

Overview: EPA Tribal Partnership Network Review

July 2026

The EPA Tribal Partnership Network (Network) refers to the collection of Tribal-represented groups which EPA regularly collaborates with to improve human health and environmental protection in Indian country and throughout Tribal communities. The Network is comprised of Tribal Leaders and Tribal Environmental Professionals from across the country participating in the [National Tribal Caucus \(NTC\)](#), Regional Tribal Operations Committees (RTOCs), and media-specific [Tribal Partnership Groups \(TPGs\)](#). The Network's coordination and collaboration with each other and with EPA is significant to furthering EPA's work with Tribes. Consistent with EPA's Draft FY 2026-2030 Strategic Plan goals to strengthen cross-agency partnerships and advance cooperative federalism, EPA is reviewing opportunities to enhance the Network's inter-group collaboration processes to elevate the work of the group both individually and collectively, strengthen EPA/Tribal engagement, and produce results that make a meaningful difference in protecting the air, water, and land in Tribal communities.

EPA is working with Tribal partners to identify successes, best practices, challenges, and opportunities, such as:

- Clarity of roles and coordination approaches,
- Maximized opportunities for Tribal engagement, and
- Tools and processes to strengthen coordination across EPA and the Network.

During this outreach phase, the EPA American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO) is meeting with the NTC, RTOCs, and TPGs to discuss the review and gather input. Following outreach, EPA will compile and analyze feedback and assess next steps. A timeline and contact information are included below.

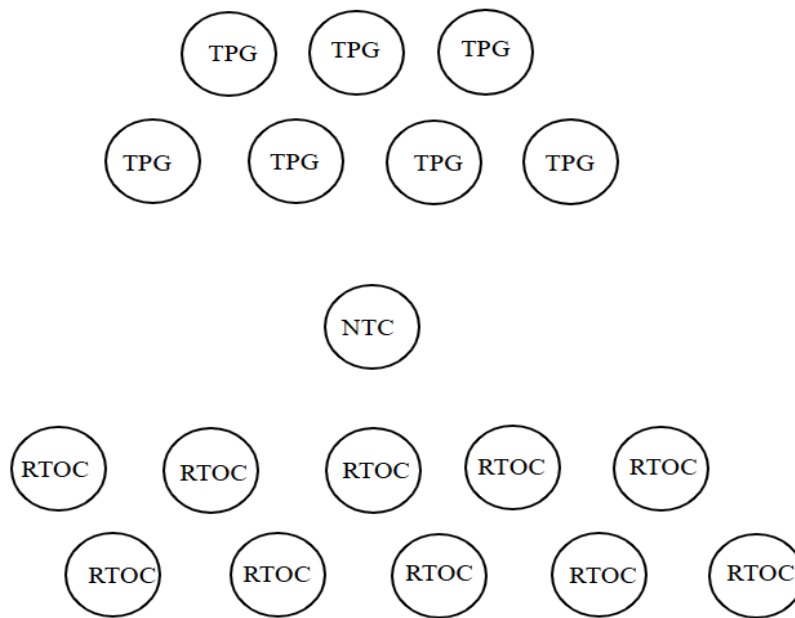
Opportunities for Tribal Engagement and Timeline

Date/Time	Milestone
June – September 2026	Outreach and comment period; EPA meets with stakeholders
July 29, 2026	1 st Tribal Virtual Listening Session – Hosted by EPA AIEO
September 1, 2026	2 nd Virtual Listening Session
September 29, 2026	Close of comment period
September – October 2026	EPA compiles and analyzes feedback and assesses next steps

Visualizing the EPA Tribal Partnership Network

The Visualization and Guiding Questions included in this document are intended to facilitate feedback and encourage discussion. By design, the image does not include established connections between groups; these connections are blank to facilitate consideration of potential or new connections. Additionally, the guiding questions include examples of potential structural and operational changes to EPA processes or the Network. Neither the visualization nor the questions are pre-determined outcomes.

The EPA Tribal Partnership Network consists of the NTC, ten RTOCs, and seven TPGs, as depicted in the visual below. How do you think the Network looks and interacts? How do you think it should look and interact?



Guiding Questions

- How do Network groups currently interact with other Network groups? What are best practices and where may there be opportunities for adjustment?
- How do Network groups currently interact with EPA national program offices and regions? What are the successes and challenges regarding effective communication and collaboration?
- What does Network cross-representation currently look like (e.g., RTOC representation on NTC, TPG representation on NTC, RTOC representation on TPGs)? Does it work well? Are there any best practices that can be replicated in other parts of the Network?
- What are some possibilities for or barriers to maximizing Tribal participation and cross-representation for Network groups? For example, what would be the benefits or implications regarding:
 - o Changing the number of RTOC representatives on the NTC?
 - o Having TPG representatives concurrently sit on the NTC?
 - o Changing the number of RTOC representatives to concurrently sit on a TPG?
 - o Revising group compositions in other ways?

Questions and Comments

Please provide feedback or questions to Daniel Vaught at vaught.daniel@epa.gov or (202) 564-6038, by **September 29, 2026**.