

Government-to-Government Tribal Relationship Policy

Management Committee

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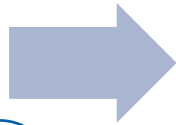
September 23, 2026



Background on Tribal Policy

2016

- First MC Government to Government Tribal Relationships Policy developed by Tribal Liaison Brooke Bordson. Policy called for regular review and updates.



2023

- First full-time permanent Tribal Liaison position established to support Tribal Relations across the enterprise.



2025

- Land, Water, and People Acknowledgement adopted and American Indian Advisory Council established to help guide Council work.



2026

- First review of the 2019 Tribal Policy. Policy and procedures updated to reflect current law, consultation practices and Council's Tribal Relations work.

Metropolitan Council

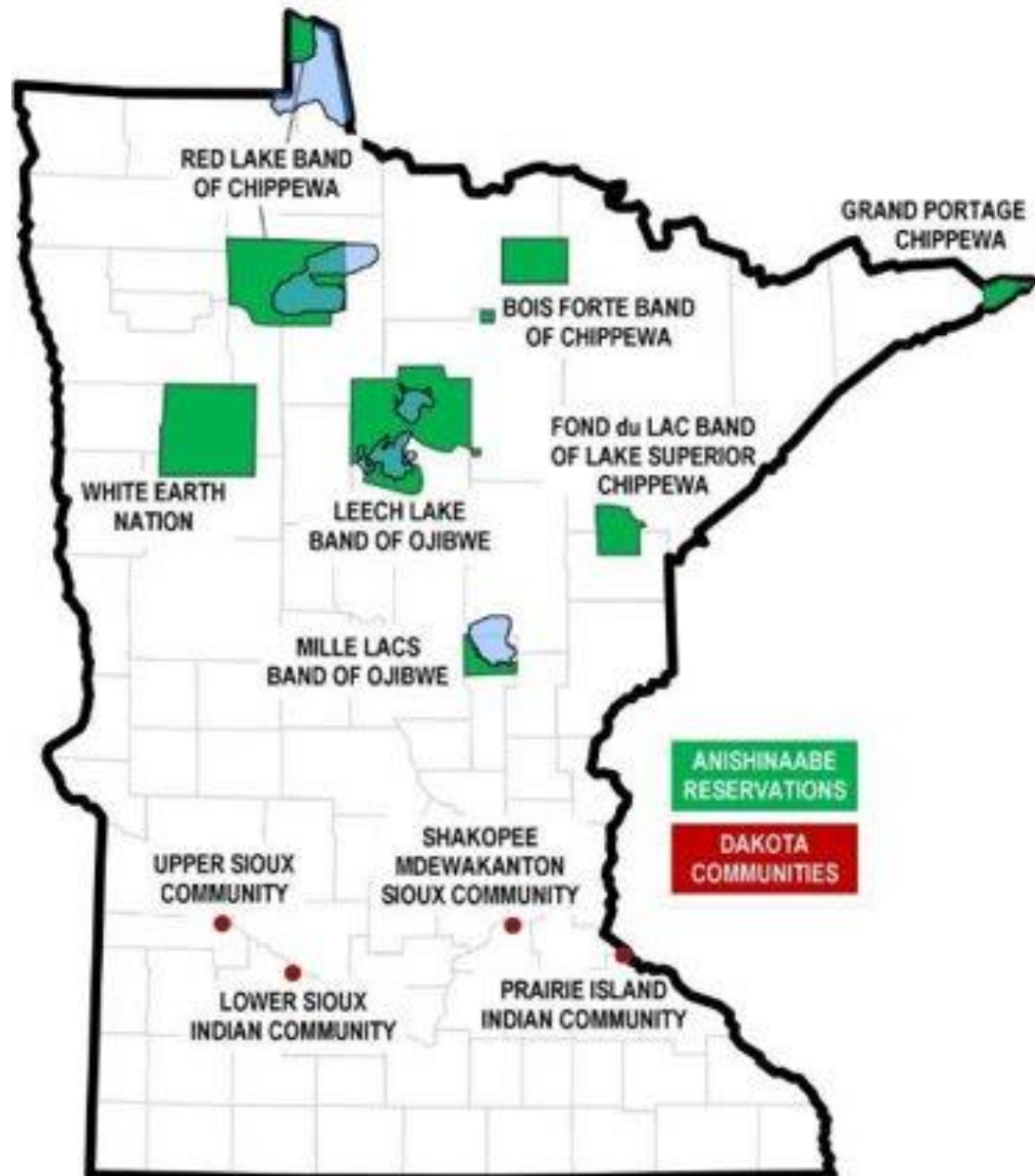
Development Process



Engaging with peers and community to guide policy update

- A small team of Met Council staff including the Tribal Liaison and representatives from the Office of General Counsel led the policy update and engaged with many stakeholders including:
 - Staff from peer state agencies
 - Met Council's American Indian Advisory Council
 - Minnesota Indian Affairs Council
 - Tribal Council Members during consultations
 - Minnesota Governor's Office

Purpose of Policy



Meeting statutory requirements

- Compliance with Minnesota Statute 10.65 requires state agencies including the Met Council to:
 - recognize and maintain the unique legal relationship between the state and Tribal Nations,
 - implement a Tribal consultation policy,
 - offer consultation to each Minnesota Tribe at least annually,
 - designate a Tribal Liaison, and
 - send leaders and appropriate staff to Tribal-State Relations Training.

Government-to-Government Tribal Relationship Policy



POLICY

Government-to-Government Tribal Relationship Policy

RF 4-2

Category: Regional and Foundational Policies

Business Unit Responsible: RA: Community Relations

Policy Owner: Director of Community Relations

Policy Contact: Allison Waukau, Tribal Liaison

Synopsis: Establishing the Metropolitan's policy for formal consultation with Minnesota's Tribal Nations and cooperation with Tribal communities on Metropolitan Council decisions.

POLICY

The Metropolitan Council recognizes Tribal Nations as sovereign governments with inherent rights to self-determination. In partnership with Tribal Nations and American Indian community members living in the metropolitan area, the Metropolitan Council commits to meaningful consultation, coordination, culturally responsive planning, and collaborative decision-making across housing, transit, community development, and environmental services to ensure American Indian voices are reflected in access to housing, safe and inclusive transit, culturally grounded development, and environmental stewardship.

PURPOSE OF POLICY

In 2019, Governor Tim Walz issued Executive Order 19-24, reaffirming the government-to-government relationship between the State of Minnesota and Federally Recognized Tribal Nations in Minnesota (hereinafter "Tribal Nations"). In 2023, the legislature passed Minn. Stat. § 10.65, codifying the provisions of Executive Order 19-24 into state law.

The purpose of this policy is to formalize and strengthen the government-to-government relationship between the Metropolitan Council and Tribal Nations to ensure that American Indian voices are represented and respected across all areas of Metropolitan Council work.

This policy will be updated once every other year, with the option to review earlier, to ensure continued alignment with Tribal consultation best practices and to reflect the evolving government-to-government relationships between Tribal Nations and the Metropolitan Council. The Metropolitan Council commits to incorporating input gathered from Tribal Nations into its decision-making processes, ensuring that Tribal perspectives are meaningfully considered in policies, programs, and initiatives that impact American Indian communities.

Commitment to the Metropolitan American Indian Community

The Metropolitan Council is dedicated to centering Tribal community voices, ensuring that American Indian perspectives, leadership, and lived experiences shape decisions and initiatives that impact the metropolitan region.

The Metropolitan Council strives to build genuine partnerships, fostering relationships rooted in trust, respect, and shared purpose with American Indian Organizations, leaders, and Tribal community at large.

The Metropolitan Council commits to cultural responsiveness that recognizes and integrates American Indian values, histories, and traditions into its work to create inclusive and meaningful engagement and partnership.

The Metropolitan Council pledges to a long-term commitment that moves beyond short-term interactions to sustained collaboration, accountability, and support for the ongoing needs and aspirations of the Metropolitan American Indian Community.

Focus Areas

Metropolitan Council Members, the Chair, and division directors and managers will participate in the Tribal-State Relations Training. Metropolitan Council employees whose work is likely to include engaging with the Metropolitan American Indian Community or includes matters that have Tribal implications, as defined in Minn. Stat. § 10.65, will be encouraged and supported in participating in Tribal-State Relations Training, thereby reinforcing the Council's dedication to strengthening government-to-government relationships between the Metropolitan Council and Tribal Nations and fostering a deeper understanding of Tribal sovereignty and perspectives.

The Metropolitan Council will honor its Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment and uphold its responsibilities, ensuring its actions reflect respect, recognition, and support for American Indian communities. This commitment also extends to actively supporting and collaborating with the American Indian Advisory Council to implement the regional development guide, valuing its guidance, leadership, and contributions in shaping policies, programs, and initiatives that serve and empower American Indian communities in the metropolitan area.

IMPLEMENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

Metropolitan Council leadership and staff will consult directly with Tribal leadership and Tribal staff on a peer-to-peer basis to ensure communication and coordination between the Metropolitan Council and the Tribes prior to taking actions that may affect Tribes or Tribal interests.

Accountability:

1. The Regional [Administrator](#) or designee is responsible for administering this policy.
2. The Regional Administrator or designee will collaborate with the Director of Community Relations and the Tribal Liaison to establish procedures to implement the policy and ensure that the procedures are consistent with this policy.
3. In accordance with state statute, the Metropolitan Council Chair is responsible for direct consultation and communication with a Tribal Council Chairman, Chairwoman, or President. The Metropolitan Council Chair, in collaboration with Council Members, may also designate Council Members to participate in consultation.
4. Division leaders are responsible for being aware of this policy and ensuring that their division's employees are aware of the policy and its implications for their work. To ensure government-to-government protocols are followed, any communication with Tribal Nations including with Tribal staff should be coordinated with the Metropolitan Council Tribal Liaison.

Updated Policy



What's new? What's important?

- Formalizes and strengthens government-to-government relationships between the Met Council and Tribal Nations
- Commits to relationship building and partnership with the Metropolitan American Indian Community
- Clarifies positions that are required or encouraged to attend Tribal-State Relations Training
- Outlines Chair role in consultation and communication with Tribal Nations as well as other leaders' roles in implementation

Tribal Nation Consultation and Communication Procedure

Accompanying guidance for all staff

- Outlines procedure for conducting annual consultations with Tribal Nations including:
 - Principles for engagement
 - Guidance to track themes and concerns from Tribal Nations requiring attention
 - Guidance to conduct internal reviews to ensure relevant projects are brought for Tribal leadership awareness
- Outlines procedure for Council staff communication with Tribal Nations including:
 - Coordinating initial communication through Tribal Liaison
 - Communicating at peer-to-peer levels
 - Using respectful greetings and language
- Role of senior leaders: Attend Tribal-State Relations Training; coordinate with Tribal Liaison on any communication and engagement with Tribal Nations; participate in Tribal consultation when invited.

Next Steps



Upcoming Meetings and Process

- Council Adoption of Tribal Relationship Policy
 - September 23 Management Committee Meeting
 - October 14 Council Meeting
- Finalizing Procedures this fall
 - Draft is developed and presented to Met Council Staff leadership (Forum) for review and comment
 - Goal to adopt by November 1



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