

METHAMPHETAMINE IN TRIBAL HOUSING

A Community Resource Toolkit — National Native Justice Institute | www.nativejustice.us

■ METHAMPHETAMINE ABUSE IN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

Methamphetamine (meth) abuse is one of the most pressing public health crises facing Tribal Nations today. AI/AN communities experience disproportionately high rates of meth use, addiction, and meth-related crime. The consequences reach every corner of community life: family separation, child welfare cases, domestic violence, and homelessness.

- ⚠ Tribal communities face meth-related arrests at 3–4x the national average.
- 🏠 Meth contamination renders homes uninhabitable and poses serious health risks to all occupants.
- 👶 Child removal rates tied to meth are significantly elevated in Indian Country.
- 🔥 Meth labs and use sites create hazardous waste requiring professional remediation before reoccupancy.

■ REQUIREMENTS FOR METHAMPHETAMINE ABATEMENT IN HOUSING

Tribal Housing Authorities and property managers must follow federal, state/tribal, and EPA guidelines when addressing meth-contaminated housing. Failure to properly remediate creates liability and ongoing health hazards.

Federal & Regulatory Standards

- EPA has published voluntary guidelines for meth lab cleanup; many states and tribes have adopted binding standards.
- HUD's Office of Native American Programs (ONAP) requires housing agencies to address contamination before reoccupancy.
- NAHASDA-funded units must meet habitability standards; contaminated units may jeopardize federal compliance.
- Tribal housing codes should specifically address meth contamination, testing thresholds, and remediation requirements.

Contamination Testing & Assessment

- Hire a certified industrial hygienist or licensed environmental contractor to conduct baseline testing.
- Testing must cover surfaces, ventilation systems, and soil in adjacent areas. Document all findings in writing.
- Establish written threshold standards (e.g., 0.1 µg/100cm²) consistent with EPA or state guidelines for clearance.

Remediation Protocol

- Remove and dispose of all porous materials (carpet, drywall, ceiling tiles) that cannot be decontaminated.
- Clean all hard surfaces with appropriate chemical agents; seal treated surfaces per remediation contractor guidance.
- Conduct post-remediation clearance testing before any re-occupancy is authorized. Maintain all records on file.
- Require professional remediation certification — do not allow untrained staff or tenants to perform cleanup.

■ TIPS TO IDENTIFY METH USE & CONTAMINATION IN TRIBAL HOUSING

Early identification of meth activity and contamination protects residents, staff, and the community. Watch for:

Signs of Active Meth Use or Production

- Unusual chemical odors — ammonia, cat urine, acetone, or solvent-like smells emanating from a unit.
- Stained surfaces, burn marks, or chemical residue on walls, sinks, counters, or floors.
- Excessive trash including lithium batteries, cold medicine packaging, drain cleaner, or solvent containers.
- Covered windows, unusual foot traffic at all hours, and occupants displaying signs of active meth use.

Health & Safety Warning Signs in Residents

- Residents reporting headaches, nausea, respiratory irritation, or rashes without clear medical cause.
- Children in the home experiencing unexplained health symptoms or developmental concerns.
- Pets or animals showing signs of illness or distress within the unit.

What To Do

If meth contamination is suspected, do not enter the unit without appropriate PPE. Document observations, notify tribal housing management and law enforcement, and initiate the formal testing and remediation protocol immediately. Contact NNJI for training, policy support, and resources.

RESOURCES, GRANTS & SUPPORT

Funding, Training, and Support Resources — Tribal Housing Meth Abatement Programs | www.nativejustice.us

■ FEDERAL GRANT RESOURCES

Housing & Remediation Funding

- **NAHASDA Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) – HUD/ONAP** – Funds tribal housing operations including substance-related remediation. hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/ih
- **Choice Neighborhoods Initiative – HUD** – Supports transformation of distressed housing communities. hud.gov
- **USDA Rural Development Housing Programs** – Grants and loans for rural/tribal housing improvements. rd.usda.gov

Substance Use & Public Safety

- **SAMHSA Tribal Opioid Response (TOR) Grant** – Addresses opioid and stimulant (meth) use disorders in tribal communities. samhsa.gov/tribal-ttac
- **COPS Tribal Resources Grant (TRG)** – Funds tribal law enforcement addressing drug trafficking and meth crime. cops.usdoj.gov
- **DOJ Tribal Justice & Safety Initiative – BJA** – Supports tribal law enforcement, prosecution, and community safety. bja.ojp.gov
- **EPA Brownfields & Environmental Justice Grants** – May fund environmental assessment and cleanup of severely contaminated tribal properties. epa.gov/brownfields

■ STATE & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **State Meth Remediation Programs** – Many states maintain certified contractor lists and cleanup standards. Contact your State Environmental Agency for tribal program eligibility.
- **State Drug Enforcement & Housing Grants** – State administrations may fund tribal housing authorities addressing drug contamination through CDBG or similar programs.
- **Grants.gov Tribal Search Tool** – Search all federal grants available to tribal entities. grants.gov (filter: Tribal Government eligibility)

■ HELPFUL TIPS FOR TRIBAL PROGRAMS & LEADERS

Adopt a Written Meth Housing Policy Develop formal lease provisions, inspection protocols, testing thresholds, and remediation procedures. Review and update annually.	Train Staff on Identification & Safety All housing and maintenance staff should know warning signs of meth use and contamination, and understand not to enter suspected units without PPE.
Maintain Certified Contractor Relationships Establish working relationships with EPA-certified or state-licensed meth remediation contractors before a crisis occurs.	Document Everything Maintain comprehensive records of all testing, remediation, clearance, and occupancy decisions. Documentation is essential for compliance and grant reporting.

■ KEY WEBLINKS

National Native Justice Institute	www.nativejustice.us
EPA Meth Lab Cleanup Guidelines	epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-04/documents/meth_lab_guidelines.pdf
HUD Office of Native American Programs	hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/ih
SAMHSA Tribal Behavioral Health	samhsa.gov/tribal-ttac
BJA Tribal Justice Programs	bja.ojp.gov/program/tribal-justice
Grants.gov (Tribal Search)	grants.gov

■ PARTNER WITH NNJI — WE ARE READY TO SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY

TAKE ACTION TODAY — Contact NNJI at www.nativejustice.us to schedule training, consultation, or access resources.

Strengthening Tribal Justice — One Community at a Time