



# Modernizing the American Indian Cultural Programming Statute

HF1265 / SF1627

## Key Data Points



American Indians make up about 1% of Minnesota's population but account for over 9% of the state's prison population.



American Indian women make up 20% of the state's female incarcerated population.



Culturally relevant programming has been proven to reduce recidivism rates. Incarcerated Native Americans who engage in culturally specific programs show lower recidivism rates compared to those who do not.

## MINNESOTA STATUTE §241.80

Minn. Stat. §241.80 mandates the Department of Corrections (DOC) to develop policies providing cultural programming services for incarcerated American Indians. **However, the statute's language and provisions are outdated and, in some instances, racially insensitive.**

The current language does not adequately meet the needs of the incarcerated American Indian population, leaving room for harmful or incorrect terminology and missing key aspects that promote true cultural understanding.

## WHY THIS NEEDS ATTENTION

The issue was brought to light during consultations with the state's 11 Tribal governments, who identified the need for the statute to be **revised to reflect current understanding and culturally appropriate language**. The current statute's terminology perpetuates harm and fails to account for the full scope of the needs of incarcerated American Indians.

Studies have shown that **American Indians are disproportionately represented in Minnesota's correctional facilities**, and targeted interventions are needed. Those who engage in culturally specific programs show lower recidivism rates compared to those who do not. Data further supports that such programs improve mental health, cultural identity, and overall well-being, contributing to more effective rehabilitation.

## SOLUTION

The revision of Minn. Stat. §241.80 will remove outdated terminology and requirements from the DOC's American Indian cultural programming statute.

By revising the statute, we help **foster a more supportive environment that respects the cultural identity and specific needs of American Indian incarcerated individuals**, leading to better rehabilitation outcomes.

