year plan and reasons why or why not;
- (2) what is known about the future scope of work, time frames, and costs; and
- (3) any key challenges faced by the agencies in completing this work and any opportunities to overcome them.



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## Challenges GAO Faces in Auditing Programs that Serve Tribes and Their Members

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- Breadth of agencies audited and programs covered
  - Diverse topic areas require mission team-specific expertise
  - Two primary Congressional committees, substantial ancillary interest
  - Lack of standardization in approach to working with tribes and tribal governments
  - High-Risk List messaging
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## Enhancing GAO's Capabilities for Auditing Tribal Programs and Working with Tribes

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- Top-down commitment with dedicated resources
  - Establishment of tribal advisory council
  - Development of protocols for working with tribes and tribal governments
  - Enhancing relationships with tribal stakeholders (governments, organizations, and tribal members)
  - Coordinated Congressional outreach
  - Incorporating tribal governments in GAO's strategic plan
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## Anticipated Outcomes of GAO's Internal Capacity Building Initiative

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- Better understanding of issues faced by tribes and of challenges administering federal government programs that serve tribes and their members
  - Potential to improve the administration of programs and illustrate effective self-governance initiatives
  - Enhanced communication with tribes and their members
  - Improved data on programs serving tribes including information on program outcomes
  - More strategic approach to GAO work
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