



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **New Mexico Indigenous Youth Council Convene for a Two-Day Strategic Planning Meeting**

ALBUQUERQUE – The New Mexico Indigenous Youth Council (IYC) convened for an in-person strategic planning meeting at the Hispano Chamber of Commerce over the past two days. This meeting marks the first in-person convening of the IYC, which has met only virtually over the past year. The purpose of the convening was to bring the council together to connect, make introductions, and get grounded in the work as they develop a strategic planning process that will help build capacity and relationships amongst IYC members as they round off their inaugural year.

On day one, Secretary Trujillo joined the council to provide welcome remarks and connect with the council over a working lunch. Over the two days, IYC members helped facilitate conversations and collaborated to develop priorities and recommendations that address existing barriers and how they, as a youth council, can work to break those barriers within the existing systems.

Key outcomes from the strategic planning session included:

- Identifying IYC priorities,
- Co-designing the IYC organizational structure and protocols,
- Identifying political education/capacity-building needs
- Making decisions around recruitment and outreach activities, and;
- Preliminary Youth Wellness Summit planning.

"I am grateful that the Indian Affairs Department supports the Indigenous Youth Council in coming together to share their time, expertise, and experiences with one another," said Lynn Trujillo, Cabinet Secretary for Indian Affairs. "It was an honor to share space with the IYC and hear their personal reflections. There is incredible strength in bringing young people together to share values and experiences so that our Indigenous communities continue to thrive for this generation and the next."

"The Indigenous Youth Council has met for the first time in-person, and it was an exciting experience. Being in a room with smart and dedicated Indigenous youth is inspiring. Moving forward, I am excited to create more opportunities for Native youth to share their voices and perspectives. Together we are shaping an image of Native solidarity on pressing issues for our respective tribes," said Ian Teller, IYC member.

"The strategic planning session was the first time we, as members of the IYC, gathered in real-time with a visit from Secretary Trujillo. Together we focused on community values and visions that grounded our past and future work in bridging culture, identity, and wellness on various levels such as interpersonal, familial, community, and state. Overall, the session was really revitalizing and inspiring – our team is exceptional," said Shayna Naranjo, IYC member.

"The IYC strategic planning work session is a step toward empowering our tribal youth across the state of New Mexico. IYC partners identified core priorities, generated our values, and grounded us in way-of-life teaching throughout the session. Moving forward, we have a plan to restore beauty across our communities," said Triston Black, IYC member.

"It was regenerating to finally get to meet the IYC members in-person and to share space. I look forward to continuing the work with the council and to seeing the recommendations that we provided over the past two days be put into action as we transition into the next phase of work," said Trinity Roybal, IYC member.

"I am very appreciative to bring our IYC zoom meetings to life, holding our IYC members in community together, with our thoughts, ideas, and plans for the future. It was very beautiful to be able to make those connections and nourish our leadership skills through healthy conversations. I am very hopeful for the inclusion and outreach that we want to extend to all of our Indigenous youth to join us, work with us to empower and build our communities through the elevation of youth voices," said Alysia Coriz, IYC member.

The Indigenous Youth Council was formed in February 2021 following two listening sessions that the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department held with tribal youth from across the state. Issues discussed ranged from the desire to have access to higher education resources to behavioral and mental health needs for tribal communities. Participants also voiced the desire to have more intertribal connections between the state's Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos.

The IAD selected members representing the 23 Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos to engage with the department and help steer the work related to the issues raised at the listening sessions. IAD provides this space to come together to share mutual experiences, collaborate on shared initiatives, and build community.

For more information on the Indigenous Youth Council's, please visit [www.iad.state.nm.us/from-the-office/indigenous-youth-council](http://www.iad.state.nm.us/from-the-office/indigenous-youth-council).

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