



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
INDIAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

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**New Mexico Indian Affairs Department Announces the
2022 Indigenous Youth Wellness Summit
June 17-18, 2022**

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (IAD) on Friday announced the 2022 Indigenous Youth Wellness Summit, "Being a Good Relative." Planned in collaboration with Honoring Native Life (HNL) and the IAD's Indigenous Youth Council (IYC), the Summit will convene Indigenous youth from across the state to acquire mental health-related resiliency tools and strategies and identify mental health needs and priorities particular to Indigenous youth. The in-person Summit is scheduled to take place in Albuquerque, NM from June 17-18, 2022, and will be open to Indigenous youth ages 16-25.

"Since its creation, the Indigenous Youth Council has worked to build and provide tools to assist our youth in improving their holistic health and resiliency," said IAD **Cabinet Secretary Lynn Trujillo**. "The Summit's goal is to encourage young people who are struggling with mental health issues to talk about their experiences without fear of stigma, as well as to create safe spaces for these discussions in schools, the workplace, and in the community. "

"It is critically important we continue our efforts to support our Tribes and Indigenous youth in mental wellness," said HNL **Program Manager Teresa Gomez**. "This year's Summit will focus on the intergenerational and environmental relationships of our communities, and how we can be good relatives to each other and our environment. We recognize that our health and wellbeing is integrally tied to the land and our relationships. The IYC has been an integral part of the planning of the Summit, adding the youth voice to ensure we are addressing concerns of Indigenous youth."

This year the IAD and IYC continue their partnership with HNL to assist with developing and executing a statewide youth wellness Summit. Created in 2011, HNL serves as a clearinghouse for Native American suicide prevention and is housed at the University of New Mexico Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Division of Community Behavioral Health. The clearinghouse provides culturally appropriate suicide prevention assistance to the state's Native American community and has historically held annual suicide prevention conferences for youth.

The Indigenous Youth Wellness Summit results from numerous calls by Tribal leadership and youth to improve access to behavioral and mental health services and resources both in and outside of Tribal communities. IAD is happy to provide the Youth Wellness Summit for a second year, building off of the inaugural Summit to provide additional resiliency tools. During the COVID-19 pandemic, access to these resources has been stifled by limited broadband capacity as most services transitioned to telehealth platforms. As New Mexico continues its recovery, the Summit will serve as a catalyst in making instrumental change for Indigenous youth and their holistic wellness.

"Last year's Youth Wellness Summit was our first large event as a group and it showcased an interest in learning more about health and wellness with a specific focus on culturally-tailored topics that challenge our normal understandings of health. For example, one of last year's presenters emphasized rethinking physical activity to something more encompassing of community values and the array of movement abilities that exist within our communities," said IYC Member **Shayna Naranjo**. "Reflecting on the recommendations and comments made at the conclusion of last year, the members and I are excited for this year's Summit since we'll be holding it in person."

"Many Native American youth do not have resources through their communities or have felt socially isolated. We want to create an open space for youth to feel safe and discuss physical, spiritual, emotional, and holistic wellness," said IYC Member **Jeremy Begay**. "I encourage youth to attend the Youth Wellness Summit to create community and promote open discussions."

Registration and location details are forthcoming. For more information on the Indigenous Youth Council, please visit www.iad.state.nm.us or email iad.iyc@state.nm.us.

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Since 2003 the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (IAD) has implemented groundbreaking state-tribal policies intended to improve the quality of life for the state's Native citizens. Our initiatives are designed to strengthen Tribal and state relations and address the challenges we face in our communities; challenges such as economic development, infrastructure improvement, the protection of our cultures and languages, health care accessibility, and educational opportunities for our most precious resource— our children. Learn more at www.iad.state.nm.us.