



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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Health, Education, and Human Services Committee receives update on wage adjustments, policy updates, and hiring enhancements



Department of Personnel Management presented an update before the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee (HEHSC) received a comprehensive update from the Navajo Nation Department of Personnel Management (DPM) on key initiatives aimed at enhancing hiring practices, implementing wage adjustments, and modernizing the personnel policies manual.

“Today’s discussion underscores our commitment to improving workforce compensation and streamlining processes that directly impact the livelihoods of our Navajo Nation employees,” stated HEHSC Chair Vince R. James. “It is essential that we ensure wage adjustments, fair pay practices, and efficient recruitment mechanisms for the betterment of our community.”

Reycita Toddy, interim director of the Division of Human Resources, led the presentation, outlining DPM’s efforts to improve efficiency and the overall employee experience.

Toddy reported that DPM has posted 727 positions, facilitated the creation of 1,335 applicant portals, and received over 1,100 applications. To enhance user support, the department’s IT and recruitment teams have addressed technical issues and improved applicant assistance.

Efforts to improve onboarding were highlighted, including a pilot intake process involving six departments, aimed at reducing delays and ensuring prompt payroll processing for new hires. This initiative seeks to eliminate traditional Personnel Action Forms (PAFs) and is expected to expand to three additional departments by December 2024.

DPM is also prioritizing fair compensation by aligning the minimum wage with Arizona's standards, raising it to \$14.35 per hour. A four percent general wage adjustment took effect on Oct. 1, 2024, for Fiscal Year 2025 to address cost-of-living increases.

Revisions to the Navajo Nation Personnel Policies Manual were also discussed. DPM has been working closely with the Department of Justice to finalize updates that will soon be presented to the HEHSC. Collaboration with the Disabilities Advisory Committee has also been key to incorporating accessibility enhancements.

"We continue to prioritize closing system gaps, from wage adjustments to hiring procedures," said Council Delegate Helena Nez Begay. "Our collective efforts are aimed at fostering transparency and efficiency to provide better human resource support and improved policies for everyone."

Delegates, including Dr. Andy Nez and Helena Nez Begay, emphasized the importance of a thorough review of policy drafts and sought clarity on timelines for wage adjustments for specific roles.

Toddy confirmed plans for a detailed review session and explained DPM's coordination with departments across the Navajo Nation to ensure effective communication and implementation of wage increases, policy revisions, and technological upgrades.

Key departmental collaboration was also highlighted, with DPM working alongside the Office of the Controller, Division of General Services, Department of Information Technology, and Office of Management and Budget to develop a Microsoft-based HR and financial management system. This integration will improve data management, budgeting, and tribal enrollment functionalities, increasing accuracy and efficiency across the Navajo Nation's administrative operations.

"We remain dedicated to supporting the Navajo Nation's workforce with streamlined hiring processes, competitive wages, and updated policies," said Toddy. "Our team is committed to ensuring these advancements serve the needs of our employees and strengthen the Nation as a whole."

The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee recommended that DPM continue engaging with the Navajo Nation Council to ensure these improvements reflect community needs and maintain open communication with Navajo Nation leadership. The Navajo Nation Council remains committed to supporting these initiatives, fostering a more efficient and responsive system to support the workforce of the Navajo Nation.

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