



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Washington, DC 20240

## Memorandum

To: Navajo Regional Director  
Northwest Regional Director  
Pacific Regional Director  
Rocky Mountain Regional Director  
Southwest Regional Director  
Western Regional Director

From: Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Subject: 2025 Bureau of Indian Affairs Interagency Hotshot Crew Program  
Requirements and Budgets

Overview: The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) sponsors and operates seven Interagency Hotshot Crews (IHCs) through both Direct Services (Fort Apache, Navajo, and Zuni) and Tribal management (Chief Mountain, Geronimo, Golden Eagles, and Warm Springs). These IHCs are integral to meeting national interagency priorities and operate under stringent requirements set forth by an interagency steering committee that includes representatives from the BIA, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service.

Program Standards: IHCs must maintain high levels of training (mental, emotional, and physical) and qualifications to effectively manage operations in diverse and dynamic environments related to wildland fire, prescribed fire, and all hazard incidents. IHCs are recognized experts and are often mobilized for both domestic and international incidents. To sustain this capability and ensure the safety of personnel and the communities they serve, adherence to established standards is critical.

The BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management (DWFM) is committed to maintaining sponsorship of seven IHCs, ensuring that fiscal funding is directed towards IHCs that fulfill all necessary requirements and contribute effectively to our mission. This directive is part of our commitment to maintaining high standards and ensuring that our resources are allocated to those demonstrating excellence and readiness.

Effective January 1, 2025, any BIA or Tribal IHC that does not currently hold Type 1 status will be placed on probationary status. These crews will then have a three-year period to meet the necessary criteria to regain IHC status. Additionally, if a current BIA or Tribal IHC does not meet IHC standards during their annual preparedness review, they will also be placed in a probationary status. The three-year period to regain IHC status will begin from the date of that evaluation.

Failure to meet these standards within the designated timeframe will result in their funding being revoked and reallocated by the DWFM. The DWFM's intent of the reallocation of these funds is to maintain seven active BIA/Tribal IHCs nationally.

Crews that are in probationary status and consider themselves ready for an IHC evaluation must submit a formal written request. This request should be made by the Line Officer or Regional Fire Management Officer (RFMO) to the DWFM Branch Chief of Fire Operations.

In addition, probationary crews are required to submit regular progress reports detailing their status and any steps taken to meet the IHC standards. These progress reports should be submitted through the respective RFMO to the DWFM Branch Chief of Fire Operations.

Corrective Action Plan Process: If a crew falls below IHC status or fails to meet IHC qualifications for a period of 30 consecutive days during their 90-day availability (fire-season), the following steps must be followed:

1. Notification: The crew must immediately inform their supervisor in writing. Their supervisor will then notify the appropriate RFMO.
2. Reporting: The RFMO and/or Line Officer must report the crew's status to the DWFM.
3. Corrective Action Plan: A formal written corrective action plan must be submitted to the DWFM and signed by a Line Officer and/or RFMO.

Timeframe: The date of the notification from the crew to their leadership will initiate the three-year probationary period for the crew to regain IHC status.

Compliance Requirements: For the 2025 operational year, BIA Regions and Units must ensure that IHC programs comply with the following current standards:

- Standards for Interagency Hotshot Crew Operations (SIHCO)
- Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book)
- National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization

Annual pre-season reviews of IHC programs will determine readiness and crew typing, utilizing the following checklists available at [www.nifc.gov](http://www.nifc.gov):

1. SIHCO Appendix B – Annual IHC Preparedness Review
2. SIHCO Appendix C – Annual IHC Mobilization Checklist
3. BIA Checklist 6 – Fire Training Qualifications
4. BIA Checklist 8 – Facilities Cache
5. BIA Checklist 14 – Individual Firefighter
6. BIA Checklist 18 – Vehicles
7. BIA Checklist 19 – Fuel Transport

Review Team Composition: Each review team must include:

- One DWFM staff member
- One local unit fire management staff member
- One regional office fire management staff member
- One current or former IHC superintendent from another BIA/Tribal or interagency IHC program

The review team will determine crew typing, subject to final approval by the DWFM Branch Chief of Fire Operations.

Budget Structure: For 2025, the DWFM has standardized funding support for all IHCs based on the following:

- A standard crew configuration
- Full crew funding support for eleven pay periods
- Standardized support costs
- Locality pay: Six crews (Chief Mountain, Fort Apache, Geronimo, Navajo, Warm Springs, Zuni) will use the "Rest of U.S." locality pay table, and one crew (Golden Eagles) will use the "San Diego" locality pay table (see attachments).

Staffing Requirements: Staffing requirements will follow the SIHCO Chapter two "Minimum IHC Mobilization Standards" to manage the use of Administratively Determined Firefighters (AD's) and loaner personnel.

- Staffing Standards: Crews must meet the staffing requirements outlined in SIHCO Chapter two, maintaining the primary 18 career and seasonal positions.
- Use of Administratively Determined (AD) and Loaner Personnel: ADs, detailers or fill-ins cannot be counted as part of the primary 18 positions. They may be used for short-term crew boosts, pending RFMO approval.
- Non-Compliance and Probation: If ADs, detailers, or fill-in personnel are used to maintain the primary 18 positions for more than 30 consecutive days within the 90-day fire season or during the annual pre-season review, the crew will be out of compliance and placed on probation. The crew will need to follow the corrective action process stated above.

Important Notes:

- No budget adjustments from DWFM will be made outside these standards; any additional funding requirements must be met by the hosting unit and/or regional office.
- Any deviations from the outlined requirements must receive prior approval from the DWFM Branch Chief of Fire Operations.

Action Items:

1. Confirm review dates with team members and IHC Crew to be reviewed by February 1, 2025. IHC review periods allow for a minimum of three days.
2. Anticipate further updates regarding requirements and budget adjustments as the IHC program evolves throughout Fiscal Year 2025.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters. For inquiries, please contact TJ Gholson, Preparedness and Medical Program Manager at (208) 387-5372, [anthony.gholson@bia.gov](mailto:anthony.gholson@bia.gov) or Aaron Baldwin, Division Chief, Division of Wildland Fire Management at (208) 387-5697.

Attachments: IHC Budget Sheet FY24 RUS  
IHC Budget Sheet FY24 San Diego

cc: Directorate, Environmental and Natural Resources