



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

# 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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## **Naabik'iyáti' Committee confirms membership of Navajo Nation Youth Advisory Council**



**Members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council were joined by the 2026-2028 Navajo Nation Youth Advisory Council after Legislation No. 0051-26 was approved.**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — On Thursday, the Naabik'iyáti' Committee approved Legislation No. 0051-26, confirming 12 young leaders to serve on the Navajo Nation Youth Advisory Council (NNYAC), welcoming new advocates that were selected from a competitive pool of 41 applicants to represent Navajo youth across the Nation's five agencies and beyond.

"Our youth are the future of the Navajo Nation, and their voices deserve to be heard at every level of governance," said Legislation sponsor Speaker Crystalyne Curley. "I am proud to support these 12 outstanding young leaders as they step into this role with purpose, determination, and a deep commitment to their communities. The 25th Navajo Nation Council stands fully behind them as they begin this important journey."

The NNYAC is a government entity within the Legislative Branch of the Navajo Nation, established to ensure that the voices of young Diné people are formally heard within the legislative process.

Under resolutions CS-40-25 and CJY-19-25, the NNYAC was moved from the Office of the President and Vice President to the Legislative Branch — a structural shift designed to strengthen the advisory council's role and effectiveness in shaping policy.

Members serve two-year terms and must be enrolled members of the Navajo Nation between the ages of 14 and 24.

Representing the Central Navajo Agency are Vydell Willie of Round Rock, Ariz., who is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Indian Country Criminal Justice at Northern Arizona University, and Aryiah James of Wheatfields, Ariz., who is working toward an associate degree in business administration and hopes to become an entrepreneur.

Representing the Fort Defiance Agency are Starr Joe of Fort Defiance, Ariz., a senior at Window Rock High School involved in youth leadership initiatives across the Navajo Nation and Arizona, and Makyle Dan of Fort Defiance, who is committed to empowering Navajo youth and promoting cultural preservation.

Representing the Northern Navajo Agency are Daelyn Benally of Tec Nos Pos, N.M., a post-baccalaureate student at Arizona State University focusing on food justice and sustainable food systems, and Tewakeedah Martin of Montezuma Creek, Utah, a U.S. Army veteran and Miss Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial Queen 2025–2026 who advocates for Native veterans and youth leadership.

Representing the Western Navajo Agency are Yanabah Smith of Oljato-Monument Valley, Utah, who is dedicated to strengthening opportunities for Navajo youth while preserving Diné culture, and Kaya Dickson of Kaibeto, Ariz., a Northern Arizona University graduate who works with the Community Assistance Teams of Flagstaff assisting unsheltered individuals.

Representing the Eastern Navajo Agency are Nikko Yazzie of Church Rock, N.M., who encourages Navajo youth to connect more deeply with Diné arts and crafts, and Kendri Kinlacheeny of Smith Lake, N.M., a sophomore at McKinley Academy with interests in politics and psychology.

Two at-large members representing Navajo youth living off the reservation also join the council. Kaylee Bahe of Piñon, Ariz., is a student at Tufts University pursuing a path toward becoming an Indigenous rights attorney, while Louvannina Tsoosie of Tohlakai, N.M., recently earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Colorado Denver and plans to pursue a master's degree in counseling.

The Naabik'íyáti' Committee approved Legislation 0051-26 under the consent agenda with a vote of 13 in favor and five opposed. The Naabik'íyáti' Committee has final authority over this legislation.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council extends its gratitude to all 41 young people who applied for these positions. Youth who wish to remain engaged in the policymaking process are encouraged to attend Navajo Nation Youth Advisory Council meetings and participate in ongoing conversations about the future of the Navajo Nation.

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