

TRIBAL GOVERNMENT



Tribal governments have existed in the United States long before European contact, governing themselves through tribal laws, cultural traditions, and religious customs.

Today there are more than 500 federally recognized tribes in the U.S. whose governments are diverse in both structure and in the decision-making process.

Most contemporary tribal governments are democracies, modeled upon the federal system of the three branches: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial.

Tribes have the inherent power to govern all matters involving their members and a range of matters in Indian Country – this is known as *sovereignty*.

Self-government is essential for tribal communities to continue to protect their unique cultures and identities, and in turn tribal cultures and traditions provide the foundation upon which Native American communities are governed.

The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians conducts elections every two years to elect its tribal government leadership team: four Business Committee members and a Tribal Chairman.

The current tribal leadership team consists of:

Kenneth Kahn	Tribal Chairman
Raul Armenta	Vice Chairman
Gary Pace	Secretary/Treasurer
Maxine Littlejohn	Business Committee Member
Mike Lopez	Business Committee Member

