



Tips on Getting the Mandatory Tribal Court Letter for the Application

Step 1

Familiarize yourself with your respective Tribe's rules on admission to practice law in your Tribal Court.

Each Tribe sets its own rules as to who can be admitted to practice law in their court. These rules can sometimes be found online. More commonly, the clerk of the Tribal court will be able to provide that information to you.

Some Tribes allow non-attorneys to practice law in their courts if the legal advocate is a citizen of their Tribe or an enrolled citizen of another federally recognized Tribe. Others may require successful passage of a Tribal Bar examination, payment of a fee, or other requirements. Some Tribes may allow non-Indians who are not law school trained and state barred to practice in their courts.

The Certificate in Tribal Court Legal Advocacy will empower you to begin a successful law practice in your specific Tribal Court. Knowledge of and adherence to the rules of admission to practice are important first steps on your journey.

Step 2:

Introduce yourself to your Judge and/or Court Clerk in person (preferred), by phone, or by email and explain your desire to practice law in your Tribal Court upon completion of the National Tribal Trial College Certificate in Tribal Court Legal Advocacy at the University of Wisconsin Law School in July.

Throughout the course (and in your future legal career) you will be building important, professional relationships with your Tribal Court personnel. Good, respectful communication is key to the success of your future legal practice.

Your Tribal Court serves a valuable role for your People. After completion of the Certificate (and completion of any other Tribal Court admission requirements), you will become a member in good standing of your Tribe's legal community. Start these relationships off "in a good way" and nurture them throughout your legal career.

Many of you will have friends or relatives working in your Tribal Courts. These relationships can also be of tremendous value as you navigate your Tribe's laws and justice systems.

Introducing yourself in a manner that is proper and professional (for the ways of your People) to a Tribal Court judge or clerk of the Court may seem daunting or scary. Remember that you are building crucial skills and relationships to advance safety, justice, sovereignty, and healing. Your confidence and voice will grow stronger in addressing legal systems throughout the course.

Step 3:

Obtain a letter on Tribal Court letterhead

Admission to the Certificate course requires a letter from the Clerk or the Judge indicating that you will be admitted to practice law after completion of the National Tribal Trial College Certificate in Tribal Court Legal Advocacy course at the University of Wisconsin Law School (sponsored and funded by the United States Department of Justice). Hundreds of graduates from Tribes across the country have completed the USDOJ funded course. There may even be NTTC graduates practicing within your Tribal Court now!

If the Clerk or Judge is unfamiliar with the course, briefly discuss the importance of learning tribal court litigation skills at the NTTC and what completion of this course will mean for your Tribe, for victims in your community, for you and for your family.

Step 4:

Request a letter (or an email) from the Clerk of the Court or the Tribal Court Judge with a statement (**on Tribal Court letterhead** or with a Tribal Court signature line to the email) **indicating your eligibility to practice law upon completion of the NTTC Certificate**. If more is required to practice law (i.e., passage of a bar examination, payment of a fee, completion of a background check, etc.), the Clerk or Judge may also include that information in the letter.

Remember that the Tribal Court may be busy or may not be open every day. You are starting your relationship off "in a good way," so please allow as much time as possible to obtain the letter from your Court.

Note: If you are unable to obtain a letter from your Court:

- Document all your efforts to obtain a letter from your Court. Be sure to list the dates and type of each contact along with the outcome. Include this information with your application. **AND**
- Include a copy of your Tribal Court rules of admission to practice law with your application (screenshot, PDF, scan, or a link) with your application.

Applications without the mandatory Court letter will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Here is a sample letter (that can be adapted into an email) that you can use to request the letter. You may also call or request the letter in person if you prefer.

Date

[Insert Name of Tribal Court Judge or Clerk of the Court]

[Insert Name of Tribal Court]

[Insert Address]

Re: Request for Letter for Admission to the National Tribal Trial College

Dear [Insert Name of Tribal Court Judge or Clerk of the Court]:

My name is _____ and I am an enrolled citizen of _____. The United States Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women has funded a 6-month, hybrid online/onsite, 240-hour Certificate in Tribal Court Legal Advocacy course at the University of Wisconsin Law School. The Certificate will provide me with the legal skills necessary to successfully litigate domestic violence protection orders in our Tribal Court. Additional information on the Certificate in Tribal Court Advocacy can be found online at: nttconline.org.

The 6-month course is free. However, to attend, I must provide a letter from the Tribal Court judge or Clerk of the Court stating information contained in the paragraph below:

[Insert your name] will be eligible to practice law before the [insert name of Tribal Court] after successful completion of the National Tribal Trial College Certificate in Tribal Court Legal Advocacy at the University of Wisconsin Law School [If your Tribe requires passage of a bar examination or some other requirement, add this information to the letter here such as “and passage of the bar examination”].

The deadline to submit my application along with the letter or email from the Tribal Court verifying eligibility to practice law is January 16, 2023. Please let me know if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your Address

Your Cell Phone Number

Your Email Address