

North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission
House Appropriations Human Resources Division Budget Hearing
House Appropriations-Human Resources Division Committee
Chairman, Representative Jon Nelson
North Dakota State Capital, Bismarck ND
March 6th, 2025

Opening Statement

Chairman Nelson and members of the Committee,
My name is Brad Hawk, and I am Hunkpati Dakota and a proud member of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe. I serve as the Executive Director of the North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission (NDIAC). I am joined today by my dedicated staff to present our testimony regarding the Commission's budget and future initiatives.

The North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission is commemorating its 75th year as a legislatively authorized body. Our nine-member Commission includes the Governor, the five North Dakota Tribal Chairpersons, and four at-large members appointed by the Governor.

Agency Overview

Mission Statement

"The Indian Affairs Commission shall have the power to assist and mobilize the support of state and federal agencies in assisting Indian individuals and groups in North Dakota, especially the five tribal councils, as they seek to develop their goals, project plans, and implement those plans."

Statutory Authority

North Dakota Century Code Sections 54-36-03 to 54-36-09.

Organizational Structure

The Commission operates with a four-member staff to coordinate and administer its work. These duties include acting as a liaison between tribal nations and state agencies, coordinating interagency communication, and addressing jurisdictional issues.

Key Responsibilities

- Investigate Indian affairs and provide actionable insights for state, tribal, and federal agencies.
- Support tribal governments in enhancing self-governance and improving quality of life.
- Foster understanding and collaboration between Indian and non-Indian communities.
- Facilitate agreements between tribal, state, and federal entities.

Accomplishments

Past Biennium Highlights

- Produced essential resources, such as the ND Tax Information for Native American and Tribal Governments.
- Hosted the 6th Government-to-Government (G2G) Conference, 425 people registered and was funded by private and Tribal support that is free to the public
- Established cyber literacy training initiatives in collaboration with the ND Tribal College System.
- Created multiple key community engagement opportunities with each Tribal Nation. There are ongoing Tribal Health Directors meetings, Economic and Workforce Development Luncheons, local off-reservation non-profits, and other groups

Key Projects

- **Native American Hall of Honor:** Recognized achievements in Arts and Culture, Athletics, Leadership, and Veterans.
- **Cultural Engagement:** Facilitated events during Native American Heritage Month and legislative training sessions.

Goals and Initiatives (2025–2027)

Program Enhancements

- Establish Community Health Aide Programs focusing on behavioral and oral health in tribal communities.
- Increase housing availability by 10% through collaboration with multiple partners
- Improving public information training and interaction with each Tribe and NDIAC

Cultural Preservation

- Promote the daily use of tribal languages within communities.
- Enhance activities during Native American Heritage Month, including the Hall of Honor and work with the ND Tribal Tourism Alliance

Strategic Planning

- Develop a comprehensive onboarding program for newly elected tribal leaders to improve collaboration with state departments.

Budget Request

Summary

The NDIAC requests funding to sustain and expand its programs and initiatives. This includes staffing enhancements, program funding, and operational resources.

Details

- **Staff Expansion:** Adding hybrid roles for Executive Administration and Public Information Officers.
- **Program Funding:** Supporting initiatives like the Hall of Honor and workforce development.
- **Operational Needs:** Allocating resources for community engagement and strategic planning.

Impact

This budget will enable the Commission to strengthen state-tribal relationships, enhance community programs, and address critical needs in housing, health, and workforce development.

Metrics and Evaluation

Performance Measures

- Track housing initiative progress, aiming for a 10% increase by 2027.
- Monitor participation and outcomes of training and conferences, such as the G2G Conference.

Outcome Metrics

- Increased tribal language usage in schools and communities.
 - Enhanced collaboration between state and tribal agencies.
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Closing Statement

Chairman Nelson and members of the Committee, the NDIAC's work is vital to fostering meaningful partnerships between the state and tribal nations. The requested budget will ensure we continue to deliver impactful programs and services.

I respectfully request your support for our funding proposal. I am happy to address any questions or provide further details about our initiatives. Thank you for your time and consideration.
