



# 2023 NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL FALL SESSION SPEAKER'S REPORT



**CRYSTALYNE CURLEY, SPEAKER  
25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL**







## 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEES

### Health, Education, and Human Services Committee:

CHAIR VINCE R. JAMES – FORT DEFIANCE AGENCY

VICE CHAIR GERMAINE SIMONSON – CENTRAL AGENCY

GEORGE TOLTH – EASTERN AGENCY

DR. ANDY NEZ – FORT DEFIANCE AGENCY

HELENA NEZ BEGAY – WESTERN AGENCY

CURTIS YANITO – NORTHERN AGENCY

### Resources and Development Committee:

CHAIR BRENDA JESUS – FORT DEFIANCE AGENCY

VICE CHAIR CASEY ALLEN JOHNSON – WESTERN AGENCY

DANNY SIMPSON – EASTERN AGENCY

SHAWNA ANN CLAW – CENTRAL AGENCY

OTTO TSO – WESTERN AGENCY

RICKIE NEZ – NORTHERN AGENCY

### Law and Order Committee:

CHAIR EUGENIA CHARLES-NEWTON – NORTHERN AGENCY

VICE CHAIR CHERILYN YAZZIE – FORT DEFIANCE AGENCY

STEVEN R. ARVISO – EASTERN AGENCY

NATHAN NOTAH – FORT DEFIANCE AGENCY

HERMAN M. DANIELS – WESTERN AGENCY

### Budget and Finance Committee:

CHAIR SHAANDIN PARRISH – WESTERN AGENCY

VICE CHAIR CARL ROESSEL SLATER – CENTRAL AGENCY

NORMAN M. BEGAY – EASTERN AGENCY

LOMARDO ASERET – FORT DEFIANCE AGENCY

SETH DAMON – EASTERN AGENCY

AMBER KANAZBAH CROTTY – NORTHERN AGENCY

## NAVAJO NATION OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Chief of Staff

Jared Touchin  
Deputy Chief of Staff

Mary Nez  
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Senior Office Specialist

Emerson Notah  
Computer Operations  
Manager

Eugene Jarvison  
Network Manager

Ernie Silversmith  
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Technician

Clarinda Begay  
Legislative Financial  
Advisor

Gayle Neboyia  
Legislative AMS

Davina Begaye  
Legislative AMS

JoAnne George  
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## MESSAGE FROM SPEAKER CRYSTALYNE CURLEY



Yá'át'ééh and welcome my colleagues of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, President Dr. Buu Nygren, Madam Vice President Richelle Montoya, Madam Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne, chapter officials, federal, state, and county officials, legislative staff, and most importantly, to our Diné People. Thank you for joining us as we welcome you to the 2023 Fall Council Session.

The month of October is known as Ghááji', meaning the transition of the seasons. On October 14th we had a new moon, which signifies the beginning of a new year for our people. This is a special time when Nihimá Nahasdzáán, Mother Earth, is letting us know that it is time for families to prepare for the changing of the weather and seasons. We also take this time to reflect on where we are in our lives, to pray and renew our efforts for ourselves, our loved ones, and our communities.

During this season, we also take time to reflect on the teachings of our elders that remind us to prepare our homes for the upcoming winter season by gathering firewood, blankets, supplies for our livestock, and food and water. As elected leaders, we strongly encourage children and grandchildren across our Nation to help their elders, so they are safe and taken care of through the upcoming winter season.

As we continue to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Navajo Nation Council, we recognize that the will of our people to be a part of the government process has never dwindled. In fact, the call of our

people to be involved and informed continues to grow. As leaders, the responsibility to make our government open to the people rests on our shoulders. I thank my colleagues of the 25th Navajo Nation Council for consistently being out in many communities listening to the issues brought forth by our people and offering your support and recommendations.

As we move forward, we encourage everyone to take time to reflect on the teachings of our elders in relation to kinship and decision making. As our grandparents always taught us, Ni'hi'saad ayoo bi'dzil, our spoken words have power to create change that improves the livelihood of our people for many years to come, but we have to work together and move forward on a positive path during this Council session. Together, we continue to set the foundation for the next 100 years for our children and grandchildren.

As the 25th Navajo Nation Council convenes for the fall session, I am confident that we will continue to make progress and plan for the future of our Nation. On behalf of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, I again thank our Diné Citizens for your guidance and support as we move forward.

Áhé'hée

Crystalyne Curley, *Speaker*  
25th Navajo Nation Council





## THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

In recent months, the Office of the Speaker has continued focusing on developing and formalizing internal processes and procedures, which have long been requested by members of the Navajo Nation Council. As the first woman to serve as the Speaker, it is a top priority to ensure that our foundation is strong and that we have policies and procedures in place to guide our employees and our leaders. On August 24th, the Naabik'iyatí' Committee voted 16-0 to approve legislation supporting the plan of operation for the Office of the Speaker. I thank my colleagues for supporting the legislation, along with a directive to provide a report by early December on the progress of developing a human resources section specifically for the Legislative Branch. The plan of operation allows additional internal policies and procedures to be implemented to assist Council members and the entire Legislative Branch.

Within the Office of the Speaker, we are also taking on the challenge of re-evaluating safety protocols for employees, Council Delegates, and the general public. We are pleased to report that within the last two months, the Office of the Speaker has brought on full time security personnel to help keep employees, delegates, and all visitors safe. With heightened safety concerns across the country, it is important that we take steps to invest in a safer environment.

The Office of the Speaker continues to offer support to each of the Navajo Nation Council's Standing Committees to establish their respective priorities, which will then guide the establishment of the overall priorities for the Council. I appreciate the Budget and Finance Committee's work to develop and approve their priorities through legislation. The Office of the Speaker continues to work with the Standing Committees to provide support to facilitate and formalize committee, state, and federal priorities.

Now and in the coming months, the Office of the Speaker will focus on several key areas in addition to supporting the priorities and initiatives of the Council's Standing Committees, task forces, and subcommittees.

## ARPA FUNDING

The implementation of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, including the \$8.8 million per delegate region, is one of a few priorities at the top of the list. The encumbrance and expenditure of ARPA funds is a challenging task that requires a great amount of coordination and communication with the Executive Branch. Furthermore, I commend all of the Standing Committees for addressing areas of policy improvements to expedite the processes of the ARPA funding and projects.

I fully understand the urgency to expend ARPA funds, especially for infrastructure projects that will deliver water, electricity, housing, and other needs for communities and residents. As we move forward, we will schedule additional leadership meetings with the Office of the President and Vice President to work through obstacles and identify solutions to expedite the process. We thank President Nygren for signing the resolution to have the Naabik'iyatí' Committee serve as the final authority for ARPA chapter regional expenditure plans to make the process even quicker. We also congratulate all the chapter governments whose ARPA projects have been approved.

## LEGISLATIVE BRANCH EMPLOYEES - SEXUAL HARASSMENT TRAINING

Recently, the Office of the Speaker again issued notice to the Legislative Branch requiring all employees to complete sexual harassment prevention training on an annual basis. The Office coordinated a no-cost, two-day supplemental training to Sexual Harassment Awareness on October 10th and 11th for Legislative Branch.





The Office of the Speaker collaborated with the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women and the Southwest Indigenous Women's Coalition to provide culturally relevant staff training on the topic. The training addressed safety in the workplace, trauma informed care, and workplace wellness for all Legislative Branch employees and Council Delegates. After completing the training, all Legislative Branch employees received a Certificate of Attendance.

Moving forward, we strongly encourage all Council Delegates to complete the training as soon as possible. We will continue to coordinate additional training opportunities.

## **FY2024 COMPREHENSIVE BUDGET/REVENUE GENERATION**

On September 6th, the 25th Navajo Nation Council approved the Fiscal Year 2024 Comprehensive Budget for the Navajo Nation, while prioritizing funding for Navajo veterans, elders, public safety, and the establishment of a Housing Trust Fund.

This was a very challenging process for the Navajo Nation Council and the Budget and Finance Committee, which took into account recommendations from the Three Branch Chiefs, the Standing Committees, division directors, and department managers to include several top priorities including our veterans, elders, public safety staff, and departments that support victim's advocate services and education. I thank Honorable Amber Kanazbah Crotty for her continued advocacy for elders and victim's rights.

The Comprehensive Budget allocates \$2 million from the Navajo Nation's Permanent Fund interest income for a new Housing Trust Fund, the first of its kind to assist our people. This fund will set-aside dollars for housing and community development projects to accommodate our Navajo citizens who want to move back home, to Dinétah.

Allocations to the Housing Trust Fund will remain untouched for a minimum two-year period. After September 30, 2025 the Navajo Nation Investment Committee will report its recommendations for a Fund Management Plan to the Budget and Finance Committee. Once the Fund Management Plan is approved, money in the Housing Trust Fund will be disbursed to the Community Housing and Infrastructure Department for future design, planning, site preparation, construction, and other activities related to housing projects.

The budget also allocates over \$35 million from the Personnel Lapse Savings Account to fund a one-time allocation to all 110 chapters to cover their utility payments, \$1.72 million for scholarships, \$215,000 for veterans assistance, \$908,368 to victim advocate services, \$1.25 million to Head Start facilities upgrades, \$541,718 to Animal Control Program and the Department of Resource Enforcement, \$1.4 million for Navajo Nation employee step increases and bonuses, and a 4-percent General Wage Adjustment for all employees in FY2024.

In addition, \$21.5 million was allocated from the Navajo Nation Permanent Fund interest income to cover various unmet needs of the Division of Public Safety, the Division of Aging and Long-Term Care Support (DALTCS) and the Division of Community Development. \$3.4 million was approved to support the Capital Projects Management Department to complete projects, \$550,000 to all 110 Chapters for veterans' awards and events, and \$1.5 million to all 110 Chapters for scholarships.

Approximately \$5.4 million was approved for the DALTCS Administration and Offices. \$3 million was also allocated to the Division of Social Services to support Navajo families through the Navajo School Clothing Program.

The Council also determined that supplemental funding for the Navajo Nation Election Administration should be allocated under fixed costs to ensure that the Navajo Election Administration receives timely funding to help increase



Navajo voter participation and to avoid any uncertainties about funding the next election. Within the Comprehensive Budget, the Council also funded summer youth employment and other necessary initiatives that usually come before the Council later in the fiscal year in the form of supplemental funding requests.

I thank my Council colleagues, legislation sponsor Chairwomen Shaandiin Parrish, the Three Branch Chiefs and employees, and everyone who played significant roles in bringing this budget together and across the finish line. As we plan for the future, we recognize that while coal and oil continue to contribute significantly to our annual revenues and budget, we must think about the future and innovative ways of bringing new revenues to the Nation.

## **WATER RIGHTS**

The Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission established a water rights negotiation team to represent the Navajo Nation in negotiating a water rights settlement with the state of Arizona and other stakeholders. Council Delegates Brenda Jesus, Cherilyn Yazzie, Otto Tso, Vince James, Carl Slater, Shawna Claw, Shaandiin Parrish, Herman Daniels, and Germaine Simonson have been appointed along with representatives from the Executive Branch and several technical experts.

Considering the severe drought conditions in the southwest and particularly in Arizona, negotiating a settlement presents many challenges for all stakeholders including the Navajo Nation. During recent negotiation team meetings, I have conveyed my commitment and support for the efforts to come together and reach a proposed settlement with the Hopi Tribe before negotiating with other stakeholders.

On September 27th, I had the honor of advocating on behalf of the 25th Navajo Nation Council for the Navajo Nation's clean water access, presenting the Nation's case before the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in support of S. 2385 and H.R. 4746, titled "Tribal Access to Clean Water", in a hearing themed "Water as a Trust Resource: Examining Access in Native Communities" on Capitol Hill.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council also received updates on the progress of the water projects associated with the New Mexico and Utah water rights settlements that were finalized by our previous leaders. We look forward to supporting the fund management plans that are being developed for the Utah settlement funds and the completion of the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project in New Mexico.

## **MISSING AND MURDERED DINÉ RELATIVES TASK FORCE**

Under the previous Council, the Naabik'iyatí Committee approved Resolution NABIN-36-22, establishing the Naabik'iyatí Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives (MMDR) Task Force to "help combat the missing and murdered Diné relative crisis on and off the Navajo Nation."

On June 22, the 25th Navajo Nation Council's Naabik'iyatí Committee approved Resolution NABIJN-17-23, to appoint members to the Task Force. Council Delegates Amber Kanazbah Crotty, Helena Nez Begay, and Eugenia Charles-Newton were each appointed as representatives of the Naabik'iyatí Committee, Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, and the Law and Order Committee. Legislative Staff Assistant Sonlatsa Jim was also selected to represent the Office of the Speaker on the Task Force.

The Task Force will conduct a study to determine how to increase resources for reporting and identifying missing and murdered relatives, to collaborate with programs, departments, and entities within the Navajo Nation and federal and state agencies to identify barriers to address the crisis and create partnerships to improve the reporting of and the



investigations and to improve MMDR's processes for information sharing and coordination of resources in regard to reporting and investigating cases of missing and murdered relatives, and to report the findings and recommendations to the Naabik'iyatí Committee and the Office of the President and Vice President.

Members of the Council and Legislative Staff are also fully engaged with the Diné Action Plan Work Group, which utilizes the traditional Navajo planning model of Nitsáhákees (thinking), Nahat'á (planning), liná (action), and Siihásin (reflection) to help address public safety, violence, substance abuse, suicide, and missing and murdered Diné relatives on the Navajo Nation.

## RADIATION EXPOSURE COMPENSATION ACT

The Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) extension and amendments remains one of the top priorities for the Office of the Speaker and the 25th Navajo Nation Council. I thank Honorable Amber Kanazbah Crotty for her continued advocacy and for sponsoring legislation supporting S.1751 and H.R. 4426, the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act Amendment of 2023.

On September 20th, on behalf of the Council, I along with Navajo Nation Washington Office Executive Director Justin Ahasteen stood in unity with members of the Navajo Uranium Radiation Victims Committee, rallying with a select group of Congressional leaders on Capitol Hill. Together, we urged for the passage of a critical extension and expansion of the RECA, which is set to expire in July 2024.

RECA, initially enacted in 1990 and subsequently amended in 2000, was established as a means to offer one-time compensation to the veterans of, and communities impacted by, the fallout of America's uranium industry and its nuclear development program. This was particularly significant for the Navajo Nation, where uranium mining had left an enduring health and environmental legacy.

In July, the U.S. Senate approved an amendment incorporating S. 1751, a bill sponsored by U.S. Sen. Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM) for the expansion and extension of RECA, into the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Its counterpart in the House, H.R. 4426—sponsored by Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández (D-NM)—is currently awaiting consideration. As we move forward, we will continue working with all allies to push for the final passage of the RECA bill by the U.S. House and for it to become law with the signature of President Biden.

## CHACO CANYON

The Office of the Speaker continues to support the Navajo Nation's position, adopted by the Naabik'iyatí Committee, which opposes the federal government's 20-year land withdrawal around Chaco Culture National Historic Park. The Navajo Nation supports the protection of Chaco Canyon and we have done more than any other tribe to protect this area by supporting efforts to work with the National Park Service over many years. But we also oppose the land withdrawal and ask the federal government to respect the sovereignty of the Navajo Nation and the Navajo allottees who have rights to their land.

We have met with the Eastern Navajo Land Commission, President Nygren, the Attorney General, and others who have interests in this issue, to determine the best path forward. The Office of the Speaker will continue to provide support as we move forward.



## CLOSING REMARKS

On behalf of the 25th Navajo Nation Council and the Office of the Speaker, we thank our Diné people for joining us during the 2023 Fall Council Session. As we move into the new year, the 25th Navajo Nation Council will continue to serve as the governing body of the Navajo Nation and work to improve the quality of life for our Navajo people. We appreciate your continued support and prayers as we move forward together.

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## Office of the Auditor General Fiscal Year 2023 – Fourth Quarter Report Summary

### Contact:

Helen Brown, CFE, Acting Auditor General; (928) 871-6303; helenbrown@navajo-nsn.gov

The Office of the Auditor General conducts internal audits of Navajo Nation programs, departments, chapters, entities and vendors.

### Accomplishments from FY2023 Fourth Quarter: 3 reports

#### Program/Chapter Audits/Investigations – 2 reports

- Sheepsprings Chapter Internal Audit
- Office of the Controller/Procurement Activities – Investigation (CONFIDENTIAL REPORT)

#### Corrective Action Plan Follow-up Reviews – 1 report

- Red Lake #18 Chapter – initial follow-up review

#### Goals for FY2024 First Quarter (planned/ongoing projects and activities)

- Navajo Rehabilitation Trust Fund Special Review
- Special Duty/Hazard Pay Special Review
- Baahaali Chapter Internal Audit
- Whippoorwill Chapter Internal Audit
- Office of the Speaker Special Review
- Division of Public Safety 3rd corrective action plan follow-up review
- Revisit for the Crownpoint Chapter LGA certification review
- Outsource more chapter audits and performance audits of Navajo Nation depts/programs; will need to issue various request for proposals to utilize consulting budget

### Issues/Recommendations

- Continue to recruit applicants to fill six (6) vacant positions including the Auditor General, three Associate Auditor positions and two Auditor positions; these are key positions for completing audits; will continue to advertise and recruit as diligently as possible.
- Due to the vacancies, our office is challenged in completing the targeted number of projects with limited resources. In order to meet our performance goals, we will have to continue to outsource more audits but that also depends on our consulting budget.
- Efforts to amend our plan of operation and internal procedures manual are ongoing as both documents have not been revised in several years; both documents need revisions to ensure consistency and compliance with audit



standards. The priority is to revise the internal procedures manual first to facilitate amendments to the plan of operation. Our office will be working with the Budget and Finance Committee on these amendments.

- A handful of chapters continue to ignore our requests for their MIP backups each quarter due to various reasons; we continue to maintain a repository of chapter financial data via the backups.
- Continue to assist the Administrative Service Centers on chapter matters.
- Continue to work with the Wells Fargo Bank to address chapter banking issues such as the need for credit cards but there are no existing policies and procedures.

## Office of Government Development Fiscal Year 2023 – Fourth Quarter Report Summary

### Contact:

P.O. Box 220, Window Rock, AZ, 86515, (928) 871-7214

The Commission on Navajo Government Development (CNGD) is a task specific entity created by the Navajo Nation Council with quasi-independent authority to accomplish the Navajo people's Government Reform Project. CNGD's purpose is to institute a government reform proposal to be approved by the Navajo people by a referendum vote to create an accountable and responsible government. The purpose of the Commission and Office is to review and evaluate all aspects of existing government structure of the Navajo Nation including laws, rules and regulations, practices, functions, goals and objectives of the central government; and to develop recommendations and proposals for alternative forms of government, including chapter governments for consideration and possible adoption by the Navajo People through a referendum or initiative vote.

The Office of Government Development (ONGD) was established for the purpose of assisting the Commission on Navajo Government Development with administrative tasks and by conducting research, analysis and making proposals for governmental changes that are necessary to ensure an accountable and responsible government to the Navajo People. The Office is tasked with assisting the CNGD draft the Government Reform Proposal and seek the Navajo people's involvement and input into the Government Reform Proposal with public informational meetings and direct communication. ONGD is also charged with developing proposals for alternative forms of local governance and empowerment.

### Accomplishments from FY2023 Fourth Quarter

In addition to ongoing research and operation of ONGD, the following outlines the accomplishments for the Fourth Quarter of Fiscal Year 2022-2023:

- **Program Performance Criteria Goal Statements: Work on the Navajo Government Reform Project**
  1. Continuing to develop the Diyin Nohookaa' Dine'e Bi Bee haz'aanii Bitsi Silei as part of the Navajo Government Reform Project.
  2. Presenting the history of Navajo Nation Government, the history of CNGD & ONGD, Navajo Comprehensive Government Reform Survey, and current governmental issues.
- **Draft the government reform proposal (measure by articles, sections)**
  1. Drafted government reform proposals for leadership roles.
  2. Local Governance Section is currently being analyzed and discussed by ONGD & CNGD.
  3. Creating and fielding the Essential Attributes of a Democracy presentation as further public engagement.
- **Empower the Navajo people by proposing amendments to Initiative procedures**
  1. Office submitted a legislative packet to the Office of Speaker and Department of Justice on August 30th, requesting her to sponsor the Legislation to amend Title 11, the Initiative section of the code in the 25th Navajo Nation Council.



- **Public Engagements regarding Navajo Government Reform Project**

1. Received and fulfilled request by Rock Springs Chapter to make a presentation for the chapter summer youth employees on July 18th.
2. ONGD Staff developed social media content pertaining to the symbolism and history of the Navajo Nation's government.
3. ONGD Staff and Alex Zhao, Statistical Research Analyst, developed and finalized the Navajo Comprehensive Government Reform survey for summer 2023.
  - a. Surveyed Locations:
    - i. Council Chambers During Summer Session
    - ii. Kayenta Indigenous Rural Summit
    - iii. Kayenta Flea Market
    - iv. Ganado Flea Market
    - v. Window Rock Flea Market
    - vi. Shiprock Flea Market
    - vii. Window Rock Flea Market
    - viii. Gallup Flea Market
    - 1x. Dilkon Flea Market
    - x. Twin Arrows Chapter Training Event
    - xi. Tuba City Flea Market
    - xii. Lechee Flea Market
    - xiii. Page Flea Market
    - xiv. Council Chambers During Code Talker Day
    - xv. Tsaile During DC College Commission Recruitment
    - xvi. Chinle
    - xvii. Ramah
    - xviii. Crownpoint
    - xix. Navajo Nation Fair
    - xx. Dine Local Governance Summit
4. Saturday, August 26th Eastern Agency Council Meeting at Whiterock Chapter where Director and Commissioner Morgan attended. Director presented the Government Reform Project.
5. September 7th & 8th, during the Navajo Nation Fair the Office participated as a booth and provided attendees information on the Office and Commission, survey, education materials, and activities for all age groups in the form of crosswords.

- **Develop proposals for alternative forms of central and chapter government**

1. Friday, August 25th, the Commission on Navajo Government Development hosted a Special Meeting focused on the Dine Local Governance Summit Breakout Session Protocol & discussion on the working document in Executive Session.
2. September 14th, Dine Local Governance Summit was a very in-demand event and representative of 66 chapters. Registration was opened on August 8th and reached the initial 200 capacity by August 26th (18 days). Accepting 20 additional registrations, official registration was closed on August 29th (21 days). Registration had 77/1 IO (70%) Chapters registered for the event, the Office will be sharing a Summit Report soon.
3. Analysts working on the Dine Local Governance Summit Report will analyze breakout room discussion on the future of Dine local governance.





## Office of Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission Fiscal Year 2023 – Fourth Quarter Report Summary

### Contacts:

Dr. Jennifer R. Denetdale, PhD., Chairperson Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission

Mr. Leonard Gorman, Executive Director Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission

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### SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE FOURTH QUARTER

The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission continues to address many significant issues this reporting period. Staff took part in all weekly staff meetings, conducted intakes on new cases, rendered follow up services to assigned cases and performed office duties associated with administrative matters. Staff also took part in attending the community policing evening meetings with the Winslow Police Department in July and August 2023. In spite of the investigator position not filled NNHRC met its program performance goals. Ms. Nicole Juan Administrative Assistant returned to the office after several weeks off. With her presences the FY 24 budget was completed and submitted as required. To ensure all performance measures are met, office staff have taken on additional workload. The Commission met one time in July of 2023. A brief synopsis of the major activities conducted by this office are as follows.

1. New Mexico Redistricting Task Force: As a member of the New Mexico Redistricting Task Force, the Office participates in the task force meetings regularly. The issue is that the next redistricting maps must be developed and approved by an independent redistricting commission. An option under consideration is to continue having the New Mexico legislature appoint members, as is the case now. The task force has reviewed various options regarding the structure of an independent commission but the common concern is that the 2021 citizen redistricting commission did not have an indigenous person on the team and that a significant proportion of the commissioners were from the Albuquerque area. This Office has the responsibility to usher ways that indigenous governments can support the proposal that is intended to be introduced in the 2024 legislative session.

2. United States Census: The Office continued to work with the Navajo Land Department, Office of the President and Vice President and Navajo Nation Rural Addressing Authority to engage the United States Census Department in preparation for the 2030 decennial census. The Navajo Nation continues to express concerns over the fact that the US Census Department had not incorporated the Navajo Nation chapter political boundaries into the census block lines, which are used to draw voting districts. The US

Census Department acknowledges the fact that it has faltered in assuring that the proper Navajo chapter boundaries are part of the census block lines. The Navajo team continues to dialogue with the Census Department. The Office is involved in the meetings because it is well aware of the census data as it pertains to redistricting. The next scheduled U.S. Census meeting is scheduled on September 26, 2023.

3. Interfacing with San Juan County Utah: The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission has a settlement agreement with San Juan County, Utah. This agreement ends in December 2024. One critical issue consistently raised



by the county is that the settlement agreement does not pertain to elections in municipalities such as Bluff and Blanding communities. However, the Navajo team continues to impress on the county that it has to accommodate Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act because it is a covered county under the census report. The county reported to the Office that there was a scheduled primary election in September 2023 but it was canceled due to a candidate withdrawing. The group focus is to achieve compliance with Section 203 for the November 2023 general election.

4. **San Juan County NM Litigation:** The Office and its Commission were assigned the task of representing the Navajo Nation and Navajo people during the 2021 redistricting period. The Commission was successful in working with the New Mexico legislature with adopting the legislative redistricting plans. However, the Commission had to file a lawsuit against the San Juan County Commission to ensure Navajo citizens are equally protected under the Voting Rights Act. Throughout the last quarter of FY 23, attorneys representing the Commission negotiated a settlement agreement with the county. On September 8th, a settlement agreement was reached whereby the information was shared with the US District Court magistrate judge. The Commission and five (5) plaintiffs came to an agreement with the county that improves Native American Voting Representation in District 1 to 74.43% And District 2 to 69.77% for the county commission seats in San Juan County. This lawsuit and the time commitment to ensure New Mexico Navajo's voting rights are protected took a substantial amount of time and dedication by all parties involved. We appreciate the five Navajo plaintiffs who weathered the arduous meeting schedules to secure meaningful election/voting results in San Juan County.

5. **San Juan County Utah Treatment of Students:** The Commission continued to work with complaining parties regarding concerns and issues regarding the administration of the Monument Valley High School at Oljato, Arizona. The office met with the San Juan County School District Superintendent and the Deputy Superintendent to discuss the district's school budget and how funds are appropriated and spend at the schools within the district. Close attention was provided to federal funds earmarked for Indian education purposes and support. The office has not completed its review of the report provided by San Juan County administration.

6. **Engaging the University of Arizona College of Law:** With assistance from the Office of Legislative Counsel, the Office transmitted an agreement to engage the University of Arizona College of Law ("UofA") to advise the Commission on the responsibilities and obligations of the United States to protect the human rights of the Navajo people. This contract is currently going through the 164 review and when completed will appropriate \$30,000. to UofA for ongoing legal assistance with elevating this matter with the United Nations and other peripheral UN instruments.

7. **Washington DC Meetings:** On September 12, 2023 the office met with representatives of the United States Postal Services, Senator Ben Ray Lujan and senior policy analyst and representatives from the Lawyers Committee of Civil Rights under the Law. The common issue shared with the above parties was the aspect of adequate postal service delivery and services in rural Arizona and some parts of New Mexico. Under the Ten Year plan the USPS has adopted, many of the tasks, objectives and goals will not work on the Navajo Nation. It is clear that while postal services are quasi private corporation and government entity, there lack of services on the Navajo Nation is worrisome. The fact that postal services across the United States is deep in debt the solution for rural areas is to lease postal services to local entities who operate solely on their own hours, service priorities and resources that are convenient to them is concerning. The public's need for adequate and efficient postal services are not a priority for the Contractual Postal Unit (CPU).

8. **Meeting with the US Department of Justice- Indian Working Group:** In this reporting period two in-person meetings were attended by staff of the Office of the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission. The first meeting occurred on August 15, 2023 where the Office accepted an invitation to attend the swearing in ceremony of Rosemarie



Hidalgo as the new Violence Against Women National Director by Attorney General Merrick Garland. Office staff also took time to meet with the chair of the USDOJ Indian Working Group to finalize topics for the upcoming September 13th meeting. Office staff and the Speaker of the 25th Navajo Nation Council attended the annual USDOJ September 13th, 2023 to discuss several matters that concern complaints filed in the office. The Memorandum of Understanding that was signed ten years ago between the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission and the USDOJ - Indian working group was commemorated by the exchanged of certificates that recognized past accomplishments and reaffirmed the commitment to continue working another ten years. Issues that were covered at this meeting included the following topics; School employment issues at Monument Valley School, Protecting Voting Rights (NMHB4), U.S.P.S. Services in rural Arizona, Employment matters with Salt River Project, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples and the Arizona Shelter Scam concerning Navajo citizens. The Office will continue to coordinate the complex issues that derived from the complaints with the Indian working group.

9. Complaints: Six (6) new complaints were received for this reporting period. Of these cases three involved deceitful automobile purchases. At the close of this reporting period a total of forty-two cases are open for investigation. A total of fifty-five follow ups occurred with all complaining parties. Five cases were closed. Two cases were not opened for investigation after meeting with the complaining party.

10. Public Information Activities: The Commission held one regular meeting during the fourth quarter. The August Commission fail to reach a quorum and the September meeting was canceled to accommodate a settlement hearing. Meetings were broadcast by KTNN through public service announcements, press release and through notices posted on the office website. The PIO is taking the lead to plan for the Indigenous language seminar that is posed to take place next year. An environmental scan is underway to assess potential attendees, presenters, location and funders. Other logistics timelines are also under construction for this seminar. Toward the lateral part of September, the PIO assisted in the development and eventual release of a radio ad on KTNN to solicit Navajo citizens who have experience problems with AAMCO in Flagstaff, AZ. Additionally, the PIO provided information to interested participants at a Resources Fair on the campus of UNM in Gallup, New Mexico. House Bill 4 ("HB4") public information is still under review. The public information surrounding this bill is a joint effort with the NMACLU. Aside from the projects above, the PIO also assisted with the management of new cases filed in the office. Finally, the ongoing day to day operations of interfacing with public and the production of media ads, human rights material and other public education documents remain a steady and active part of the day-to-day operations.

## RESOLUTIONS

No Resolutions were considered or passed this reporting period.

## CONDITIONS OF APPROPRIATIONS

NNHRC has no conditions of appropriations that are to be addressed.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Budget Form 2 is attached for this reporting cycle. All performance measures were met.

## UPCOMING QUARTERLY INITIATIVES

The NNHRC staff will continue to address complaints, improve social media and public information, complete performance measures and perform duties essential to service delivery and accountability.





## Navajo Nation Labor Commission Fiscal Year 2023 – Fourth Quarter Report Summary

### Contact:

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### Accomplishments for 4th quarter of FY 2023:

- Efficient use of allocated funds, NNLC held (20) hearings by teleconference or Zoom or in person with counsels of record and parties.
- NNLC and program timely processed (02) appealed NNLC cases to Navajo Nation Supreme Court.
- NNLC program timely processed (20) formally filed complaint by mail, fax & email.
- NNLC timely adjudicated/ settlement conferences (20) NPEA cases.
- NNLC and program timely closed and issued (17) continuance orders.
- NNLC & program timely issued and mailed (600) subpoenas and notice of hearings & NNLC Rules by certified mail, first class, facsimile and email to counsels of record or parties.
- NNLC will continue to adjudicate (85) pending NPEA cases.
- NNLC program made (04) audio copies at parties' request.
- Amended NNLC Rules of Procedure effective April 19, 2021
- NNLC staff continues to participate in 25th NNC and Committee leadership meetings
- Section Two: Goals for 1st Quarter of FY 2024:
- NN Presidential and HEHS appointment of NNLC membership per CJY- 42-16. Continue to refer candidate(s) to appointing authority.
- Efficient use of allocated funds and timely processed appealed NNLC case(s).
- NNLC & program will timely adjudicate NPEA cases by teleconf., Zoom, and authorized in person hearing(s) from July 08, 2021.
- NNLC & program will timely process formally filed NPEA complaint(s) and/or petition(s).
- NNLC & program will timely issue and close out NPEA cases.
- NNLC & program will continue review and amend NNLC Rules of Procedure.
- NNLC to assist and complete proposed amendments to NNLC Plan of Operation
- NNLC & program will continue to preserve substantial rights of all employees and employers in accordance to Navajo Law.

### Issues/Recommendation(s):

- NNLC lacks one (1) NNC Health, Education and Human Services Committee duly appointment and (2) Navajo Nation Presidential appointment. Vacancy been advertised.
- NNLC will continue to expedite office renovation & funding per COVID- 19 guidance
- Continue need of sanitation supplies re: COVID-19 issues
- Need eEquipment for audio Zoom NNLC hearings
- NNLC & office updating NNLC Plan of operation, Honorable Otto Tso processing legislation
- Continuing compliance with Federal American Disability Act

# 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY 1923-2023



*Honoring 100 years of culture, history,  
and leadership*

