



BUDGET The United States Department of the Interior **JUSTIFICATIONS**

and Performance Information
Fiscal Year 2026

NATIONAL INDIAN GAMING COMMISSION

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL INDIAN GAMING COMMISSION

FY 2026 Budget Justification

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National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC)

Executive Summary

The National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC or “Commission”) was created by the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-497). The purpose of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA or “Act”) is, in part, to promote tribal economic development and self-determination; support the integrity of the Indian gaming industry; and ensure that tribes are the primary beneficiaries of their gaming activities. To ensure those purposes of IGRA are carried out, IGRA created NIGC as an “independent Federal regulatory authority for gaming on Indian lands ... to meet congressional concerns regarding gaming and to protect such gaming as a means of generating tribal revenue.”¹

In addition to NIGC, there are approximately 6,000 Tribal Gaming Regulators serving as the primary regulators of Indian gaming operations in 29 states. Further, states provide appropriate regulatory support to implement their respective responsibilities under IGRA and tribal-state compacts. Besides NIGC, tribal and state regulatory agencies, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Justice (DOJ), and the Department of the Treasury all implement and enforce laws that serve to ensure that tribes are the primary beneficiaries of Indian gaming. NIGC coordinates closely with these governmental entities to fulfill the mandates of IGRA.

NIGC’s budget is tied to the mandates of IGRA. In May 2006, Congress enacted the Native American Technical Corrections Act of 2006 (Sec. 301 of P.L. 109-221). This Act authorizes the Commission to collect up to 0.080 percent of the gross gaming revenue, but also links NIGC’s fee collections to the growth or contraction of the Indian gaming industry so that the Agency’s funding reflects the financial status of the industry. Importantly, the Act also created the requirement for the Agency to provide training and technical assistance to tribal gaming operations as agency functions. As in the past, the FY 2026 budget will continue to include expanding tribal consultation and improving intergovernmental coordination, carrying out Commission priorities as noted in the strategic plan, providing training and technical assistance to tribal gaming commissions and operations, conducting a regulatory review, examining and assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission, and enhancing the information technology infrastructure.

¹ 25 U.S.C. § 2702(3).

Mission

NIGC's mission is to (1) promote tribal economic development, self-sufficiency, and strong tribal governments; (2) maintain the integrity of the Indian gaming industry; and (3) ensure that Tribes are the primary beneficiaries of their gaming activities. To fulfill its mission and achieve compliance, NIGC works within the framework created by the IGRA by providing sound guidance, removing unnecessary roadblocks, and sensibly regulating gaming activities conducted by sovereign Indian tribes on Indian lands without stymieing the economic development and the entrepreneurial spirit of tribes.

Vision

The Commission's vision is to utilize its regulatory tools, including training, technical assistance, public education, and enforcement, to empower and partner with tribal governments to ensure that regulatory compliance and gaming integrity respect the capabilities and responsibilities of each sovereign tribe.

General Statement

The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) established NIGC as an independent Federal regulatory agency within the Department of the Interior. IGRA created NIGC to protect tribal gaming as a means of generating revenue for tribal governance and tribal communities. IGRA further provides a legal framework structured to safeguard tribes as the primary beneficiaries of their gaming operations, support the integrity of the Indian gaming industry, and assure that gaming is conducted fairly and honestly by both the operators and players.

NIGC ensures compliance with IGRA, NIGC regulations, and tribal gaming ordinances with more than 520 gaming establishments licensed by approximately 250 federally recognized tribes located within 29 states. To do so, the Commission regulates and monitors tribal gaming activity, inspects gaming premises, conducts background investigations, analyzes audits of Class II and certain aspects of Class III gaming operations, and investigates violations of IGRA. NIGC also coordinates its regulatory responsibilities with tribal regulatory agencies through the review and approval of tribal gaming ordinances and management agreements. NIGC further provides technical assistance, including extensive training, to tribal leaders as well as tribal gaming commissions and operators. The Commission may issue guidance to improve the operation and understanding of its regulatory goals. In addition, the Commission considers the Office of Self-Regulation's recommendations when a tribe petitions for a certificate of self-regulation.

When technical assistance and training do not result in compliance with IGRA, NIGC regulations, or the tribal gaming ordinance, NIGC may undertake certain enforcement action. Such actions may include the issuance of a notice of violation, and/or the imposition of appropriate sanctions, such as civil penalties and orders for temporary or permanent closure. In

addition, if the Commission receives information that indicates a violation of Federal, State, or tribal law, the Commission refers such matters to the appropriate law enforcement officials.² As NIGC fulfills these responsibilities, the Commission closely reviews all matters for any indications of corrupting influences by non-tribal governmental entities.

IGRA authorizes the Commission to assess and collect fees on tribal gaming revenues to cover agency operating costs. NIGC also conducts background investigations, including fingerprinting, of individuals and entities with a financial interest in, or management responsibility for, potential management contracts. These investigations are conducted to provide the Chair with adequate information to determine whether to approve management contracts. The Commission is reimbursed periodically by the potential contractors for performing these investigative services. It is also reimbursed for fingerprint processing costs.

Although NIGC was created as an independent regulatory agency within the Department of the Interior, IGRA tasked both NIGC and the Department of the Interior with certain responsibilities under the Act. As such, the two Agencies work together to ensure the implementation of IGRA and effective regulation of the Indian gaming industry. The Commission also has unique relationships with the Indian gaming industry's stakeholders. The Commission, as an agency of the Federal government, maintains a trust relationship with Indian nations. The Commission is committed to meaningful consultation with tribes prior to making changes to regulations or policies having tribal implications. Additionally, it endeavors to provide tribes, states, sister Federal agencies, and stakeholders with courteous and timely responses to issues as they arise.

² 25 U.S.C. § 2716(b).

The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) of 1988

In 1987, the Supreme Court affirmed the inherent sovereign authority of tribes to operate and regulate gaming facilities on Indian lands free from state regulation if the state did not prohibit gaming (*California v. Cabazon Band of Mission Indians*, 480 U.S. 202 (1987)). The following year, Congress enacted the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. Embodied in IGRA was a compromise between state and tribal interests. The drafters “balance[d] the need for sound enforcement of gaming laws and regulations, with [a] strong Federal interest in preserving the sovereign rights of tribal governments to regulate activities and enforce laws on Indian lands.”³ IGRA fully preserved tribal regulatory authority over Class II gaming without state intervention. However, IGRA gave the states a role in determining the scope and extent of tribal gaming by requiring tribal-state compacts for Class III gaming.⁴

IGRA establishes the jurisdictional framework that governs Indian gaming. IGRA establishes three classes of games with a different regulatory scheme for each.

- Class I gaming is defined as traditional forms of Indian gaming or social games played solely for minimal prizes.⁵ Regulatory authority over Class I gaming is vested exclusively in tribal governments.
- Class II gaming is generally defined as the game of chance commonly known as bingo (whether or not electronic, computer, or other technological aids are used in connection therewith) and (if played in the same location) pull-tabs, lotto, punchboards, tip jars, instant bingo and other games similar to bingo. Class II gaming also includes non-banked card games under certain conditions. IGRA specifically excludes slot machines or electronic facsimiles of any game of chance from the definition of Class II games. Tribes retain their authority to conduct, license and regulate Class II gaming as long as the state in which the tribe is located permits such gaming for any purpose, and the tribal government adopts a gaming ordinance approved by the Commission. Tribal governments are responsible for regulating Class II gaming, with Commission oversight.
- Class III is defined as all forms of gaming that are neither Class I nor Class II. Games commonly played in casinos, including, but not limited to, any house banked game, slot machines⁶, blackjack, craps, and roulette, fall in the Class III category. Class III gaming is often referred to as full-scale casino-style gaming. As a compromise among tribal, state and Federal interests, IGRA restricts tribal authority to conduct Class III gaming. Before a tribe may lawfully conduct Class III gaming, the following conditions must be met: (1) the facility must be located in a state that permits such gaming for any purpose by any person, organization or entity; (2) the tribe and the state must have negotiated a compact that has been approved by the Secretary of the Interior, or the Secretary must

³ 134 Cong. Rec. S12649 (daily ed. Sept. 15, 1988).

⁴ 25 U.S.C. § 2710(d)(1)(C).

⁵ 25 U.S.C. § 2703(6); 25 C.F.R. § 502.2.

⁶ As defined in 15 U.S.C. § 1171(a)(1).

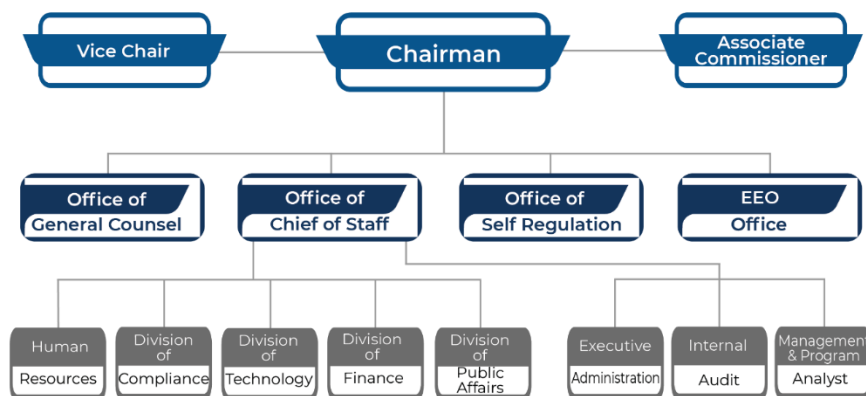
have approved secretarial procedures; and (3) the tribe must have adopted a tribal gaming ordinance that has been approved by the Chair of the Commission. State and tribal governments are primarily responsible for regulating Class III gaming.

Although Congress clearly intended states to address Class III regulatory issues in tribal-state compacts, IGRA did not make this mandatory, and many states accordingly rely upon continued tribal and Federal oversight by NIGC to address their regulatory concerns regarding Class III tribal gaming under IGRA. Additionally, IGRA tasks NIGC with a number of specific regulatory functions, such as: approving tribal ordinances for Class II and Class III gaming; approving management contracts; promulgating and implementing regulations; and ensuring tribes and management contractors comply with IGRA and Commission rules and regulations. Accordingly, the Commission plays a key role in the oversight and regulation of both Class II and Class III gaming.

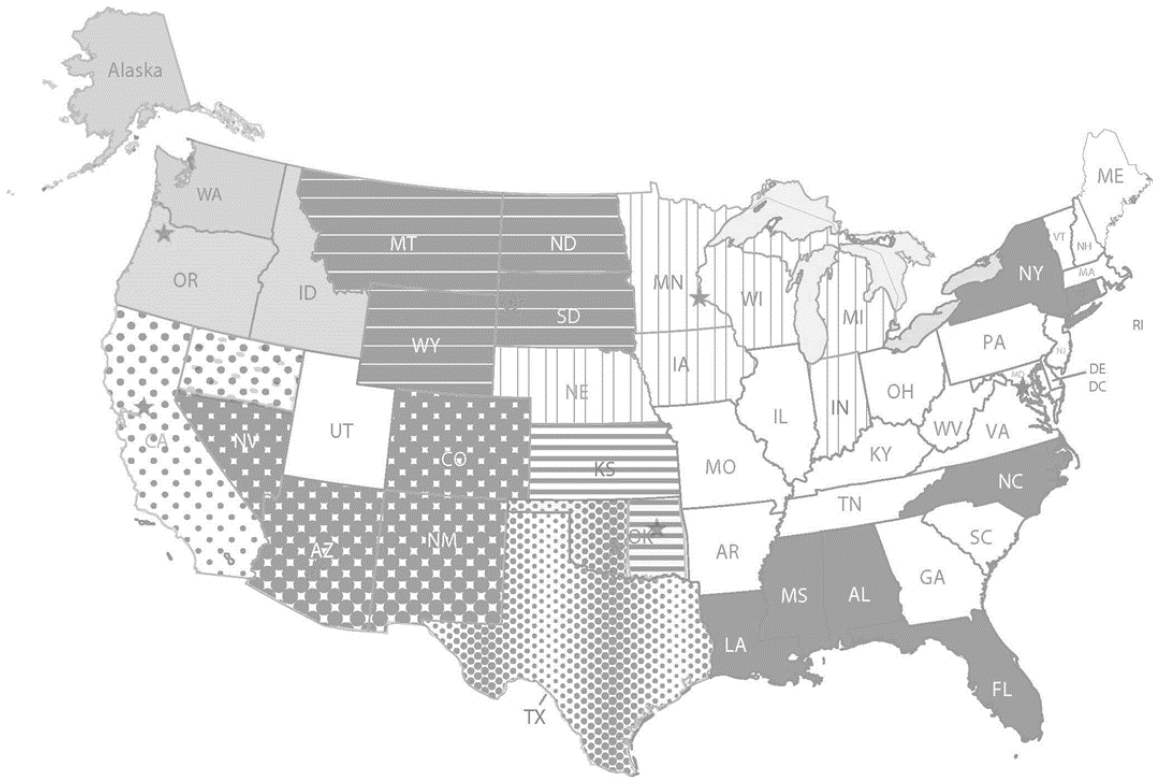
Commission Structure

The Commission is composed of a Chair, appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, and two Associate Commissioners appointed by the Secretary of the Interior after a public notice and comment period. The Commission selects a Vice Chair by majority vote. IGRA established NIGC as a bipartisan agency, permitting only two of the three Commissioners to be from the same political party. In addition, at least two members of the Commission must be enrolled tribal members. NIGC's organizational structure is composed of two main branches, the Office of General Counsel which handles legal affairs, and the Office of the Chief of Staff, which manages day-to-day activities and includes the Division of Compliance, Division of Finance, Division of Public Affairs, and the Division of Technology.

The Commission provides Federal oversight to more than 520 tribally licensed gaming establishments on Indian lands in 29 states. The Commission maintains its headquarters in Washington, DC and has eight regional offices. Approximately half of the Commission staff is assigned to headquarters in Washington, DC, with the remaining staff working remotely or assigned to regional offices located in Portland, Oregon; Sacramento, California; Phoenix, Arizona; St. Paul, Minnesota; Rapid City, South Dakota; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.



National Indian Gaming Commission Regions



Regional Office	Areas Served
 Portland	Alaska, Washington, Oregon and Idaho
 Sacramento	California, and northern Nevada
 Phoenix	Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and southern Nevada
 St. Paul	Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan and Indiana
 Rapid City	Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota and South Dakota
 Tulsa	Kansas and eastern Oklahoma
 Oklahoma City	Texas and western Oklahoma
 Washington, DC	Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, New York and Connecticut

The Commission strategically established the locations of its field offices to improve the level and quality of services it provides to tribes, and to enhance its ability to communicate, collaborate, and interact with tribes located within each office's geographic region. The field offices are vital to carrying out the statutory responsibilities of the Commission. By having auditors and compliance officers close to tribal gaming facilities, the Commission seeks to facilitate compliance with the Act and foster better relationships with tribal leaders, officials, and regulatory personnel. In addition to auditing and investigative activities, the field staff provide technical assistance and training to promote a better understanding of gaming controls within the

regulated industry, and to enhance cooperation and compliance to ensure the integrity of gaming operations.

Budget Priorities

The Commission will continue its positive trend of improving services to tribal governments and tribal gaming commissions while finding a stable balance in its fee rate collections. In addition, the Commission notes the importance of maintaining its fiscal self-sufficiency to ensure the continuity of its operations given any potential risks to significant fluctuations to its singular source of funding and the impact those fluctuations would have on Indian gaming's regulatory framework. Technology in the gaming industry continues to evolve, resulting in both greater efficiencies and new challenges. In order to keep pace with changes in technology, financial resources will be directed to providing technical training to the Commission staff and updating technology platforms. In addition, the Agency will continue to provide up-to-date technical training to tribal gaming operators and regulators to assure their ability to regulate and safeguard the integrity of Indian gaming. Strategic flexibility will ensure that adequate resources are available to meet the growing needs for technical assistance and training in Indian gaming enterprises large and small.

Background

Prior to 1997, the Commission was legislatively prohibited from collecting fees in excess of \$1.5 million annually. The 1998 Interior Appropriations Act (P.L. 105-83) expanded the fee base to include Class III (casino style) gaming and raised the limitation on annual fee collections to \$8 million. In the 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006 Interior Appropriations Acts, the Congress enacted a general provision raising this limitation to \$12 million for fiscal years 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007 respectively. On May 12, 2006, Congress enacted the Native American Technical Corrections Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-221) providing a new fee limit of no more than 0.080 percent of the gross gaming revenues of all gaming operations.⁷

This amendment allowed the Commission to collect fees in direct proportion to the size of the industry it oversees. With fees now capped at 0.080 percent of the industry's gross revenue, the Commission's funding expands or contracts in proportion to the growth or contraction of the Indian gaming industry. The Commission historically worked to maintain a fee rate well below the statutory limit, but due to the significant decrease of the industry's gross gaming revenues during the pandemic, the fee rate was raised to and has been maintained at its statutory limit since FY 2022.

Another legislative change included in Public Law 109-221 was the requirement that the Commission, like other Federal agencies, be subject to the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), and that any plan instituted in compliance with GPRA include technical assistance to tribal gaming operations.⁸ In accordance with this mandate, NIGC submitted its

⁷ 25 U.S.C. § 2717(a)(2)(B).

⁸ 25 U.S.C. § 2706(d)(1)-(2).

GPRA Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022 to 2026 to Congress and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The NIGC strategic plan is posted on the NIGC website at: <https://www.nigc.gov/commission/strategic-plan>.

Annual Fees for Operations

The Commission assesses annual fees on tribal gaming revenues in accordance with procedures set forth in 25 C.F.R. Part 514. On January 22, 2018, the Commission published changes to the fee regulations in the Federal Register (83 FR 2903). The amended regulations became effective on February 21, 2018. The changes to these regulations are intended to improve the efficiency of the Commission's fee rate analysis and publication process, coincide the fee rate announcement with the annual release of the Gross Gaming Revenue numbers and the completion of the Commission's budget for the upcoming year, and mitigate any confusion that may arise from changing the fee rate twice a year. Under the prior regulations published in 2012, the Commission adopted a preliminary fee rate by March 1 and a final fee rate by June 1 of every year. The current regulations simplify this process by providing that the Commission will adopt a final fee rate no later than November 1 of each year. The current regulations also define the fiscal year used in calculating the annual fee so that one fee rate is applied consistently to a gaming operation's assessable gross revenues for one fiscal year. Finally, among other clarifying revisions to the fee regulations, the rule describes the fees and statements required of gaming operations that cease operations. The fee rate must be sufficient to generate income to fund the annual operation of the Commission, and to maintain a transition balance for the upcoming year's operation. Each gaming operation within the jurisdiction of the Commission must self-administer the provisions of 25 C.F.R. Part 514, and report and pay any fees that are due to the Commission quarterly.

Maintenance of the transition balance is essential to the fiscal integrity of the Commission because the unique statutory provisions governing the Commission's funding subject it to significant cash flow variations. Unlike other Federal agencies, the Commission's authorizing legislation does not provide for full funding at the beginning of each fiscal year. Instead, the Commission receives quarterly payments equal to one fourth of each gaming operation's reported annual fee assessment. The carryover transition balance is necessary to cover the first and second quarters of operation until the fees are actually received and credited to the operating account. For example, fees collected on or before the December 31, 2025 due date will provide the operational capital for the first three months of calendar year 2026. The Commission attempts to maintain a transition balance to fund the first two quarters of the new year to absorb any cash flow variations that may occur.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL INDIAN GAMING COMMISSION**

Narrative Summary Statement

The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) established the National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC) as an independent Federal regulatory agency within the Department of the Interior. The purpose of IGRA and NIGC is to support and promote tribal economic development, self-sufficiency and strong tribal governments through the operation of gaming on Indian lands. The Commission collaborates with tribes to monitor and regulate gaming activities conducted on Indian Lands to ensure that gaming operations are conducted with integrity and that tribes are the primary beneficiaries of gaming revenues. IGRA authorizes the Commission to assess and collect fees on tribal gaming revenues to cover agency operating costs.

Summary of the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget

NIGC Gaming Activity Fees	2024 Actual	2025 Notional	2026 Request
Permanent Budget Authority (\$ Million)*	29	30	31

* Net after sequestration

Permanent Appropriation

IGRA, as amended, established NIGC to monitor and participate in the regulation of gaming conducted on Indian lands. NIGC's operational costs are financed through annual assessments of gaming operations regulated by the Commission.

NIGC is forecasting FY 2025 Gaming Activity Fees at \$30 million which is based on the FY 2025 fee rate of 0.08% adopted by the Commission on November 1st, 2024. This fee rate remains unchanged from FY 2024. To ensure the Agency has sufficient funding to fully meet its statutory and regulatory responsibilities, it is necessary for the Commission to maintain the fee rate at 0.08% for FY 2025. The estimated FY 2026 Gaming Activity Fees of \$31 million reflect the preliminary forecast of the FY 2024 Gross Gaming Revenue (basis for calculating FY 2026's Gaming Activity Fees).

Unlike other federal agencies, NIGC does not receive congressionally appropriated funding. Instead, the Agency receives quarterly payments from Tribes equal to one quarter of their gaming operation's reported annual fee assessment. To guarantee the Agency's continuity of operations, the Commission must maintain an adequate transition carryover balance to cover any cash flow variations resulting from the timing difference of fee receipt and operational payments.

In order for the Commission to fulfill its statutory duties and to provide necessary services to the Tribes, backfilling positions continues to be a budget priority of the Agency. For FY 2025 and FY 2026, the Commission remains dedicated to recruiting and retaining talented employees along with identifying employee professional development opportunities and competitive salaries.

Reimbursable Expenses

The National Indian Gaming Commission conducts background investigations of individuals and entities with a financial interest in, or management responsibility for, potential management contracts. Tribes may also submit fingerprint cards to the Commission for processing by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Commission may charge a fee to process fingerprint cards on behalf of the Tribes. The Commission is reimbursed from potential contractors to conduct these background investigations and for fingerprint processing costs.

Fee Regulation

The regulations implementing the legislative provisions governing the collection of fees allow the Commission to collect the statutory maximum allowed by Congress:

§514.14 Annual Fees

(a) The total amount of all fees imposed during any fiscal year shall not exceed the statutory maximum imposed by Congress. The Commission shall credit pro-rata any fees collected in excess of this amount against amounts otherwise due.

Additionally, in January 2018, NIGC regulations were amended to specifically address the collection of fees for fingerprint processing:

§ 514.15 May tribes submit fingerprint cards to NIGC for processing?

Tribes may submit fingerprint cards to the Commission for processing by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Commission may charge a fee to process fingerprint cards on behalf of the tribes.

§ 514.16 How does the Commission adopt the fingerprint processing fee?

- (a) The Commission shall review annually the costs involved in processing fingerprint cards and, by a vote of not less than two of its members, shall adopt the fingerprint processing fee no later than November 1st of each year.
- (b) The Commission shall publish the fingerprint processing fee in a notice in the Federal Register.
- (c) The fingerprint processing fee shall be based on fees charged by the FBI and costs incurred by the Commission. Commission costs include Commission personnel, supplies, equipment costs, and postage to submit the results to the requesting tribe.

§ 514.17 How are fingerprint processing fees collected by the Commission?

- (a) Fees for processing fingerprint cards will be billed monthly to each tribe for cards processed during the prior month. Tribes shall pay the amount billed within forty-five (45) days of the date of the bill.
- (b) The Chair may suspend fingerprint card processing for a tribe that has a bill remaining unpaid for more than forty-five (45) days.
- (c) Remittances and other communications about fingerprint processing fees shall be sent to the Commission by the methods provided for in the rates of fees notice published in the Federal Register.

Authorization:

Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, Public Law 100-497, as amended.

Objectives:

To regulate and monitor gaming conducted on Indian lands and to protect Indian gaming as a means of generating tribal revenues.

Program Activities:

The Commission's mission is to work within the framework created by the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) for the regulation of gaming activities conducted by sovereign Indian tribes on Indian lands to fully realize IGRA's goals: (1) promoting tribal economic development, self-sufficiency, and strong tribal governments; (2) maintaining the integrity of the Indian gaming industry; and (3) ensuring that tribes are the primary beneficiaries of their gaming activities. To affect these goals, the Commission is authorized to carry out training and technical assistance; conduct investigations; undertake enforcement actions, including the issuance of notices of violation, assessment of civil fines, and issuance of closure orders; approve management contracts; and issue such regulations as necessary to meet its responsibilities under the IGRA.

The IGRA grants the Chair, on behalf of Commission, the authority to:

- issue temporary closure orders⁹
- levy civil fines, of up to \$65,655 per violation per day, against a tribe, management contractor, or individual operator for violation of the Act, the regulations, or a tribal gaming ordinance¹⁰
- approve tribal gaming ordinances¹¹
- approve gaming management contracts¹²
- appoint and supervise staff¹³

The Commission is empowered by IGRA to:

- monitor gaming activities¹⁴
- inspect gaming premises¹⁵
- conduct background investigations¹⁶

⁹ 25 U.S.C. § 2705(a)(1).

¹⁰ 25 U.S.C. § 2705(a)(2). Pursuant to the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015 (Sec. 701 of P. L. 114-74), the original civil penalty amount of \$25,000 is adjusted annually.

¹¹ 25 U.S.C. § 2705(a)(3).

¹² 25 U.S.C. § 2705(a)(4).

¹³ 25 U.S.C. § 2707(b).

¹⁴ 25 U.S.C. § 2706(b)(1).

¹⁵ 25 U.S.C. § 2706(b)(2).

¹⁶ 25 U.S.C. § 2706(b)(3).

- inspect records relating to gaming¹⁷
- approve the annual budget¹⁸
- adopt regulations for the assessment and collection of civil fines¹⁹
- adopt a schedule of annual fees²⁰
- issue permanent closure orders²¹
- adopt regulations as deemed appropriate to implement the provisions of IGRA²²
- authorize the Chair to issue subpoenas and order testimony to be taken by deposition²³
- issue and rescind certificates of self-regulation²⁴

In carrying out its responsibilities, the Commission also:

- maintains and enhances relationships with other Federal agencies and partner governments
- provides education, training, and technical assistance regarding applicable statutory and regulatory requirements
- assists tribes with background investigations and fingerprint processing
- receives and processes appeals of final agency action²⁵
- conducts formal and informal hearings
- consults with Indian tribes
- engages with states and the regulated community
- issues advice and guidance through bulletins, advisory opinions, and other publications
- provides audits and other evaluative services

¹⁷ 25 U.S.C. § 2706(b)(4).

¹⁸ 25 U.S.C. § 2706(a)(1).

¹⁹ 25 U.S.C. § 2706(a)(2).

²⁰ 25 U.S.C. § 2706(a)(3).

²¹ 25 U.S.C. § 2706(a)(5).

²² 25 U.S.C. § 2706(b)(10).

²³ 25 U.S.C. § 2715.

²⁴ 25 U.S.C. § 2710(c)(6).

²⁵ 25 U.S.C. §§ 2705(a), 2706(a)(5), 2713(a)(2).

Government Performance and Results Act Information

In 2006, Congress amended the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, 25 U.S.C. §§ 2701 – 2721, Pub. L. 100-497, for the first time and made the National Indian Gaming Commission subject to the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), Pub. L. 103-62. That obligation is set out at 25 U.S.C. § 2706(d)(1), which states: “In carrying out any action under this chapter, the Commission shall be subject to the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993.”

GPRA requires that an agency’s “strategic plan shall be updated and revised at least every four years.” 5 U.S.C. § 306(b). Consistent with this obligation and the Commission’s vision of adhering to principles of good government, including transparency to promote agency accountability and fiscal responsibility, NIGC followed the consultation requirements set forth in the GPRA, Executive Order 13175 “Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments,” the National Indian Gaming Commission Policy on Consultation with Indian Tribes, and guidance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). NIGC recognizes the importance of tribal consultation in formulating policy and maintaining the government-to-government relationship with tribal nations. To engage with tribal leaders in formulating the strategic plan, NIGC sent written notice of the availability of the draft strategic plan and held a webinar to present and hear comments on it, followed by a comment period of more than a month. In addition, tribal input received during preceding consultation sessions related to the subject matter was taken into consideration. NIGC also engaged with the public by posting the draft strategic plan for comment to NIGC website. All relevant comments and feedback received during the webinar, in-person tribal consultations sessions, and from the public were taken into consideration in finalizing the strategic plan.

The strategic plan for fiscal years 2022-2026 was published in February 2022. The plan focuses on support for industry integrity, efforts around agency accountability, the regulatory community’s commitment to preparedness, and innovation in the Agency’s outreach and collaboration. The newly adopted strategic plan also includes for the first time establishing employee committees to advise on and assist in measures to ensure achievement with the plan’s goals. This strategic plan updates and supersedes the fiscal years 2018 – 2022 plan.

Summary and Highlights of Commission Activities

During FY 2024, the Commission's four primary goals arising from its 2022 Strategic Plan consisted of (1) Industry Integrity; (2) Preparedness; (3) Outreach; and (4) Agency Accountability. As such, during the past fiscal year, the Commission accomplished the following goals and tasks.

- The Commission continued its emphasis on working with tribal, state, and Federal regulators to ensure effective coordination in the regulation of Indian gaming, working with tribes to ensure compliance with IGRA, and taking enforcement action for violations of IGRA when necessary.
- In FY 2024, the Commission successfully achieved compliance with a major Federal agency-wide records management mandate to transition all agency recordkeeping into electronic format. In tandem with this initiative, the Commission undertook a restructuring of the Commission's recordkeeping so that it better aligns recordkeeping responsibilities with more clearly defined associated business functions. This restructuring ensures that recordkeeping requirements and records maintenance, storage, and disposition practices are more closely incorporated into agency processes, systems, and procedures and allows for enhanced information management, business analytics and decision-making.
- The Office of General Counsel advised the Chair and Commission on five management contracts, sixty-three tribal gaming ordinance submissions, enforcement actions and administrative appeals, and litigation. Additionally, the Office of General Counsel assisted and brought stability to the tribal gaming industry by offering opinions on a variety of matters including seven game classification opinions and 19 financing or other agreements to ensure they do not implicate management or sole proprietary interest concerns.
- The Office of General Counsel has successfully collaborated the Information Technology (IT) department to build and transition to a new Matter Tracking and Document Management System. This transition will not only upgrade the security posture of the system but will also enable the Office of General Counsel to track multiple deadlines for each matter and generate reminders and customizable reports. The Office of General Counsel looks forward to completing the testing phase and implementation of a new system that is customizable to the changing business processes of the Office of General Counsel.
- The Commission continued the process of focusing its training activities and agency resources by identifying partnerships, improving training offerings, and utilizing technology to reach intended audiences more effectively. The agency expanded its blend of both in-person and virtual events to conduct 81 sessions, presenting a record 364 courses. Of note, the agency hosted its first-ever Virtual National Training Conference (4k+ attendees), three in-person events consisting of a National Training Conference, a Beginner's Internal Audit Workshop and a Compliance Workshop. Training and outreach additionally included presentations at 18 professional organizational tradeshow and conventions. The agency also held two symposia with other federal partners covering cybersecurity and Bank Secrecy Act/Anti-Money Laundering. The agency also completed 11 National Training Topic of the

Month sessions, 43 site-specific trainings, and three Special Emphasis events. These events had a combined attendance of more than 22,000 individuals through 460.5 hours of instruction. The Commission also continued to increase its video library, consisting of 151 recordings, up from 117 from the prior year.

- Commission auditors performed a number of reviews and evaluations for FY 2024, including: 11 Internal Control Assessments (ICA), 2 Investigative Audits (IVA), 9 ICA Follow-ups, assistance on 19 site visits, one (1) Self-regulation review, 527 reviews on audited financial statements and 413 Agreed Upon Procedure report reviews. The audit findings were included in reports delivered to the audited tribes. The Commission will offer technical assistance to the tribes in identifying and implementing remedial action.
- Commission staff continued to diligently review management contracts. The Commission received three new management agreement/amendment submissions and two management contracts were approved by the Chair in FY 2024.
- The Commission continued to conduct financial background investigations on persons and entities associated with management contractors. The Commission received 29 applications for background investigations in FY 2024.
- The Commission processed approximately 236,515 background and licensing actions including dissemination of fingerprint cards to and from the FBI and name checks for tribal gaming commissions.
- The Commission, through its Compliance Division, addressed potential non-compliance through its standardized regulatory processes, analyzed tribal gaming facilities and created a compliance plan that included one site visit at each tribal gaming facility conducted either remotely or in person. The Compliance Division completed 698 site visits, 95 internal audit checklists, 293 licensing reviews and 19 Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) audits.
- The Commission, through its Division of Technology, successfully awarded multiple IT vendor contracts to perform an Agency network infrastructure hardware refresh in preparation of the NIGC headquarters office move.
- The Commission, through its Division of Technology, issued 4 Tech Alerts & Warnings and 3 Internal IT Bulletins, and issued 12 internal Cyber “Hints and Tips” articles to promote cyber awareness for Agency staff and external stakeholders. The division also completed a combined 31 IT Vulnerability Assessments (internal and external) and 4 internal phishing campaigns.
- The Commission, through its Division of Technology, continued to innovate agency-managed IT services and improved security compliance by collaborating with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to implement Government-wide cybersecurity initiatives including the submission of the agency’s annual Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA) report through Cyberscope.
- During FY 2024, the Agency promoted accountability and preparedness to respond to cyber threats against its IT systems and extended assistance to the tribes in several cybersecurity

outreach efforts. The Commission continued to nurture strong partnership with CISA which resulted in the implementation of new security capabilities through the Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation (CDM) Program. The ongoing CDM integration provides a level of visibility into the NIGC security posture never achieved before, while enabling the Commission to align with federal directives, and ensuring industry integrity.

- The Commission, through its Privacy program, received 74 FOIA requests and processed 83 (including 9 that were pending or backlogged at the end of FY 2023).
- The Commission, through its Privacy and Training programs, completed the development of a new, comprehensive agency Information Management training that includes instruction on Commission's newly acquired learning management platform and the provision supplementary materials and a mandatory knowledge check and achieved a 100% agency participation rate.
- The Commission, through its Privacy and CJIS programs, successfully obtained approval from OMB for the collection of information from the public for the purpose of ensuring the continued security and integrity of the tribal FBI background check process. This OMB approval formally elevates the Agency's engagement with the Indian gaming community and is a recognition of the Agency's unique role in collaborating with the Indian gaming community in building and maintaining Tribal gaming's successful regulatory framework.
- The Commission, through its CJIS program, developed and released numerous CJIS resources to assist tribes with achieving and maintaining compliance with the modernization of the FBI CJIS Security Policy (CJISSECPOL). In FY 2024, these resources consisted of a new Local Agency Security Officer (LASO) Handbook, 12 sample audit checklists, 7 sample policy templates, and 40 LASO communications informing LASO community members of operational updates.
- To promote Environmental Public Health and Safety (EPHS) awareness and the Commission's preparedness emphasis, the Safety and Occupational Health Manager completed seven on-site EPHS Assessments along with technical assistance, resulting in 364 findings for corrective action. In addition, the EPHS program provided training alongside other federal agencies and contractors. The program conducted 43 in-person or virtual sessions on EPHS topics for more than 3,000 attendees.
- The Commission continued to update the Self-Regulation webpage placing all the information regarding self-regulation in one location, <https://www.nigc.gov/utility/office-of-self-regulation>.
- The Office of Self-Regulation processed one self-regulation petition.
- The Commission continued its efforts to educate the Tribal gaming industry on Human Trafficking indicators and prevention by presenting 30 separate trainings consisting of trade show conferences, webinars, site-specific training, and professional organizations, reaching over 2,800 attendees. In addition, the NIGC provided training alongside other federal agencies DHS Blue Campaign and Investigations, and the BIA Office of Justice Services.

The Commission also partnered with the Department of Homeland Security to create a robust human trafficking educational video.

During FY 2025, the Commission will continue its four strategic plan initiatives which focus on support for industry integrity; efforts around agency accountability; the regulatory community's commitment to preparedness; and innovation in the Agency's outreach and collaboration.

- The Commission will continue ongoing communications with tribes regarding NIGC Operational Updates.
- The Commission continues to review prior year consultation activity and make appropriate regulatory changes in accordance with the Agency's consultation policy.
- The Commission continues to offer training and technical assistance, and enforcement when necessary, to help facilitate compliance throughout all regions.
- The Commission continues to provide technical assistance and resources to tribes related to preparedness.
- The Commission continues to build upon relationships with tribal, Federal, and state regulatory and/or law enforcement agencies.
- The Commission will continue promoting tribes' capacity to plan for risks to tribal gaming including man-made disaster threats, cybersecurity threats, pandemics, natural disaster threats, the need to modernize and enhance regulatory and gaming operation workforces, or public health and safety emergencies such as active shooter and human trafficking threats.
- The Commission continues to review and update its regulations to maintain the integrity of Indian gaming. The Commission will continue to consult with tribes as part of its regulatory review.
- The Office of General Counsel continues to advise the Chair and Commission on management contracts, tribal gaming ordinance submissions, and litigation. Additionally, the Office of General Counsel continues to assist and bring stability to the tribal gaming industry by offering opinions on a variety of matters including game classifications, Indian lands status, and whether financing or other agreements implicate management or sole proprietary interest concerns.
- The Commission continues to work on drafting, or revising, and adopting additional internal agency policies.
- The Commission continues to improve the level of response to requests received from tribes for technical assistance and support to include cybersecurity incident response. To assist in these efforts, the Commission will continue its engagement with Federal partners to leverage all forms of training, resources, and technical assistance to better serve intended audiences being mindful of impacts to Commission and tribal financial resources. The Commission continues to update the training catalog and provides training to tribes throughout all eight NIGC regions. The Commission is continuing efforts to modernize NIGC Information

Technology (IT) services to improve and maintain reliability and manageability. This includes updating the Agency's public-facing website and accounting systems.

- The Commission through its Division of Technology will continue its efforts to modernize the NIGC Fingerprint program and continue to deliver CJIS resources to assist tribal partners with achieving and maintaining CJIS compliance as the FBI continues to modernize the CJIS security policies (CJISSECPOL).
- The Commission, through its Cybersecurity program, will focus on improved risk management practices, the deployment of more CDM capabilities to support higher program maturity levels, and the evolution of NIGC cybersecurity toward a Zero Trust Architecture. In its outreach to the Tribes, the Cybersecurity program developed relevant training content and delivered training sessions to promote better security practices in the tribal community. Current and future IT security investments will continue to support strategic cybersecurity objectives.
- The Commission will continue to improve its operational efficiency by working toward full transitioning to newly approved electronic record schedules and by leveraging its ongoing IT upgrades to further enhance the stability, security, and efficiency of the Commission's records management processes.
- The Commission will continue to track technological advancements in the industry to ensure the Commission provides up-to-date technical assistance, ensures regulations remain current and applicable, meets its oversight responsibilities, and fulfills its statutory mandates.
- The Commission continues to ensure agency tasks are completed to include, but not limited to the following:
 - performing internal control assessments specific to Class II gaming operations.
 - performing IT vulnerability assessments as a service for tribal gaming operations to identify and protect against IT threats and vulnerabilities.
 - responding to requests from tribal gaming operators and regulators for IGRA and gaming related training and technical assistance.
 - ensuring availability of NIGC Fingerprint programs services enabling tribes with information to complete their own comprehensive background investigation of prospective licensing applicants.
 - maintaining accumulated financial data from the gaming operations' audited financial statements and Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) report filings to ensure accuracy and justification of Commission established fee rates.
 - performing internal audits of NIGC divisions to increase the Commission's efficiency, effectiveness, and compliance with Federal regulations.
 - reviewing management contracts and amendments to management contracts.
 - processing fingerprint cards for tribal gaming employees as they are submitted by the tribal gaming commissions and tracking payment for fingerprint processing.

- continuing to respond to technical assistance requests from tribal governments and tribal regulators, assisting tribes that are considering entry into the Indian gaming industry or have recently opened a new Indian gaming facility.
- Continue training outreach on self-regulation at industry events.
- The Commission through its Division of Technology will refresh critical server computing hardware, install infrastructure components and cabling, and implement required physical access control systems to support the relocation of the DC headquarters office.
- To reduce the DC headquarters footprint, the Agency renovated and moved to the new office in Q3 2025.

As part of its program objectives for FY 2026, the Commission plans to:

- Continue holding ongoing meetings with tribes regarding NIGC Operational Updates.
- Continue its emphasis on Upholding Integrity, Committing to Accountability, Promoting Preparedness, and Cultivating Outreach.
- Continue building relationships with partner governments and sister agencies to share timely information and provide technical assistance and training.
- Continue taking steps to achieve NIGC Performance Goals as identified in the Strategic Plan and monitor strategic plan performance measures.
- Continue efforts to modernize NIGC Information Technology services to improve and maintain reliability and security for information systems and data. This includes further developing policies and procedures supporting an agency-wide cybersecurity framework to ensure appropriate security controls are managed and maintained.
- Continue regulatory review and implementation of new and/or revised regulations and provide training to tribes on compliance with any new requirements.
- Continue reviewing management contracts and tribal ordinance submissions and make appropriate changes to process and staffing levels.
- Continue, through its Office of General Counsel, offering opinions on a variety of matters including game classifications, Indian land status, and whether financing or other agreements implicate management or sole proprietary interest concerns.
- Continue seeking opportunities to improve operational efficiencies by developing the Commission's internal administrative, communications and evaluation functions.
- Continue informing the public about the Commission's activities through various outreach initiatives and training resources.
- Provide and coordinate training events to tribal entities in each of the eight regions through virtual platforms or in person settings.

- Continue responding to requests from tribes for technical assistance and increasing both the amount and breadth of technical assistance provided and updating the training catalog as necessary.
- Utilize all forms of training forums and locations to better reach intended audiences and save Commission and tribal financial resources.
- Continue assessing the effectiveness of the Agency's training program to assist tribes in achieving and maintaining compliance.
- Continue performing site visits, internal control assessments, IT vulnerability assessments, and other types of compliance reviews to maintain the integrity of the gaming industry.
- Continue implementing GPRA requirements.
- Continue updating information systems and programs to ensure compliance with the receipt of personal identifiable information and criminal history record information.
- Maintain a consistently high level of compliance for the submission of gaming activity fees and external year-end audits through continued monitoring and contact with gaming tribes, with an emphasis on compliance.
- Continue enhancing internal records management.
- Continue monitoring the training and employee development program in order to attract and retain highly qualified personnel. The Agency will annually assess the skills of its employees and provide necessary training.
- Continue tracking technological advancements in the industry to ensure the Commission provides up-to-date technical assistance, ensure regulations remain current and applicable, meet its oversight responsibilities, and fulfill its statutory mandates.
- Promote the self-determination goals of IGRA through administration and promotion of the IGRA's self-regulation petition process.
- Continue providing ongoing technical assistance and training to support Indian country-wide efforts to promote awareness around environmental, public health and safety priorities and critical event response and preparedness.
- Continue identifying appropriate opportunities for NIGC to support tribes' response and/or recovery efforts from the impact of the pandemic on Indian gaming.