



North Carolina

Commission of Indian Affairs

Annual Report 2023-2024



NC DOA
Department of Administration
**Commission of
Indian Affairs**

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Our Mission

The mission of the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs is to instill a positive vision for American Indians by preserving cultural identity while promoting and advocating for the rights, beliefs and opportunities which impact the quality of life.

Message from the Executive Director

The NC Commission of Indian Affairs advocates for the rights of American Indians and provides programs and services that enhance the lives of North Carolina tribal communities across the state. Since the initial appropriation from the North Carolina General Assembly in 1971, Indian Affairs has expanded its reach, offering programs that support education, social, and economic development.

This report provides a comprehensive summary of the division's work, programs, activities, and accomplishments during the 2023-24 state fiscal year. With \$9,485,283 in funding and continued support from local, state, and federal agencies, the Commission of Indian Affairs achieved its intended goals and objectives. These accomplishments were also made possible with support from North Carolina's eight state-recognized tribes and four Urban Indian organizations, each of which is represented on the Commission.

On behalf of the Commission and Indian Affairs, we thank Governor Roy Cooper, the North Carolina General Assembly, Administration Secretary Pamela B. Cashwell, North Carolina's Indian tribes, the Urban Indian Associations, and the residents of North Carolina for supporting our efforts throughout the year.

With Warm Regards,

Gregory A. Richardson
Executive Director
North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs





About the Commission

The Commission of Indian Affairs is comprised of one representative from each of the eight state or federally recognized Indian tribes and four Urban Indian organizations, five state officials, and one appointee each by the Speaker of the NC House of Representatives and the President of the Senate. Ex-officio members include one representative each from three other organizations: the North Carolina Native American Youth Organization, the North Carolina Native American Council on Higher Education (which is currently inactive), and an ad hoc representative from the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources State Archaeology.

Housed within the North Carolina Department of Administration (pursuant to G.S. 143A - 6(b) and (c)), the Commission employs an executive director to lead the day-to-day responsibilities and business of the Commission. The executive director, who serves at the pleasure of the Commission membership, employs staff to oversee and manage programs and provide administrative support to the NC Commission of Indian Affairs. The director must discharge his or her responsibilities in accordance with the administrative, budget, and management policies of the North Carolina Department of Administration and guidelines associated with state and federal programs administered by the Commission. The director reports to the secretary of the North Carolina Department of Administration with respect to the Commission's administrative functions and the Commission's membership concerning the work of the Commission.

The Commission held four quarterly meetings in September and December 2023 and March and June 2024. During each meeting, Commission members addressed issues concerning the needs of North Carolina's American Indian citizens and received reports from standing committees, the executive director, and Commission staff.

Commission of Indian Affairs Members

Chairman: Reverend Ricky Burnett, Lumbee Indian Tribe

Vice Chairman: Craig D. McMillian, Speaker of the House Appointee

Secretary-Treasurer: Nadine F. Patrick, Waccamaw Siouan Tribe

Members

- David Elliott, designee for Secretary Pamela B. Cashwell, NC Department of Administration
- Betty Marrow-Taylor, designee for Secretary Machel Baker Sanders, NC Department of Commerce
- Debra Farrington, designee for Secretary Kody H. Kinsley, NC Department of Health & Human Services
- Sharon Martin, designee for Secretary Elizabeth S. Biser, NC Department of Environmental Quality
- Julie Ryan, designee for Commissioner Josh Dobson, NC Department of Labor
- Gerald Goolsby, President Pro-Tem Appointee
- Craig D. McMillian, Speaker of the House Appointee
- Isabell Freeman Elliott and Lenora Locklear, Coharie Indian Tribe
- Gladys Hunt and Helen Cook, Cumberland County Association for Indian People
- Joshua Welch and Carolyn West, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
- Sheila Kay Wilson and DeVane Burnette Sr., Guilford Native American Association
- Alfred Ray Richardson and Pamela Sunshine Richardson, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe
- Vernanda (Vee) Oxendine, Larece Hunt and Ricky Burnette, Lumbee Indian Tribe
- Constance Mitchell, Meherrin Indian Tribe
- Walter Baucom and Greg Bryant, Metrolina Native American Association
- Dorothy Stewart Yates, Sappony Indian Tribe
- William Anthony (Tony) Hayes, Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation
- Danny Bell, Triangle Native American Association
- Elton Ray Jacobs and Nadine F. Patrick, Waccamaw-Siouan Indian Tribe

Ex-Officio Members

- State Official Ex-Officio for Cultural Resource Advisor John Mintz, Chief Archaeologist
- Ariel Locklear and Korbyn Walton, NC Native American Youth Organization (NCNAYO) co-chair, designees
- Joshua Lamar Richardson, NC Native American Council on Higher Education, designee

Funding Summary

Program Revenue	State Appropriations	Grant	Federal Funding	Other	Total
NC Commission of Indian Affairs	\$713,750	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$713,750
State Recognition	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
Native Survivors of Human Trafficking	\$0	\$0	\$228,799	\$0	\$228,799
NC Tobacco User Survey Grant (through NC Dept. of Health & Human Services)	\$0	\$195,670	\$0	\$0	\$195,670
Violence Against Women Act	\$0	\$199,999	\$0	\$0	\$199,999
Family Violence Prevention & Services Act (through NC Council for Women & Youth Involvement)	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$100,000
Indian Child Welfare (NC Dept. of Health & Human Services)	\$6,681	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,681
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act	\$0	\$0	\$376,895	\$0	\$376,895
Children's Advocacy Program (Donations for Indian Child Welfare Gathering)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,045.55	\$3,045.55
Victims of Crime Act (through Governor's Crime Commission)	\$0	\$138,782	\$0	\$0	\$138,782
Action Partnership (through NC Dept. of Health & Human Services)	\$0	\$47,541	\$0	\$0	\$47,541
Funds from Land Sale	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$24,067.58	\$24,067.58
Low Income Energy Assistance Program (through NC Dept. of Health & Human Services)	\$0	\$87,736	\$0	\$0	\$87,736
Housing & Urban Development	\$0	\$0	\$4,382,870	\$0	\$4,396,633.96
Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program)	\$0	\$0	\$2,705,792	\$75,138.96	\$2,786,169.93
Mainstream	\$0	\$0	\$151,255	\$0	\$151,255
Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing	\$0	\$0	\$3,258	\$0	\$3,258
Total					\$9,485,283.02

*Chart includes carry forward funds
+ Earnings from HUD

Program Update

The Commission of Indian Affairs' programs focus on developing partnerships and collaborations with local, state and federal resources to develop and implement services for American Indians. Programs address a variety of needs faced by senior citizens, veterans, families, children and students, as well as those native residents experiencing life-changing circumstances including victimization.

American Indian Adult Tobacco Survey

In July 2023, the NC Commission of Indian Affairs officially launched the NC American Indian Adult Tobacco Survey (NCAIATS) to gain a better understanding of commercial tobacco use among North Carolina tribal communities. Funding and tribal participation ensured that the program had a successful start in gathering critical data on commercial tobacco, nicotine dependence, and cessation behaviors by tribal affiliation. In January 2024, the NCAIATS program increased its staff from two part-time employees who worked solely in the Coharie and Waccamaw-Siouan tribes to eight part-time specialists covering all eight state-recognized tribes.

NCAIATS staff are required to complete basic human research training from the Wake Forest School of Medicine and NC Department of Administration cyber-security training before beginning community outreach. The NCAIATS Team then promoted and administered the survey at multiple events, powwows, health fairs and conferences such as the annual NC Unity Conference. The goal was to reach 2,000 survey participants with 60% participation from all North Carolina tribes. By late May 2024, the NCAIATS program had 2,300 completed surveys.

The program received an additional \$20,000 through a COVID-19 disparities grant from NCDHHS, which extended it from the end of May 2024 through September 2024. A second COVID-19 disparities grant (\$195,000) further extends survey promotion and participant recruitment through September 2025. Additionally, funding from the V-Foundation Juul Settlement will help create a new youth component that engages tribal youth in talking circles on commercial tobacco use and nicotine dependence. The goal is to encourage younger tobacco users to break the habit to reduce the incidence of cardiovascular disease and lung cancer within tribal communities. Program staff plan to reach more than 200 youth participants.

NCAIATS program data and achievements will be available in Fall 2024.

American Indian Workforce Development Program

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) helps job seekers access employment, education, training and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Approved by

Congress in 2014, the WIOA Section 166 program is a federal grant program dedicated to serving the employment needs of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

To meet the needs of North Carolina's American Indian population, the WIOA program serves 63 counties associated with native communities that comprise of the eight state and federally recognized tribes.

The WIOA program strives to reach and serve as many American Indian participants as possible. In FY 2023-24, the WIOA program served 98 participants, surpassing the target goal of 76 participants (an increase of 28 new enrollments). The WIOA program director and three program coordinators worked diligently to promote the program's services such as financial help with tuition, books and fees, and help with career counseling, job searches and resume preparation. Staff attended in-person community events, as well as webinars and virtual meetings. The WIOA program team also participated in the 43rd Annual National Indian and Native American Employment and Training Conference in Mashantucket, Connecticut and the NC Works Partnership Conference in Greensboro, North Carolina.

This year, \$376, 895 in WIOA program funds helped several American Indian students ages 18 and up with employment training needs. Eight program participants graduated with degrees in the fields of dental radiology, dental assistance, computer programming, accounting and finance, phlebotomy, veterinary assistance, and commercial driving.

The WIOA program continues to accept new applicants and program coordinators compile waiting lists as they prepare for a new grant cycle.

Economic Development Program

In fiscal year 2023-24, the Economic Development Program launched two new initiatives to help build network connections and resources among the American Indian business community. The Commission of Indian Affairs launched the **American Indian Business Survey** in November 2023 to better understand and support the needs of the tribal business community. Business owners who are enrolled members of North Carolina American Indian tribes were encouraged to participate. Once they had completed the survey, the business owners were listed in an online directory and sent notifications about training opportunities, events, activities and potential funding sources. The 12-question survey was easily accessible via a QR code; it was shared at tribal events and on Indian Affairs' communication.

In January 2024, Indian Affairs introduced the **THRIVE newsletter** as an economic development digest for the American Indian community. The quarterly **THRIVE** publication (Tribal Heritage Reshaping Indian Ventures Economically) is designed to foster economic growth and empower American Indian communities with essential information and resources to help them succeed.

The **Supporting Undergraduate Native Students (SUNS)** Program helps foster generational wealth by making college dreams a reality for American Indian students across the state. The SUNS Program helps income-eligible students to enroll full-time in an accredited North Carolina-based community college or university. Each fall and spring semester, the program provides scholarships, incentive payments, and supportive services to help students achieve

their educational goals. Scholarships cover tuition, fees, books, supplies, equipment, and uniforms for enrolled classes. The SUNS program is funded through the NC Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Economic Opportunity's annual Community Services Block Grant, which provided \$47, 541 during the 2023-24 fiscal year. Program funding supported 36 college students, including nine graduates (listed here), during the fiscal year.

Spring 2024

- Colin Bryce Freeman, AA (Academic Honor's List), Cape Fear Community College
- Hailey Hammonds, BS in Chemistry (Magna Cum Laude), NC State University
- Cyrus Jacobs, BS in Chemistry (Summa Cum Laude), NC State University
- Emily Jacobs, AAS in Accounting and Finance, Robeson Community College
- Keilah Locklear, BS in Business Administration, UNC-Pembroke
- Isabelle Mejia, BS in Communication Studies (Cum Laude), Appalachian State University

Fall 2023

- Mackenzie Carr, BS in Exercise Science (Magna Cum Laude), UNC-Wilmington
- Mercedes Yanick, BS in Biology, Biology/Chemistry, UNC-Pembroke
- Caleb Messer, BS in Construction Management, East Carolina University

Housing Assistance Program

Funded annually with money from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Housing Choice Voucher Program provides affordable, safe and sanitary housing via rental assistance. Subsidized payments are paid directly to each landlord on behalf of the tenant with the amount of assistance determined by each family's income and family size. In FY 2023-24, the Commission of Indian Affairs' Housing Assistance Program added another voucher option and now oversees five distinct voucher services.

- Housing Choice Vouchers provide versatile housing solutions.
- Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Vouchers address veterans' needs.
- Mainstream Vouchers help people under 62 years of age who are disabled.
- Emergency Housing Vouchers offer critical assistance for the homeless and those in domestic violence situations.
- Stability Vouchers support the homeless, survivors of domestic violence, veterans, and other vulnerable groups.

The NC Commission of Indian Affairs received \$4,396,633.96 from HUD to provide housing assistance and utility reimbursement payments for 1,650 eligible low-income families, an increase of nearly 300 families from the previous year. Rental assistance was provided to eligible families in Columbus, Halifax, Hoke, Granville, Person, Sampson and Warren counties.

During the past year, the Commission of Indian Affairs increased partnerships with local and national real estate agencies to broaden the network of participating landlords. The program also improved its strategic outreach, distributing informational packets and collaborating with partners such as Southeastern Integrated Care to reach underserved populations. In just its collaboration with Southeastern Integrated Care alone, the Indian Affairs' Housing Assistance Program achieved 89% representation from the American Indian community.

The division also secured more than \$6 million in funding and is partnering with ERA Live Moore on affordable housing solutions that alleviate financial pressure on agencies and tenants. Plans are underway for an inaugural housing conference that will provide education and resources to prospective program participants and landlords.

The NC Commission of Indian Affairs' Housing Program has made substantial progress in improving housing accessibility through a combination of strategic partnerships, effective funding, proactive outreach and educational initiatives and continues to advocate for accessible housing for all.

Low Income Energy Assistance Program

Funded by the NC Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Social Services through Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) federal grants, this education and outreach program promotes awareness among American Indian communities about potential funding assistance for energy-related household costs. Specifically, LIEAP staff worked to reach eligible American Indian households in Bladen, Columbus, Cumberland, Halifax, Harnett, Sampson and Warren counties. The goal was to ensure that families – especially those with elderly, disabled individuals and/or young children – are informed and encouraged to apply for LIEAP services through county social services departments.

During the 2023-24 fiscal year, staff hosted energy education events in American Indian communities and promoted LIEAP at major tribal events such as the NC Indian Senior Citizens Coalition Conference, NC Indian Unity Conference, NC Museum of History's American Indian Heritage Month Celebration, annual Lumbee Homecoming, various powwows and other community meetings. They also shared program information at churches, community centers and civic and non-profit organizations within designated service counties. The LIEAP program director met with county social services staff to update them on program changes, application deadlines and additional programs and services available to families in need. The LIEAP program director also collaborated with county social services to complete weatherization training and help with food banks in surrounding communities.

Outreach efforts included meetings, phone calls, emails, direct mailings with posters and other educational materials were placed in businesses, churches, community/civic centers and tribal offices across the seven counties. Through these efforts, approximately 6,000 families across the seven-county area received information on LIEAP services and other Indian Affairs' programs.

Tribal Recognition

Since 1976, the NC Commission of Indian Affairs has administered the procedures for state recognition of previously unrecognized American Indian tribes and organizations in North Carolina. This authority is granted under N.C.G.S. 143B-406 and is outlined in Chapter 15 of the North Carolina Administrative Code. A 12-member Recognition Committee, comprised of representatives of each American Indian tribe and urban Indian organization, makes recommendations to the full Commission.

Several tribes have been granted state recognition since then. The Meherrin Tribe of Hertford County was granted state recognition under these procedures in 1986. In 1997, the historical tribal group known as the Indians of Person County had their recognition status reinstated by the North Carolina General Assembly and are now recognized as Sappony. In March 2000, the Commission officially recognized the Raleigh-based urban Indian organization, Triangle Native American Society, Inc.

The Commission received two petitions and/or supporting documentation during this fiscal year. A virtual technical assistance session will be conducted in August 2024 for those groups.

1. **Roanoke-Hatteras Indians of Dare County, NC:** The Commission reviewed documentation and provided technical assistance to the petitioning group, Roanoke-Hatteras Indians of Dare County, NC. Additional information was received from the petitioner in May 2023 and June 2024. An on-site technical assistance session was held in January 2024 in Manteo, NC. The Recognition Committee is reviewing the group's submitted history and genealogies.
2. **Fula American Indian Tribe (Lenoir, NC):** In May 2024, the Commission acknowledged receipt of a formal notice of intent to petition for state recognition from the Fula American Indian Tribe.



Victim Services Program

The Victim Services Program helps and advocates for people experiencing domestic violence, sexual assault or human trafficking by providing resources and referrals to aid those in need.

A casebook database was added this year to help manage victim service cases, track their outcomes and measure successes. This user-friendly interface features customizable workflows, and robust reporting to help streamline data management. In addition to improving internal processes, the program continued to offer direct support to victims, culturally specific workshops, as well as talking circles to address community issues and foster a safe space for healing.

These initiatives and services were made possible with funds provided by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). In fiscal year 2023-24, Indian Affairs' was awarded \$283,000 to support victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking within the American Indian community. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) awarded Indian Affairs' \$200,000 to address the disparity of violence against Indigenous women and provide services that contribute to a safer and more supportive environment. Indian Affairs' was also awarded \$100,000 in grant funding through the Family Violence Prevention Services Act. Funding from this grant will support the continuation and expansion of Victim Service Programs including community outreach and workshops.

With funding and a new case management database, the Victim Service Program will continue making positive impacts to address the unique needs of North Carolina's tribal communities.

Event Highlights

Indian Affairs collaborates with state recognized tribes, external agencies and organizations each year to co-sponsor various activities and events throughout the state. A few key events from the past year are summarized here.

Indian Child Welfare Gathering

The 8th Annual Indian Child Welfare Gathering was held on June 27, 2024. Each year this event brings child service professionals and advocates together to discuss issues and concerns impacting American Indian children.

North Carolina Indian Unity Conference

The 49th Annual North Carolina Indian Unity Conference was held in Charlotte, March 6-8, 2024, and consisted of general sessions, workshops, and an awards banquet. It is easily recognized as one of the largest American Indian conferences in the state.

The annual Unity Conference is sponsored by the United Tribes of North Carolina in collaboration with the Commission, state tribes, and urban organizations. Commission staff

provided audio-visual support, participated in educational sessions and served as presenters and moderators.

North Carolina Indian Youth Unity Conference

Sponsored by the NC Native American Youth Organization (NCNAYO), the North Carolina Indian Youth Unity Conference was held June 21st, 2024, on the campus of UNC-Pembroke. Commission staff provided support, facilitated workshops, and sponsored 22 students for the event. More than 352 youth (ages 14 to 18) from Indian tribes, Urban Indian organizations, and North Carolina's Title VII Indian Programs attended the NCNAYO conference. The event featured workshops on the following topics: pathways to success, making moves and taking action, Indian citizenship, decolonization, Commission of Indian Affairs overview, healthy relationships, government leadership, financial aid and more. A pageant was also held to crown the 2023-2024 Miss NCNAYO. Students were also awarded scholarships, and officers for the upcoming year were elected to serve as NCNAYO representatives for the NC Commission of Indian Affairs.

Tribes and Organizations Represented on the Commission

Membership Tribes	Membership Organizations
Coharie Indian Tribe 7531 N. US Hwy 421 Clinton, NC 28328 Phone (919) 564-6909 Fax (919) 564-2701	Cumberland County Association for Indian People 2173 Downing Road Fayetteville, NC 28301 Phone (910) 483-8442 Fax (910) 483-8742
Eastern Band of Cherokee Nation PO Box 455 Cherokee, NC 28719 Phone (828) 497-2771 Fax (828) 497-7000	Guilford Native American Association PO Box 5623 Greensboro, NC 27435 Phone (919) 273-8686 Fax (919) 272-2925
Haliwa-Saponi Tribe PO Box 99 Hollister, NC 27844 Phone (252) 586-4017 Fax (252) 586-3918	Metrolina Native American Association 8001 N. Tryon Street Charlotte, NC 28262 Phone (704) 926-1524 Fax (704) 347-0888
Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina PO Box 2709 Pembroke, NC 28372 Phone (910) 521-7861 Fax (910) 521-7790	Triangle Native American Society PO Box 26841 Raleigh, NC 27611 Phone (919) 996-9822
Meherrin Tribe PO Box 274 Ahoskie, NC 27910 Phone (919) 209-0934	
Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation PO Box 356 Mebane, NC 27302 Phone (336) 227-4594	
Sappony Indian Tribe PO Box 3265 Roxboro, NC 27573 Phone (434) 585-3352	
Waccamaw Siouan Indian Tribe PO Box 69 Bolton, NC 28423 Phone (910) 655-8778 Fax (910) 655-8779	



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