

The American Indian Law Center, Inc.: The Work We Do

Helen B. Padilla, Esq.
Director



What Is the AILC?

- The AILC is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, incorporated in 1977.
- Before 1977, AILC was part of the UNM School of Law.
- AILC is not part of the University of New Mexico School of Law, although we are guests of the law school, with our offices housed there, and partnering with the law school on different projects and initiatives.

What Is the AILC?

- The oldest Indian-controlled and Indian-operated legal and public policy organization in the U.S.
- Provides preparatory legal education.
- Provides training and technical assistance to Tribes and tribal courts.
- Provides legal research, code development, and policy analysis to Tribes, other governments, and Indian organizations.

Southwest Intertribal Court of Appeals

- Provides impartial appellate review of lower court decisions for Tribes and Pueblos in New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, and west Texas.
- Provides training and technical assistance to any tribal court in the above states regarding various issues whether the court utilizes appellate court services through SWITCA or not.

Southwest Intertribal Court of Appeals

- For appellate services, jurisdiction is defined by the participating tribal governments through tribal council resolutions.
- Currently, handling appellate cases for 17 Tribes in the region.
- Tribes may designate SWITCA as appellate court on a case by case basis.

Southwest Intertribal Court of Appeals

- Research – Legal Research and Training.
- Training includes the annual AILC Tribal Leadership Conferences that include sessions for Tribal leaders, key administrative and management officials, Tribal Judges, and Tribal Court staff.
- Periodic Court Clerk Training covering topics such as Case Management and Calendaring, Customer Service, and Confidentiality, Case File Organization, to name a few.

Pre Law Summer Institute (PLSI)

Rodina Cave Parnall, PLSI Director, will discuss our flagship program: The Pre Law Summer Institute.

Law and Policy Work

Melanie Fritzsche, AILC Assistant Director and Staff Attorney will discuss our legal and policy work.

Law and Policy Work

- Conducted twenty four comprehensive tribal court assessments in New Mexico, California, and western Texas on behalf of Tribal Justice Support of the BIA. (Aug 2013 – July 2017)
- Developed curriculum and conducted national tribal court training over the course of three years for Tribal Court Judges, Tribal Court Clerks and Administrators, and Tribal Prosecutors. (Dec 2010 – July 2013)

Law and Policy Work

- Code Development – 12 Month comprehensive Community involved project requiring meetings, interviews, legal analysis and legal drafting to amend the Taos Pueblo Children's Code and develop the Taos Pueblo Juvenile Code.
- Legal Services provided to American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association – contract review, by-laws and personnel procedures developed or amended.

Law and Policy Work

- National Congress of American Indians Research Project – Researched and analyzed all 50 states tribal-state collaboration mechanisms such as Indian Affairs Offices, state Indian Commissions, and other Indian organizations.
- Legal Services for specific Tribes and Pueblos – casino contract review, tribal laws, written procedures, and other legal documents.

Law and Policy Work

- Planned and coordinated a four-part, web – based training series focused on emerging practices in tribal judicial systems for the National American Indian Court Judges Association (2015).
- Conducted assessment of the disciplinary processes and procedures related to the CFR Court and the need for a juvenile code for the Santa Fe Indian School. (2013)

Sponsoring of Conferences on Important Indian Law Issues

- 50th Anniversary Celebration – PLSI (CLE- September 2017)
- The First Thirteen – A Symposium of the First Thirteen Native Americans to Argue Before the US Supreme Court (CLE March 2012)
- Indian Country Statute: 60 Years Later (CLE 2008)

Sponsoring of Conferences on Important Indian Law Issues

- 100th Anniversary of Winters water law case (CLE Spring 2008)
- Indian Country's Winning Hand: 20 Years of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (CLE with ASU Fall 2008)
- 40 Years of PLSI, A Retrospective Symposium and Reunion (CLE Spring 2007)

Sponsoring of Conferences on Important Indian Law Issues

- Cohen's Handbook of Federal Indian Law (The 2005 Edition): Treatise or Brief? (CLE Spring 2006)
- The Federal Indian Trust Responsibility & Transactions on Indian Land (CLE with ASU: Winter 2005)

CLOSING REMARKS

