



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
INDIAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

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Lynn Trujillo, Secretary
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**New Mexico Indigenous Youth Council Convenes the
Second Annual Youth Wellness Summit**
“Being a Good Relative”
June 17-18, 2022

ALBUQUERQUE – The New Mexico Indian Affairs Department’s (IAD) Indigenous Youth Council (IYC) convened the Second Annual Youth Wellness Summit, "Being a Good Relative." Planned in collaboration with Honoring Native Life (HNL) and the IAD Indigenous Youth Council, the Summit convenes 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 being held June 17-18, 2022, with participants ranging from ages 16-25.

“It’s no question that the pandemic has exacerbated mental and behavioral health for individuals across New Mexico - this is especially true for Tribal youth. While our state has responded with increased resources and support to help Indigenous young people who are struggling, unprecedented times like these have lasting effects that must be addressed,” said **Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham**. “The annual Youth Wellness Summit provides space for youth to come together and identify existing gaps and needs and find ways to better serve Indigenous youth from across the state.”

“Addressing Indigenous youth mental and behavioral health continues to be a priority for the Indian Affairs Department and the Indigenous Youth Council,” said IAD Cabinet **Secretary Lynn Trujillo**. “The Lujan Grisham administration continues to listen and support Indigenous youth voices. The Youth Wellness Summit provides another opportunity to learn how to best serve our young people.”

In early 2021, the IAD and the Indigenous Youth Council partnered with Honoring Native Life to develop and execute the inaugural Indigenous statewide youth wellness Summit. Created in 2011, Honoring Native Life 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.

“Honoring Native Life values our partnership with IAD and the Indigenous Youth Council. This partnership has proven to be effective in our collective mission to address mental health and wellbeing in our Tribal communities, and particularly with our Indigenous youth,” said HNL **Program Manager Teresa Gomez**. “Our theme for this event, “Being a Good Relative” focuses 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 mental health and wellbeing is integrally tied to the land and our relationships. Nurturing these relationships supports youth engagement and connection as we address the public health epidemic of suicide and supports healing community wide.”

“Indigenous youth need to be at the forefront when discussing difficult topics such as mental and behavioral health,” said **IYC member Trinity Roybal**. “During the Summit we are working together to identify ways to be a good relative to one another while at the same time learning new skills and tools to take back to our Tribal communities.”

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. As New Mexico begins its recovery from the COVID pandemic, the Indigenous Youth Council has been leading elevating the voice of the youth asking how can the state support Indigenous youth during this transition, the resounding theme of the youth’s responses were mental health related. This Summit will serve as a catalyst in making instrumental change for Indigenous youth and their holistic wellness.

For more information on the IYC, please visit iad.iyc@state.nm.us.

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Lt. Governor Howie Morales stopped by on day 1 (June 17) to share a few words of encouragement to Summit attendees.
(Pictured *(left to right)* IYC member Alysia Coriz, IYC member Jeremy Begay, Lt. Governor Morales, IYC member Trinity Roybal)