



# 2016 State-Tribal Leaders' Summit

Summary Report

**T**he 2016 State Tribal Leaders Summit was a continuation of positive State-Tribal relations in New Mexico. New Mexico Indian Affairs Department once again utilized the newly-restructured format from the 2015 Summit to create an environment where the state and tribes, nations and pueblos could effectively address topics of high concern. The strategies and progress developed throughout the year were presented during the roundtable discussions. This collaborative opportunity between the State of New Mexico and Tribal Nations is of mutual benefit.

The Summit consisted of joint presentations from state and tribal speakers in the following four topic areas: Water Rights and Natural Resources (emphasis on water rights), Education (emphasis on language curriculum), Economic Development (emphasis on sustainability), and Health. The proposal of these efforts and goals will be accomplished through the ongoing cooperation of the tribal nations and state agencies.

### **TOPIC ONE: WATER RIGHTS AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

*Co-Presentations by Governor J. Michael Chavarria, Pueblo of Santa Clara and State Engineer Tom Blaine, New Mexico Office of the State Engineer*

The dialogue concerning water usage remains critical. The impairment of Indian water rights is not only a tribal concern but a concern for the Office of the State Engineer. There are currently 23 Indian water right settlements that need to be funded by the legislator; six have been fully addressed.

**Next Steps:** Work with legislators to ensure solvency of funds for the Indian water rights settlements. Advocate for supportive laws for senior and master water users.

#### **Suggested Goals:**

1. Educate legislators on importance of Indian water rights settlements and the preference for negotiation over litigation (cost effectiveness)
2. A collaborative workshop on technologies for water delivery and management
3. Request further State-Tribal Water Institute sessions
4. Increase of resources to Office of State Engineer to adequately address the water rights issues and management

### **TOPIC TWO: EDUCATION**

*Co-Presentations by Governor E. Paul Torres, Pueblo of Isleta and Cabinet Secretary Hanna Skandera, New Mexico Public Education Department*

Native American students are leading the way in closing achievement gaps. The Native American graduation rate increased to 63%. The advanced placement (AP) courses taken by Native American students increased by 40%. Language and multicultural education are key elements to the vital preservation of culture and traditions for future generations. The State of New Mexico has been proactive in funding language and culture programs.

**Next Steps:** Continue to strengthen schools and support the Native American Technical Advisory Committee. Maintain federal partnerships to expand school breakfast and lunch programs to 35 tribal schools.

#### **Suggested Goals:**

1. Investing in language and culture retention and revitalization projects

2. Cultural competency training, increased funding, and recruitment for native language teachers
3. Implementation of Indian Education Act rules and regulations after consultation with the tribes, nations, and pueblos
4. Increase school's ability to provide healthier meals to students
5. Further continuance of STEP initiative – specific to Navajo Nation
6. Federal support for historic school site infrastructure – specific to Taos Pueblo
7. Tribal members on committee that selects textbooks and translation of curriculum
8. Improve bus routes and road infrastructure
9. Continue state-wide broadband connectivity initiative

### **TOPIC THREE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

*Co-Presentations by Tribal Council Member Ben Martinez, Mescalero Apache Tribe and Mark Roper, Tribal Liaison, New Mexico Economic Development Department*

A strong economy provides the financial resources needed for the perpetuation of cultures and communities. In order to strengthen tribal communities collectively, the state and tribes need to address access to healthcare for workers. The state and tribes also need to manifest concerted efforts to sustain the economy and grow it by forging partnerships.

**Next Steps:** Diversifying economies to increase economic development within tribal communities. Improving the economic environment such that it is more business friendly. Encourage investment and sustainability.

#### **Suggested Goals:**

1. Technical and financial support to promote the marketability of existing properties
2. Identify active tribal, public relations liaisons within each native community, to coordinate and encourage an expanded film industry in New Mexico
3. Resource list highlighting native skills and businesses to promote business development
4. Digital entrepreneurship (telehealth, internet commerce)
5. Strong vocational training in local tribal communities
6. Funding for economic development studies within native communities
7. Consider the viability of tribal credit unions

### **TOPIC FOUR: HEALTH**

*Co-Presentations by Governor Kurt Riley, Pueblo of Acoma; Cabinet Secretary Brent Earnest, New Mexico Human Services Department; and Cabinet Secretary Designate Lynn Gallagher, New Mexico Department of Health*

With the expansion of Medicaid, it was felt strongly that every citizen in New Mexico should have access to healthcare. Leaders recognize the need for a certified community healthcare workers program that would be culturally sensitive to the needs of the native communities. The overall quality of care is improving, and preventative measures and collaboration are essential to sustain the existing health care infrastructure.

**Next Steps:** Continue with health task force to collaboratively develop a plan of action with clear, attainable goals to address health-related issues that affect the state and tribal communities. Improve the health care infrastructure within the state for both tribal and non-tribal members.

**Suggested Goals:**

1. To recruit medical professionals; the need for housing, job partnerships for spouses, and education for their children
2. Need for jobs for partnership and spouses
3. Improve health education for students
4. Social determinates for health need to be addressed
5. Access to healthcare given the reduction in Medicaid and Medicare providers
6. Guidance to establish certified public health offices
7. Certification of community healthcare workers in tribal communities
8. Strengthening 'Healthy Kids Healthy Communities' initiative
9. Adequate access to and recruitment of dental/oral care hygiene professionals
10. Adequate continuum of care for co-occurring disorders
11. Collaboration on developing health emergency preparedness plans in tribal communities
12. Development of a drug and suicide outreach program

At the conclusion of the Summit, the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department was identified as the lead agency to address the above mentioned next steps and suggested goals. Work groups will be ongoing if necessary. The event's collaboration effort was successful; the level of commitments and mutual support to make effective change for tribal communities was achieved. As an innovative approach, a presenter's debriefing will be conducted to compile all the presented information, and to process the information that was gathered.