

**PREPARING A HEALTHY PATH:  
THE IMPACTS OF FAS/ARND ON TRIBAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS**  
*A TRAINING CURRICULUM FOR TRIBAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS PERSONNEL*



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## PREFACE

Tribal courts are often forums for the resolution of disputes arising in communities which are suffering complex social issues that may be further aggravated by multigenerational incidence as well as a severe lack of resources. The National Indian Justice Center (NIJC) is a non-profit organization that provides training and technical assistance to tribal governmental agencies. In our work evaluating tribal courts, we have witnessed many court proceedings involving persons with suspected fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) or alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disorder (ARND). Most tribal court judges, advocates, and law enforcement officers approached the persons with FAS/ARND who were involved in the court system with due care and consideration but none had developed a specific protocol establishing a process for evaluation, referral, interrogation of a person with FAS/ARND. The standard punitive measures were not effective and many criminal defendants with FAS/ARND repeatedly returned to the courts and detention centers.

In 2001, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Prevention Team awarded the National Indian Justice Center (NIJC) a cooperative agreement. Pursuant to that agreement, NIJC developed this FAS awareness curriculum which promotes a tribal multidisciplinary team approach for responding to persons with FAS/ARND who are involved in the tribal justice system as defendants, witnesses or victims. The goals of this curriculum are to increase awareness of FAS/ARND among tribal justice system personnel and to reduce the secondary disabilities associated with FAS/ARND specifically those that result in increased criminal behavior among or victimization of persons with FAS/ARND.

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