



OST Name Change

Dear Dr. Per Cap:

Why did the Office of the Special Trustee change its name and how will this impact my IIM account?

Signed,

Interested Beneficiary

Dear Interested Beneficiary

On October 1st the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration assumed the fiduciary duties previously managed by the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians aka OST.

This transition dates back to 1994 when OST was created to facilitate trust reform following a lawsuit against the Bureau of Indian Affairs for failing to uphold trust responsibilities to Native American beneficiaries. Originally OST was intended to be a temporary office under the Secretary of the Interior but the organization endured for 26 years.

I recently spoke with Treci Johnson of External Affairs at the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration aka BTFA. She explained that although there is a new name the mission of BTFA remains the same - to manage the financial assets of American Indians held in trust by the Department of the Interior. These tasks include annual disbursements of over \$1 billion and active day-to-day management and investment of over \$5 billion on behalf of tribal and individual beneficiaries.

Ms. Johnson also stressed that BTFA will operate under the Indian Affairs umbrella with improved collaboration, better efficiencies, and shared resources. Staff, such as fiduciary trust officers who work with beneficiaries at the community level, will maintain the same duties and OST email addresses will remain active through the end of 2020. After which they will change to the BTFA.gov domain. Local field offices will also remain in operation when safety permits.

Other resources such as The Trust Beneficiary Call Center will operate as before and improvements will be made to the OST website which will also eventually move to BTFA.gov. Moreover, Individual Indian Money (IIM) Accounts will continue to issue statements and funds will be safely managed and accessible to beneficiaries. There are also plans to roll out an app based mobile experience for beneficiaries

needing user friendly access to information. BTFA will feature different branding too so keep on the lookout for a new logo, messaging, and related images.

Another interesting development is a partnership between BTFA and a Native owned capital management firm. This will mark the first time that an outside investment manager working on behalf of the federal government and Indian Country will also invest back into Indian Country.

For more information about the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration and the ongoing transition from OST contact the Trust Beneficiary Call Center at 888-678-6836 or tbccmail@btfa.gov. You can also reach out to local staff within BTFA's twelve regions to check IIM account balances, update an account, or change your address. Contact info is available at <https://www.doi.gov/ost/contact-us>.

Ask Dr. Per Cap is a program funded by First Nations Development Institute with assistance from the FINRA Investor Education Foundation. For more information, visit www.firstnations.org. To send a question to Dr. Per Cap, email askdrpercap@firstnations.org.