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## Introduction to New Mexico Tribal Court Handbook

Tribal Law Journal Staff

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## **Introduction to New Mexico Tribal Court Handbook**

The Indian Law Section of the State Bar of New Mexico first published the New Mexico Tribal Court Handbook in 1991, with the last update in 2001. The State Bar of New Mexico requested the assistance of the *Tribal Law Journal* to update and publish the latest updates to the Handbook on the *Tribal Law Journal's* website. Since the *Tribal Law Journal* follows an entirely online format, the Handbook will be readily accessible to legal practitioners with consistent updates provided by the Journal's staff.

The purpose of the Handbook, as stated in the introduction to the first volume, remains the same:

The importance of this handbook is that it helps take some of the mystery out of practicing in tribal courts. Each time an attorney prepares to practice in a new jurisdiction-whether state, tribal, or federal-she or he must become familiar with new rules and protocols; this preparation is made substantially more difficult if the attorney has no way to learn in advance what the new rules and protocol are. Without that necessary information, of course, most attorneys are understandably reluctant to practice in a new jurisdiction... As a result, tribal courts are underused or misused. Outsiders cannot develop respect for a system that they fear or are unable to use, and the underused tribal courts themselves may not receive all the benefits of an active, diverse, lively, creative, and healthy advocate system. This handbook is intended to help attorneys and advocates become more aware of the various individual tribal court systems and to learn their rules and protocol.

The year that appears in parenthesis next to each Tribal Court indicates the last update made by the Journal to any section of a Tribe's information. Updates may include new information sent to the Journal by each Tribe or entries made by the Journal staff based on updated Tribal Court directories or other information obtained by the Journal. Some Tribes did not respond to the State Bar's initial request, but contact information for these tribes is updated as it becomes available to the Journal. Clicking on the corresponding link at right allows the user to access a tribe's or pueblo's court information.

The *Tribal Law Journal* staff will continue to work with tribal courts to process and publish updates to the Handbook. Tribal court employees who find errors within the Handbook for their respective court's information, or wish to contribute updates to the Handbook, may make such updates known to the Journal by letter to:

Tribal Law Journal  
1117 Stanford, NE Room #1222  
Albuquerque, NM 87131  
Email: [tlj@law.unm.edu](mailto:tlj@law.unm.edu)

This update will further the stated goal of the *Tribal Law Journal*, which is to promote indigenous self-determination by facilitating discussion of the internal law of the world's indigenous nations. The Journal will continue to strive to promote projects such as the New Mexico Tribal Court Handbook and appreciates the opportunity to participate in the updating and publishing of the Handbook. The *Tribal Law Journal* would like to sincerely thank the staff and officials of New Mexico's tribal courts, as this update could not have been possible without their willingness to assist and their dedication to the purpose of the Handbook. *The Tribal Law Journal* would also like to thank the Indian Law Section of the State Bar of New Mexico for its dedication to this project and its permission to update and publish the Handbook.

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