



## **-If I decide to sell my land how much is it worth?**

The Land Consolidation Fund, administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, must pay you fair market value for any lands you wish to sell.

Therefore the value of the land will depend on what type of land it is, where it is, and how much you own.

Also for every land purchase it makes the B.I.A. will make a donation to a college fund for American Indian students out of surplus funds.

## **-What should I do if I decide not to sell my land?**

If you do not wish to sell your Indian land when the land consolidation program begins all you need to do is inform the B.I.A. that you are not interested in selling.

Finally, we encourage everyone who owns Indian land to make out a will or consider other estate planning options. If you would like assistance with this please contact Wisconsin Judicare to see if you are eligible for our services or for a referral to a private attorney with experience in Indian estate planning.

**For more information contact:**



**Cobell Settlement Information Center:** 1-800-961-6109 or  
[www.cobellsettlement.com](http://www.cobellsettlement.com)

**Office of Special Trustee for the Department of Interior Call Center:**  
1-888-678-6836

# What Every Indian Land Owner Needs to Know About the Cobell Settlement

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On December 8<sup>th</sup> 2009 the Department of the Interior announced a *Proposed* settlement of the Cobell lawsuit.

### **-What was the suit about?**

The Cobell litigation was over B.I.A. mismanagement of funds from Individual Indian Lands, such as lease payments and mineral rights.

### **-Am I a member of the class?**

There are actually two classes, or groups of people affected by the suit. The Historical Accounting Class is everyone who had an Individual Indian Money Account between October 1994 and September 30, 2009. The second class, The Trust Administration Class is anyone who owned individual Indian trust land on September 30, 2009.

### **-What should I do if I think I am a member of the class?**

If you think you may be a member of either class but have not received any notices or information you should do two things: First, call 1-800-961-6109 to register to receive notice (or register online at

[www.cobellsettlement.com](http://www.cobellsettlement.com)). Second, you should contact the Office of Special Trustee at 1-888-678-6836 to update your account information.

### **-What Will I get?**

The *Proposed* settlement will pay \$1,000 to everyone in the Historical Accounting Class. Additionally, everyone in the Trust Administration Class will get \$500 plus a portion of any remaining funds in the settlement.



### **-When do I get my money?**

At the moment this is just a proposed settlement. Because the U.S. Government is a party to the case Congress has to approve the settlement. After Congress has approved it, the Federal Court also has to approve it. Once that happens a notice will be mailed to everyone who is a part of the class with more information. We cannot say for sure how long all this will take.

### **Will this money affect my Social Security (or other benefits)?**

The proposed legislation to authorize the settlement explicitly says that these funds are exempt income for all public benefit programs. So, it will not affect your benefits.

### **-Do I have to take the settlement?**

You cannot “opt out” of (or choose not to participate in) the \$1,000 settlement, but you will have the opportunity to “opt out” of the \$500+ land claim settlement.

If you opt-out you will not receive your share of that settlement but you can bring your own suit against the government later.

### **-Will I lose my land if I take the settlement?**

No, the settlement payments are for past mismanagement of the land, and accepting the settlement will have no affect on the lands you own. However as part of the settlement a land consolidation fund has been established.