



# PHYSICAL AND ELECTRONIC SECURITY AIDS FOR TRIBAL COURTS


A Tribal Court Security Technology Toolkit — National Native Justice Institute | [www.nativejustice.us](http://www.nativejustice.us)


## ■ PHYSICAL AND ELECTRONIC SECURITY TECHNOLOGY IN TRIBAL COURTS

Physical and electronic security aids are the infrastructure layer of tribal court security — the tools, systems, and physical design elements that enable security officers to identify threats, control access, monitor the facility, and respond effectively. In tribal courts, where security staffing is often limited and facilities serve multiple functions, well-chosen and properly maintained security technology extends the reach of every officer on duty. The most effective security programs combine trained personnel with appropriate physical and electronic tools.

 Security cameras that are actively monitored and properly recorded are among the most powerful deterrence and investigation tools available to tribal courts.

 Entry screening equipment — walk-through magnetometers, hand wands, and X-ray — is the primary physical barrier between the public and the protected courtroom environment.

 Communication systems — two-way radios with courthouse-wide coverage and direct links to tribal police — are as important as any physical security device.

 Physical access control (locks, controlled doors, and restricted area protocols) is the first and most fundamental layer of courthouse security.

## ■ ENTRY SCREENING EQUIPMENT

### Walk-Through Magnetometers (WTMs)

- The primary entry screening tool for tribal courts. WTMs screen for ferrous metal objects and alert officers to potential weapons before individuals enter the secure area.
- Calibrate WTMs daily following the manufacturer's standard. Document calibration in a daily equipment log.
- Never rely on the WTM alarm alone. All alarms require secondary screening with a hand wand and, if warranted, a pat-down by a trained officer.
- WTMs must be positioned so that all persons entering the courthouse pass through — with no bypass routes available.

### Hand Wands & X-Ray Systems

- Hand wands provide precise secondary screening when a WTM alarms. Every court security officer must be trained and proficient in hand wand technique before conducting entry screening.
- X-ray screening of bags and packages is the most effective method for detecting non-metallic threats. Where resources allow, an X-ray conveyor system should be used for all bags at the primary entry point.
- Where X-ray is not available, all bags must be physically searched. Document the basis for any search and the officer who conducted it.

## ■ ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

### Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV)

- Install cameras at all entry points, hallways, waiting areas, courtrooms, prisoner holding areas, and parking lots. Camera placement should eliminate blind spots in all high-risk areas.
- Ensure all cameras record continuously with a minimum 30-day retention period. High-risk incident footage should be preserved indefinitely.
- Designate a security staff member to actively monitor live CCTV during court operating hours. Recorded footage that no one watches does not prevent incidents.

### Access Control Systems

- Electronic key card or code access systems for restricted areas — judge's chambers, jury deliberation rooms, evidence storage, and prisoner holding — provide a documented access trail and prevent unauthorized entry.
- Audit access logs monthly. Any unauthorized or anomalous access to restricted areas requires immediate investigation and documentation.

### Panic Alarms & Communication

- Install silent panic alarms at the judge's bench, clerk's counter, and security officer post. Test all panic alarms monthly and document tests in writing.
- All court security officers must carry two-way radios with clear coverage throughout the entire courthouse including holding areas. Test coverage during pre-shift equipment checks.
- Establish a direct radio or phone channel to tribal police dispatch. This channel should be tested daily and known to every security officer.

## ■ PHYSICAL SECURITY DESIGN

- Maintain clear separation between public areas and restricted areas through physical barriers, signage, and controlled access points.
- Ensure all exterior doors are alarmed or monitored. Secondary entry points that are not actively screened create bypass vulnerabilities that can defeat your entire entry screening program.

# RESOURCES, GRANTS & SUPPORT

Funding, Training, and Support Resources — Tribal Court Physical & Electronic Security Programs | [www.nativejustice.us](http://www.nativejustice.us)

## ■ FEDERAL GRANT RESOURCES

### Court Security Funding

- **COPS Tribal Resources Grant (TRG)** – Funds tribal public safety including court security staffing, training, and equipment. [cops.usdoj.gov/tribalresources](http://cops.usdoj.gov/tribalresources)
- **CTAS – Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation** – DOJ consolidated tribal funding for courts, law enforcement, and security programs. [justice.gov/tribal](http://justice.gov/tribal)
- **BJA Tribal Justice Programs** – Supports tribal court operations and court security capacity. [bja.ojp.gov/program/tribal-justice](http://bja.ojp.gov/program/tribal-justice)
- **FEMA Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program (THSGP)** – Annual DHS funding for tribal security infrastructure and emergency preparedness. [fema.gov/tribal](http://fema.gov/tribal)

### Security Technology Resources

- **FEMA – Physical Security Resources for Courts** – FEMA tribal grants fund security equipment including cameras, magnetometers, and access control. [fema.gov/tribal](http://fema.gov/tribal)
- **National Center for State Courts – Technology** – Court technology standards and security equipment resources for tribal and state courts. [ncsc.org](http://ncsc.org)
- **DHS CISA – Physical Security Assessments** – Free physical security vulnerability assessments for tribal facilities from DHS Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. [cisa.gov](http://cisa.gov)

## ■ STATE & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **State Court Security Standards** – Most state court administrative offices publish court security standards applicable to tribal courts under intergovernmental agreements. Contact your State Court Administrator.
- **State Homeland Security Grants (SHSGP)** – Tribal court security programs may be eligible for state-administered FEMA homeland security funding. Contact your State Administrative Agency (SAA).
- **Tribal Law & Order Act (TLOA) Resources** – TLOA expanded tribal justice authority and DOJ technical assistance for tribal courts and security programs.
- **Grants.gov Tribal Search Tool** – Search all federal grants available to tribal entities. [grants.gov](http://grants.gov) (filter: Tribal Government eligibility)

## ■ HELPFUL TIPS FOR TRIBAL PROGRAMS & LEADERS

<p><b>Conduct an Annual Physical Security Technology Assessment</b></p> <p>An annual technology assessment — reviewing camera coverage, magnetometer calibration, access control logs, and panic alarm functionality — identifies gaps before they become incidents.</p>	<p><b>Develop a Security Technology Budget Line</b></p> <p>Security technology requires ongoing funding for maintenance, calibration, replacement, and software updates. A dedicated budget line ensures these costs are planned, not reactive.</p>
<p><b>Apply for FEMA THSGP Funding for Technology Upgrades</b></p> <p>The FEMA Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program is a primary funding source for tribal court physical and electronic security technology upgrades. Apply annually.</p>	<p><b>Coordinate Technology Purchases with Tribal Police</b></p> <p>Security technology that integrates with tribal police systems — shared radio channels, camera access, and access control — multiplies its value. Coordinate purchases with tribal police before procurement.</p>

## ■ KEY WEBLINKS

National Native Justice Institute	<a href="http://www.nativejustice.us">www.nativejustice.us</a>
National Center for State Courts	<a href="http://ncsc.org">ncsc.org</a>
COPS Tribal Resources Grant	<a href="http://cops.usdoj.gov/tribalresources">cops.usdoj.gov/tribalresources</a>
BJA Tribal Justice Programs	<a href="http://bja.ojp.gov/program/tribal-justice">bja.ojp.gov/program/tribal-justice</a>
FEMA Tribal Grants	<a href="http://fema.gov/tribal">fema.gov/tribal</a>
DHS CISA Security Assessments	<a href="http://cisa.gov">cisa.gov</a>
National Center for State Courts	<a href="http://ncsc.org">ncsc.org</a>

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

**TAKE ACTION TODAY** — Contact NNJI at [www.nativejustice.us](http://www.nativejustice.us) to schedule training, consultation, or access resources.  
*Strengthening Tribal Justice — One Community at a Time*