



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## Emergency Justification

Given the magnitude of the crisis of childhood obesity and related diseases among American Indians and Alaska Natives, an interagency collaboration between the First Lady's *Let's Move!* Initiative, the White House Domestic Policy Council, the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and Education has been formed to reduce disproportionately high obesity rates and improve the health of Native youth. Through concrete policy changes called for in the President's Childhood Obesity Task Force Report targeted actions will be taken to address prenatal and early childhood care in the IHS hospital system and to improve access to healthier foods and increase physical activity in Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)-funded schools and public schools as well as address prenatal and very early childhood care in the Indian Health Service operated facilities.

The *Let's Move! in Indian Country* Initiative is essential to the mission of the Department of the Interior and more appropriately the BIE's mission as stated below:

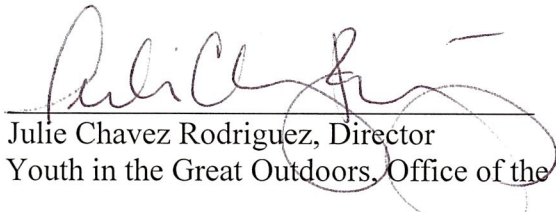
As stated in Title 25 CFR Part 32.3, BIE's mission is to provide quality education opportunities from early childhood through life in accordance with a tribe's needs for cultural and economic well-being, in keeping with the wide diversity of Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages as distinct cultural and governmental entities. Further, the BIE is to manifest consideration of the whole person by taking into account the spiritual, mental, physical, and cultural aspects of the individual within his or her family and tribal or village context.

The survey is an integral part of the process to develop the *Let's Move! In Indian Country* Initiative in a way that builds off of existing efforts at BIE-funded schools and public schools serving high Native student populations. The survey will be administered to BIE schools, Tribal schools, and public schools serving high populations of Native students. This survey is designed to determine what resources are already available at schools in Indian Country and those serving significant populations of Native youth and will establish the baseline to determine what further resources are needed in order to create healthy school environments for all students. The results will enable us to move forward with the initiative, ensuring that BIE-funded and public schools are receiving the aid that is most needed. Administratively, we do not have compiled data on the needs of all the schools, so the data collected in this survey will be a great resource.

**We are seeking emergency approval** of this one-time survey to allow us to implement the concrete policy changes called for in the President's Childhood Obesity Task Force Report, as soon as possible. The survey is the first step in a 3-month process to develop the framework for the Initiative, with an anticipated launch date of late-March 2011. If we are

not able to conduct this survey in the next week, the Initiative will be unable to launch on time, we will not be able to take the action to address the urgent public health matter of disproportionately high obesity rates among Native youth. For example, a study of four year-olds found that obesity is more than two times more common among American Indian/Alaska Native children (31%) than among white (16%) or Asian (13%) children. This rate is higher than any other racial or ethnic group studied. In 2008, Indian Health Service (IHS) determined that 16.3% of American Indian/Alaska Native adults have been diagnosed with diabetes. Because of this urgency, public harm, in the form of continued disproportionate obesity rates and obesity-related illnesses, is reasonably likely to result if the normal clearance is followed.

Although we would not be soliciting public comment via the Federal Register if this emergency request is approved, we have consulted with several stakeholder groups on the development of the survey. Specifically, we consulted with Amy Martin, Director of Communications, National Indian Education Association (NIEA), 202.544.7290. All comments received from NIEA were taken into consideration and the requested amendments were made to the survey. We also consulted our interagency work group, including staff from USDA/Food and Nutrition Services, HHS/Indian Health Services, Department of Education, as well as the Domestic Policy Council for the proper wording in relevant sections of the survey. The broader Let's Move in Indian Country Initiative is facilitating several collaborative efforts with Tribes and Tribal leaders providing ample opportunities for comment and input on the Initiative as it is developed, including goals and strategies for implementation.

  
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Julie Chavez Rodriguez, Director  
Youth in the Great Outdoors, Office of the Secretary

1-26-11  
Date