



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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Naabik'iyáti' Committee discusses the budget, recruitment, and future leadership plans of the Navajo Nation's Youth Advisory Council



Office of Miss Navajo Nation Program Supervisor Carletta Benally affirms the Navajo Nation Youth Advisory Committee is actively engaging in leadership opportunities.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The Naabik'iyáti' Committee received a report on the status, budget, and recruitment efforts presented by the Office of Miss Navajo Nation which highlighted the progress and challenges in advancing the Navajo Nation Youth Advisory Council (NNYAC).

Program Supervisor, Carletta Benally, presented the financial breakdown and emphasized that the funds are exclusively for youth-related activities, including office supplies and printing services. For fiscal year 2024, NNYAC's budget was \$50,000, of which only 10% was expended. She also explained that a budget transfer was necessary to create two proposed positions: a coordinator and a chaperone for the NNYAC.

Delegates discussed the effectiveness of the advisory council and its delivery under the executive branch. Some advocated for moving the NNYAC under the legislative branch to provide more oversight and support.

"This Youth Advisory Council has been under the executive branch for years, but progress has been minimal," said Health, Education, and Human Services Vice Chair Germaine Simonson. "Our goal is to create a mentorship program where one day we can see Navajo youth serving as legislators and gaining firsthand knowledge of our government."

Ms. Benally stated that creating the coordinator position will provide guidance and support to the 12 members of the NNYAC, ensuring they are actively engaged in leadership opportunities, including public hearings and nonprofit events.

“The chaperone will ensure the safety of unaccompanied minors during council events and travels,” said Benally.

However, delegates raised concerns about whether the current budget could support these new positions. “The fiscal year 2024 budget and the \$25,000 allocated for fiscal year 2025 won’t sustain these positions. Is this part of your unmet needs request, or how do you anticipate funding them?” asked Delegate Dr. Andy Nez.

Vice Chair Cherilyn Yazzie inquired about the outreach plan, stating, “How many applicants are there, and what is your strategy to gain more interest? We want to ensure every young person on the Nation is aware of this opportunity.”

Recruitment remains a priority for the Office of Miss Navajo Nation. Three applications have been received, but more applicants are needed to fulfill the 12-member council. Benally noted a soft launch of the NNYAC website and social media outreach generated some interest, but a larger media blitz is planned. “We’re working with Navajo Nation TV and Film to create video content that will better explain the purpose of the NNYAC and attract more applicants,” she said.

Benally also announced the launch of the official NNYAC website where applications can be downloaded. However, some delegates pointed out technical issues with the website. “If you can send the direct link to council staff, we can share it with our constituents,” suggested Delegate Dr. Nez.

Delegate Nathan Notah emphasized the need for better visibility and stakeholder involvement. He asked Benally what is being done to advertise it.

Benally acknowledged these concerns and pledged to improve communication with stakeholders, including the Office of Diné Youth, while continuing to recruit youth leaders through school events, radio segments, and community outreach.

Despite setbacks, Ms. Benally reaffirmed her office’s commitment to the NNYAC. “Our youth need stability and a platform where they can grow as leaders. This council is vital for fostering future Navajo leaders who will one day serve as legislators, judges, and even president,” she said.

The Naabik’íyáti’ Committee voted 8–5 in favor of receiving the report from the Office of Miss Navajo Nation on status of the NNYAC.

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