

# PROCESS OF CONDUCTING RESEARCH ON THE HUALAPAI RESERVATION, ARIZONA

## Introduction

Conducting research on Native American Reservation lands demands a unique protocol that prospective researchers need to understand and respect in order to proceed in an ethical and culturally sensitive manner. First, and foremost, researchers must recognize that they are working on sovereign lands and that cultural and legal issues may be very different than that of their own upbringing and background.

Approval of research proposals will vary depending upon the Tribe or Nation on whose territory the research will be conducted; therefore, researchers must become informed about the requirements in place on their specific Reservation of interest. In some cases, a letter from the Tribal Council may be sufficient. In others, the approval of a tribal Institutional Review Board (IRB) may be required. No research should be conducted based on verbal approval from one individual. The researcher must insure that the appropriate Tribal representative or group has issued approval, in writing, before proceeding with any research activities.

All Research that involves Tribal individuals must incorporate an 'Informed Consent' form. Informed Consent should be considered an ongoing process that drives open and honest communication between the researcher and the subject throughout the term of the research. The form should be written in language that is easily understood by the subject to insure that the subject fully understands what he is signing. It must include specific statements covering:

- The volunteer nature of the subject's participation
- The project purpose
- Selection criteria for subjects
- Duration of subject participation
- Research procedures
- Risks and benefits to the subject
- Confidentiality measures
- Participation Costs and Subject Compensation
- Project Contacts
- Liability

Guidelines and examples of this form can be found at the University of Arizona site: <http://www.publichealth.arizona.edu/StudentResources/Documents/HIPAAFAQs.swf>. Other universities have similar sites with Consent Form information. A federal checklist for consent forms can be found at: <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/assurance/consentckls.htm>. Creation and use of an Informed Consent form is a crucial step that must be undertaken prior to engaging Tribal members in research projects that affect individuals.

## Hualapai Tribe Process of Conducting Research

No formal research protocol exists for the Hualapai Tribe for performing research with community members, other reservation residences, or within the boundaries of

the reservation. Outside researchers should be flexible, as research procedures may alter according to the nature and extent of the research plan. Also, concerns may arise as the Tribal Council considers the request. The Hualapai Tribal Council desires to preserve collective and individual welfare as well as confidentiality of tribal members and privileged information, in order to prevent misinterpretation and exploitation of the cultural practices and history of the Hualapai. The Hualapai people would like to determine if the research will contribute to the health, culture, and resources of the community.

The following principals exhibit research activities that the Tribe has approved in the past, and may be used as examples to outside researchers who would like to conduct research with the Hualapai Tribe. However, following these steps does not guarantee tribal approval.

- Build a relationship with a tribal employee in a leadership position, such as a program manager or director, as a local partner, in order to collaborate in the development of a research plan and activities.
- Develop of a 1-2 page proposal, coordinating with the local partner. This document should clearly state the background, purpose, methods and tribal community benefit of the research. Avoid academic jargon, and employ a bulleted written style, when possible, to facilitate rapid review of the material.
- Work together with the local partner, and request that the Executive Tribal Secretary put your research project presentation on the next regularly scheduled Tribal Council meeting, and also to request a draft of a tribal resolution to support the research before the Council meeting. After scheduling the presentation, provide 10 copies of the 1-2 page proposal to the Executive Secretary at least one week before the meeting, for distribution to the council members. Indicate in the short proposal that you will provide the complete research proposal if requested.
- During the Council meeting, the local partner and the outside researcher will introduce the research plan and activities and offer to answer questions. Presentation time should not go over 15 minutes in length. Power point slides are not needed unless otherwise specified.
- The Council may alter the proposed plan in order that the research outcomes pertain to the benefit of the community.
- If Council supports the research activities, they will pass the tribal resolution and will send a copy to both the local partner and/or the outside researcher.

- The researcher should describe any major changes in the design of the research activities in writing to submit to the Council, if the design of the research changes from the original research plan. The Council will decide if the projected changes require full Council review and approval.
- Written documents, videos, or other audio recordings pertaining to the research activities must be submitted for Tribal Council review and approval before public distribution. The Tribal Council requires the approval of research products and all materials, notwithstanding economic gain.
- The researcher and local partner should request approval of manuscripts and research outcomes through a presentation to the Tribal Council, similar to the steps used to request approval of the research.

The Hualapai Tribal Council, representing the rights of a sovereign nation, may change these guidelines at any time and is not required to reveal reasons for change.



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**This information has been reviewed by university faculty.**  
[cals.arizona.edu/pubs/natresources/az1469.pdf](https://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/natresources/az1469.pdf)

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