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News Release

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Transitions: Tribal Leadership Conference Will Not Be Held, Tribal Court Personnel Training Scheduled in Early 2017

ALBUQUERQUE, NM — The Director of the American Indian Law Center, Inc. (AILC), Ms. Helen B. Padilla, today announced that the Transitions: Tribal Leadership Conference will not be held in 2016 due to other tribal court projects currently in progress at AILC. Ms. Padilla began the conference eight years ago specifically to provide tools for tribal leaders and tribal court judges to become better equipped to deal with current issues facing tribes and tribal courts. The topics offered included those of national concern and of local interest that impacted tribes and tribal courts. The conference quickly gained momentum, with tribal leaders and tribal court judges participating from across Indian Country. Tribal court training was a popular track offered during the conference that many tribal judges, court clerks, and court administrators attended.

Over the past three years, AILC has specifically focused on a project to strengthen tribal courts. AILC was awarded a contract to conduct tribal court assessments by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Office of Justice Services (OJS), Tribal Justice Support (TJS). The assessments are currently being performed all across Indian Country by different vendors. AILC is the vendor for the Bureau's District IV Region which includes tribal courts located in New Mexico, Colorado and Texas. Tribes initiate the assessment process by submitting a request to TJS. AILC has completed over 15 assessments thus far, and has partnered with American Indian Development Associates, LLC to now conduct assessments in California.

AILC continues to recognize the need for training and further development of tribal courts. Instead of hosting the Leadership Conference, more concentrated training for tribal court personnel will be held in the Spring of 2017. Training will be funded by the Southwest Inter-Tribal Court of Appeals (SWITCA) for tribal court personnel in New Mexico, Arizona, southern Colorado, and west Texas. SWITCA, a program administered by AILC, is an appellate court forum that also provides training and technical assistance to tribes in the southwest. AILC will host the training that will provide guidance and instruction to court clerks and court administrators in tribal court processes and administrative procedures. The location of the training will be announced soon.

About the American Indian Law Center, Inc.

Established in 1967, the AILC is the oldest existing Indian-managed and Indian-operated legal and public policy organization in the country serving to strengthen, promote, and honor self-sustaining American Indian and Alaska Native communities through education, training, and leadership.

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