



COURT PERSONNEL RESPONSE TO ACTIVE SHOOTER


A Tribal Court Emergency Response Toolkit — National Native Justice Institute | www.nativejustice.us


■ ACTIVE SHOOTER PREPAREDNESS FOR TRIBAL COURTS

An active shooter in a courthouse is among the most dangerous and rapidly evolving emergencies a tribal court facility can face. Courts are uniquely vulnerable: they concentrate emotionally volatile individuals, restrict the normal flight options of participants in proceedings, and create predictable attendance patterns that a determined attacker can exploit. Every court employee — judge, clerk, attorney, advocate, and security officer — must be trained on active shooter response before an incident occurs. Preparation is the only effective defense.

 FBI data shows that active shooter incidents are resolved in under three minutes in most cases. Law enforcement response time averages three to fifteen minutes. Court personnel response in the first minutes is decisive.

 Tribal courts are frequently located in communities with extended law enforcement response times. The responsibility for initial life safety response falls on court personnel and security officers.

 Training, preparation, and practiced protocols convert panic into purposeful action. Unprepared personnel freeze. Prepared personnel act.

 Your first action in any active shooter event is to call 911 — even if you believe someone else has already called. Every 911 call provides additional information to responding officers.

■ THE RUN-HIDE-FIGHT FRAMEWORK FOR COURT SETTINGS

RUN — Evacuate When a Safe Path Exists

- Know all courtroom and courthouse exits before any emergency occurs. Walk every exit route at the start of every new assignment or posting.
- If a clear evacuation route exists away from the threat, move immediately. Do not wait for instructions. Leave all belongings.
- Help others evacuate when possible. Do not let hesitation, disbelief, or the desire to help others who are not moving stop your own escape.
- Once outside and at a safe distance: call 911, provide your exact location, a description of the shooter if known, and the number of victims visible.
- Do not re-enter the building for any reason until law enforcement provides a verified all-clear.

HIDE — Shelter in Place When Evacuation Is Not Possible

- Move to a room that can be locked or barricaded. Block the door with heavy furniture. Turn off lights, silence phones, and move away from windows and doors.
- Stay low and out of sight lines from doors and windows. Remain silent until law enforcement arrives and provides verbal identification.
- Do not open the door for anyone claiming to be law enforcement until you see them through a window or receive confirmation through 911 that they have secured the floor.
- Text or use silent messaging to communicate with tribal police and 911 if you cannot speak aloud. Many 911 systems accept text.

FIGHT — Last Resort When No Other Option Exists

- Fight only when your life is in immediate danger and escape is impossible. Commit fully and act with aggression. Hesitation is fatal.
- Use any available object as an improvised weapon: fire extinguisher, chair, stapler, hot coffee. Aim for eyes, throat, and groin.
- Coordinate with others in the room. Multiple people acting together against a single attacker have a significantly higher survival probability than individuals acting alone.

■ COURT-SPECIFIC ACTIVE SHOOTER CONSIDERATIONS

In-Custody Defendants

- In-custody defendants in the courtroom during an active shooter event must be secured if possible — to a fixed object using available restraint equipment.
- If securing the defendant is not possible without endangering yourself or others, your first obligation is to protect the lives in the room. Law enforcement will manage the custody situation when they arrive.

The Judge and Protected Personnel

- The security officer's primary protective responsibility during an active shooter event is the presiding judge and then court staff in the immediate area.
- Know the location of chambers and the most direct secure route to chambers before any session begins. Practice the route.

RESOURCES, GRANTS & SUPPORT

Funding, Training, and Support Resources — Tribal Court Active Shooter Preparedness Programs | 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
- **CTAS – Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation** – DOJ consolidated tribal funding for courts, law enforcement, and security programs. justice.gov/tribal
- **BJA Tribal Justice Programs** – Supports tribal court operations and court security capacity. 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

Emergency Preparedness

- **DHS – Active Shooter Preparedness** – Free active shooter training resources including court-specific guidance. dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness
- **FEMA IS-907 Active Shooter Training** – Free online active shooter awareness and response training for all personnel. training.fema.gov
- **FBI – Active Shooter Resources for Courts** – FBI guidance and training resources on active shooter response for judicial facilities. fbi.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 (filter: Tribal Government eligibility)

■ HELPFUL TIPS FOR TRIBAL PROGRAMS & LEADERS

<p>Develop a Court-Specific Active Shooter Emergency Plan</p> <p>A generic active shooter plan is insufficient for a courthouse. Your plan must address in-custody defendants, victim and witness separation, chambers evacuation, and personnel accountability.</p>	<p>Conduct an Annual Active Shooter Tabletop Exercise</p> <p>An annual tabletop exercise — facilitated by tribal police or FEMA — walks court staff through a simulated active shooter scenario to identify gaps and build response confidence.</p>
<p>Install and Test Panic Button or Silent Alarm Systems</p> <p>Direct silent alert systems to tribal police and 911 are critical in court settings where staff cannot speak aloud during a lockdown.</p>	<p>Coordinate Active Shooter Response with Tribal Police Annually</p> <p>Annual coordination meetings with tribal police confirm response times, entry protocols, and communication channels so that law enforcement response is as fast and seamless as possible when seconds count.</p>

■ KEY WEBLINKS

National Native Justice Institute	www.nativejustice.us
National Center for State Courts	ncsc.org
COPS Tribal Resources Grant	cops.usdoj.gov/tribalresources
BJA Tribal Justice Programs	bja.ojp.gov/program/tribal-justice
DHS Active Shooter Preparedness	dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness
FEMA Emergency Training	training.fema.gov
FBI Active Shooter Resources	fbi.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