

INDIAN TIMES NEWSLETTER

North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs



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WHAT IS THE COMMISSION?



The North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs was created in 1971 by the North Carolina General Assembly in response to the requests of concerned American Indian citizens from across the state. The Commission was established pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes 143B-404 through 143B-411.

The mission of the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs is to instill a positive vision for American Indians through preserving cultural identity by promoting and advocating the rights, beliefs, and opportunities which impact the quality of life. The Commission welcomes you to the Summer 2022 Edition of the *Indian Times Newsletter*. This newsletter was designed to provide a brief snapshot of Commission and related activities this summer! We hope you enjoy it!

Pictured above, Commission of Indian Affairs staff. First row (from left to right) Sue Faircloth, Kimberly Hammonds, Candace Lowry, Tenley (Nikki) Locklear, and Daphne Pinto. Second row (from left to right) Pamela Brewington and DOA Secretary Pamela B. Cashwell. Third row (left to right) Wanda Ammons, Stephen Maynor and Greg Richardson.

Executive Director Updates

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Written by: Greg Richardson



Appointment of a Deputy Director

We are pleased to announce that Governor Cooper included funding for a new deputy director for the Commission of Indian Affairs in the budget request and the NC Legislature approved reoccurring funds! After conducting an extensive search, Candace Lowry was selected to fill the position in April 2022. See below for more information on Candace and her appointment to this new position.

New American Indian Heritage Commission Established

Last year, the NC General Assembly authorized the creation of a new American Indian Heritage Commission housed within the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR). DNCR received \$250,000 to fund the work of the new Commission. Mr. Kerry Bird (pictured left) has been hired as the executive director and Mr. Quinn Godwin (pictured right) has been hired as the associate director. Learn more about the new American Indian Heritage Commission and it's leadership [here](#).



Big News this Summer: \$10 Million in Pandemic Recovery Funding Coming to State Recognized Tribes and Urban Indian Associations

State-recognized tribes will receive \$715,285 in funding plus an additional amount based on a tribe's tribal enrollment, in effect on July 1, 2021. The four urban Indian associations that hold NC Commission membership will each receive \$250,000. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was enacted by congress to address the continued impact of COVID-19 on the economy, public health, state, Indian tribes, local governments, individuals, and businesses. The NC General Assembly appropriated State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF) in Session Law 2021-180. The NC Pandemic Recovery Office is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the use of the SFRF as well as reporting to the U.S. Treasury on behalf of state agencies.

New Deputy Director

Meet Candace Lowry

Written by: Page Freeman

Throughout my time interning with the Department of Administration, I have had the pleasure of working closely with Candace Lowry. Allow me to introduce the Commission of Indian Affairs' new deputy director!

Candace Lowry is a proud member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina and resides in Robeson County with her three sons.

She holds a Master of Public Administration from the University of Phoenix. She also received a Master of Arts in Science Education and a Bachelor of Science in Biology from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke.



Before transitioning to the Commission, Candace worked for the NC Department of Commerce where she served in several leadership positions including career advisor and case manager for the NCWorks Career Center in Robeson County. While employed with the Career Center, Candace helped individuals with career exploration and job placement. In addition to this, Candace is a veteran leader and educator with more than 10 years in post and secondary education. She served as an instructor for Robeson Community College and as a teacher for Robeson, Scotland, and Richmond County Public Schools.

Candace began her time with the Department of Administration in 2019 as the Director of the American Indian Workforce Development Program for the Commission of Indian Affairs. This program provides occupational development and career assistance to American Indian communities. It was recently awarded the Grants Performance Management System Team Award presented by the U.S. Department of Labor under Candace's leadership.

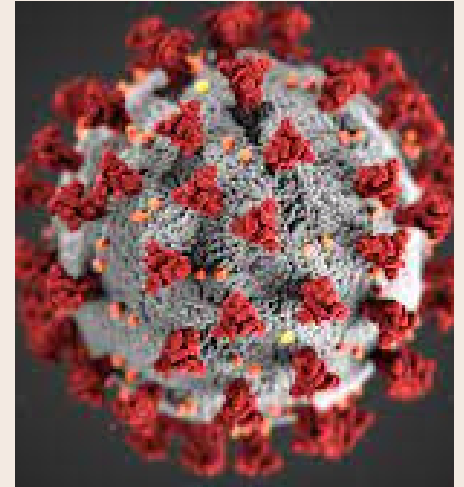
In this new position as deputy director, Candace will serve second in command to Executive Director Greg Richardson, assisting in the oversight and management of Commission funding, reporting, and overall program operations. The Commission is so excited to have Candace serve in this capacity! Please join us in congratulating Candace on this promotion!

Impact of COVID-19

The New Normal

Written by: Greg Richardson

As we all know, in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the world as we knew it. The work of the NC Commission of Indian Affairs was severely impacted by the pandemic and faced many new challenges. The Commission quickly adapted to a new way of conducting business, through teleworking, virtual meetings, and conference calls, which was not an easy task. The Commission became the leading entity across the state to address the COVID-19 pandemic in American Indian communities with very few resources. Indian tribes, urban organizations, state, and local agencies depended on the Commission to provide details and contact information for North Carolina's American Indian communities.



An action plan was developed to address resources needed to work under COVID restrictions. The plan included a teleworking policy, and the procurement of laptops, monitors, printers, and related equipment required for staff to work from home under the DOA teleworking policy. Microsoft Teams and Zoom software was procured so that meetings could be held virtually to discuss COVID issues and concerns. The Commission staff was trained to utilize the new software to conduct their work and COVID assessments. Ultimately all meetings with tribal leaders, staff, state, and local officials were held virtually and that practice is continuing.

At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission, Indian Tribes, and urban Indian communities were not included in outreach efforts to determine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as the focus was on local government, cities, and counties. The first phase of COVID contact tracing work in the state only included two American Indian contact tracers. We were able to work with the NC Department of Health and Human Services to change that practice. The Commission's Workforce Innovations Opportunities Act (WIOA) Program staff were dispatched to assist with the recruitment of potential contact tracers throughout the Indian communities. This effort yielded a marked increase in the number of American Indian contact tracers employed in the state. The number of contact tracers quickly increased to 35 in a very short time. The WIOA staff also worked with the Small Business Administration to assist American Indian businesses with their applications for pandemic recovery funding.

Additionally, the Commission purchased and received donations of PPE, masks, hand sanitizer, gloves, and other safety items for distribution to American Indian communities. With the donation of 25,000 masks from the Veterans Administration and several tribes to the Commission, we were able to distribute necessary supplies to American Indian communities while traveling to promote our programs, events, and services.

COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery

Rebuilding our Communities

Written by: Greg Richardson

American Indians were reluctant to participate in contact tracing efforts and many were very hesitant to get vaccinated. Therefore, the Commission worked with the NC Department of Health and Human Services to develop videos to assure the Indian population that the vaccines were safe and had been thoroughly tested. DOA Secretary Pamela B. Cashwell and others participated in the making of these videos. The Lumbee Tribe also developed a video, which featured local American Indian pastors who also spoke about how safe the vaccines are. Additionally, the Commission held several virtual tribal leaders' Listening Sessions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Mandy Cohen, who was the Secretary of Health and Human Services at that time, and other state officials were invited to participate and spoke directly to tribal leaders about the COVID-19 pandemic and related challenges.



Now that we are transitioning into a period of pandemic recovery, the Commission has continued to work tirelessly for the full recuperation of our tribal communities. This year, North Carolina's American Indian communities received a total of \$10 million in state funds to support programs and services to help with pandemic recovery. This year's state budget allocated money to each of the state-recognized tribes and urban tribal organizations. These nonrecurring funds will be disbursed from the Pandemic Recovery Office within the Office of State Budget and Management. The NC Department of Administration's Commission of Indian Affairs also received general appropriation funds to support further research into the impact of the pandemic on tribes across North Carolina. The funds were allocated as follows:

- \$715,285 to seven state-recognized American Indian Tribes: Coharie, Haliwa-Saponi, Lumbee, Meherrin, Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, Sappony and Waccamaw-Siouan
 - Note: As a federally recognized tribe, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians receives federal money directly as part of the American Rescue Plan Act.
- \$4,000,000 to be disbursed among the seven tribes on a per capita basis
- \$250,000 to each of the following American Indian Urban Organizations: Cumberland County Association for Indian People, Guilford Native American Association, Metrolina Native American Association, and Triangle Native American Society
- \$73,000 in general appropriation funds to the Commission of Indian Affairs for a time-limited COVID Pandemic Coordinator.
 - The Commission has posted this available position twice but still has not received any applicants that have the kind of background needed for this position.

Program Director's Report

American Indian Workforce Development Program (WIOA)

Written by: Sue Faircloth



The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Section 166 program ("WIOA") is a federal grant dedicated to serving the education and employment needs of Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian individuals.

To meet the needs of North Carolina's American Indian population the WIOA program serves 63 counties associated with the eight state/federally recognized tribes in North Carolina's American Indian communities. The WIOA program director as well as the WIOA program coordinators have performed exemplary work in terms of assisting American Indians during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The goals of the NCCIA/WIOA program are to:

- Increase academic, occupational, and literacy skills among the American Indian population
- Increase American Indian workers' abilities to be competitive in the workforce, thus helping them to achieve personal and economic self-sufficiency

NCCIA's WIOA program currently has 71 participants. The 2021-2022 funding amount for the WIOA program was \$392,233. This amount was used to assist American Indian students ages 18 and up with employment, education, and training needs.

This year, we had 3 graduates in May. We want to congratulate the following students on their amazing accomplishments!

- **Alex Burnette:** Associate degree in Information Technology, Computer Programming, and Development
- **Emily Pierce:** Associate degree in Science (Employed with the Sampson County EMS)
- **Alicia Hart:** Associate degree in Accounting

If you are interested in the NCCIA's WIOA program, please contact a program coordinator in your residential area to learn more.

Wanda Ammons- Program Coordinator (Sampson and surrounding counties)

910-564-6726 (O) | wanda.ammons@doa.nc.gov

Carolyn Crocker- Program Coordinator (Columbus and surrounding counties)

910-655-8708 (O) | carolyn.crocker@doa.nc.gov

Program Director's Report

Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, & Human Trafficking Program

Written by: Nikki Locklear



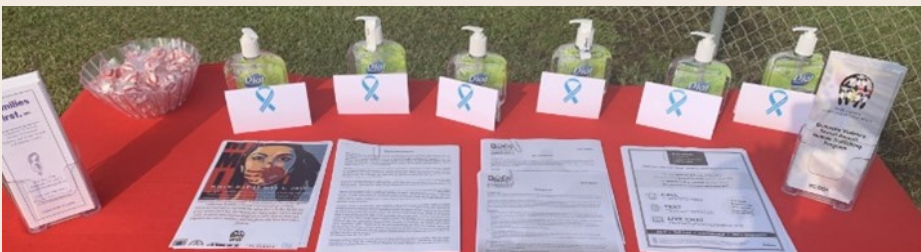
The NCCIA Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault (DV/SA) program is funded through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) by the Governor's Crime Commission and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) through the Council for Women and Youth Involvement (CFWYI). VOCA funds the program for 21 months, providing support for a program director including advocates from various tribal communities as well as funding for training opportunities for the advocates, and for building relationships between the American Indian advocates and community partners.

Over the past few months, our advocates have been hard at work providing outreach events in their tribal communities. Our program took full advantage of the pandemic restrictions easing up and getting back out into our communities!

The Domestic Violence program along with the CFWYI submitted a proposal to present at the 27th International Summit on Violence, Abuse & Trauma, in La Jolla, California. Our proposal entitled: "Using a Data-Informed Approach to Provide Services to Human Trafficking Survivors in North Carolina Native American Communities" was accepted and we will be attending the summit.

For Sexual Assault Awareness month, our Waccamaw-Siouan advocate held a Sexual Assault Awareness Drive-Thru Event. A total of 170 participants received information on sexual assault awareness, domestic violence, and human trafficking.

For MMIW (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women) Awareness Day on May 5th, our Haliwa-Saponi advocate held a talking circle at her tribal center and a reading of the proclamation. Our Waccamaw-Siouan advocate held a "Women Are Sacred" prayer circle and a youth circle event at her tribal center. We are so excited to get back to serving our survivors face-to-face!



Program Director's Report

Economic Development Program

Written by: Kimberly Hammonds

Small Business is Big Business

The NC Commission of Indian Affairs, Economic Development Program in collaboration with Two Rivers Community Development Corporation (CDC) sponsored an Economic Development Workshop – Small Business is Big Business on May 17 at the NC Indian Housing Authority in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

Featured speakers included representatives from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and North Carolina Government Contracting Assistance Program (NCGCAP). They provided information on resources available to small businesses such as SBA programs, and contracting opportunities with the federal and state governments, and encouraged businesses to take advantage of the resources and opportunities available.



Two Rivers has a long history with tribal companies and partnerships and is willing to provide technical assistance as requested by individuals. Individuals can also access the NCGCAP office for technical assistance. These are free resources to assist small businesses.

Supporting Undergraduate Native Students (SUNS) Program Update

We are pleased to announce that the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Application for fiscal year 22-23 was approved by the NC Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Economic Opportunity. The annual grant award to the Commission is \$55,280 with approximately 50 American Indian students participating in the SUNS program. The current services of the SUNS program include providing educational scholarships, incentive payments, and supportive services to eligible students. In addition to these services, participants will be eligible to receive a health and wellness stipend at the start of the fall and spring semesters. This stipend can cover the cost of personal protective equipment, COVID-19 test kits, COVID-19 testing/vaccine fees, medications, etc., so they may stay safe and healthy and remain in college. This is a new service for FY 22-23.

Two program participants graduated during the last fiscal year (FY 21-22). **Hallie Moore**, a member of the Waccamaw-Siouan Tribe, graduated from Southeastern Community College with a License in Practical Nursing (LPN). **Jakob Jackson**, a member of the Lumbee Tribe, graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill with a bachelor's degree in Political Science. Each of these students are to be commended for their accomplishments and success in the face of a global pandemic. Congratulations to both of them! We are pleased to be able to continue supporting undergraduate Native students in making their college dreams a reality.

Program Director's Report

Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)

Written by: Pamela Brewington

What is LIEAP?

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded service that provides a one-time vendor payment to help eligible households pay their heating bills. Priority in eligibility is given to households with:

- An elderly person age 60 or older or
- A disabled person that is receiving services through the Division of Aging and Adult Services.

In order to be eligible, households must meet the following requirements:

- Households must meet an income test.
- Households must be responsible for their heating bills.
- Households have assets/resources at or below \$2,250.
- Households must include a U.S. citizen or eligible alien.

The goal of the NC Commission of Indian Affairs Low Income Energy Assistance Program is to operate an education and outreach program designed to promote public awareness in American Indian communities in the designated counties of Bladen, Columbus, Cumberland, Halifax, Harnett, Sampson, and Warren to ensure that eligible American Indian households, especially elderly and disabled individuals and families with young children, are informed and encouraged to apply for the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program services available at the local county departments of social services.



Applications are taken December 1 – January 31 or until funds are exhausted for priority households and February 1 – March 31 or until funds are exhausted for all other households. You may apply at the county Department of Social Services where you live. Your local department may also offer energy assistance services through their Crisis Intervention Program.

We are committed to providing energy education to American Indian citizens with the goal of enhancing lives by improving knowledge and empowering you to make positive changes in your home to improve energy efficiency and to help you save money.

Workshop topics include:

- Energy Conservation
- Energy Efficiency
- Energy Star Programs
- Weatherization Programs
- Community Resources

(Dates and locations to be announced)



Program Director's Report

Section 8 Housing Voucher Program

Written by: Stephen Maynor

Mainstream Voucher Program

The Mainstream Voucher program accepts referrals from Local Management Entity / Managed Care Organization "LME/MCO" for individuals with a disability under the age of 62. The individual must meet the following criteria to be considered eligible:

- Experienced continued homelessness for at least one year
- Were homeless at least four times in the past three years currently living in a publicly or privately operated emergency shelter
- Presently living in places not meant for human habitation
- Currently living in transitional housing but were originally residing in places not meant for human habitation
- Habituating at an emergency shelter

The above services are available for the residents of the following counties: Columbus, Cumberland, Durham, Granville, Halifax, Hoke, New Hanover, Orange, Person, Robeson, Sampson, Wake, and Warren. To determine eligibility individuals must contact their LME/MCO to be screened.

LME/MCO Agency	Contact Number	Counties Served
Alliance Health	(800) 510-9132	Cumberland, Durham, Wake
Cardinal Innovations Healthcare	(800) 939-5911	Granville, Halifax, Orange, Person, Warren
EastPointe	(800) 913-6109	Robeson, Sampson
Sandhills Center	(800) 256-2452	Hoke
Trillium Health Resources	(877) 685-2415	Columbus, New Hanover

Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program

The EHV program will address the increasing number of individuals that are homeless or may become homeless. Eligible participants must have a referral from the Coordinated Entry System and meet one of the following criteria:

- Homeless
- At risk of homelessness
- Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking
- Recently homeless
- For whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having a high risk of housing instability.

To date, the agency has issued more than 575 vouchers across the State of North Carolina to eligible families. This program has added value to the Commission's efforts to provide affordable, decent, safe, and sanitary housing. Additional funds have been made available for tenant's application fees, holding fees, utility, and rental deposits, moving expenses, renter's insurance, and landlord incentives.

Inquiries can be made by contacting your NC Balance of States' Coordinated Entry or by calling 211.

Please contact Steve Maynor (steve.maynor@doa.nc.gov) with any questions regarding the above mentioned programs or the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program.

Summer Events

June Commission Meeting & Retreat

Written by: Greg Richardson

The NC Commission of Indian Affairs held a meeting June 2-3 at Campbell University in Buies Creek, North Carolina. During this meeting, the Commission approved all appointment recommendations to the NC Indian Housing Authority and the State Advisory Council on Indian Education.

The major focus of this meeting was a strategic planning forum which was led by Dr. Priscilla Maynor, founder and CEO of Imaging Ed Partners. The purpose of this retreat was to provide an opportunity for the Commission to conduct strategic planning for the upcoming years and work on team-building skills. Information derived from the retreat will be compiled and delivered to the Commission at a follow-up meeting.

The Commission's next meeting will be held in September. The agenda will include the swearing-in of new and returning members, the election of officers, and the appointment of committees.



Summer Events

2022 North Carolina Native American Youth Organization (NCNAYO) Annual Conference

Written by: Pamela Brewington, Kimberly Hammonds, and Greg Richardson



Every year the North Carolina Native American Youth Organization (NCNAYO) hosts an annual conference at a NC college or university. The 2022 NCNAYO conference was held in person at East Carolina University from June 23 to 26 and had approximately 250 Native youth in attendance!

This year, the Commission sponsored 23 students attending the conference. The \$250 sponsorships were made possible through funding from federally funded Commission programs. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 8 Housing program sponsored 19 students and the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault program sponsored four students.

The conference provided an opportunity for American Indian students to learn more about their Indian heritage, explore educational opportunities, and work together on issues and concerns of Indian youth and their communities. Learn more about NCNAYO [here](#).

Commission staff attended the conference and were able to host a workshop. An overview of all the programs and services offered by the Commission was given during the workshop. During this workshop the SUNS, WIOA, LIEAP, and Domestic Violence programs we highlighted. Page Freeman, a DOA summer intern and current participant of the Supporting Undergraduate Native Students (SUNS) program, provided a first-hand account of her experience with the program and interning with the NC Department of Administration (NCDOA). A highlight of the workshop included students receiving a t-shirt and promotional items from the WIOA and SUNS programs.



Thank You!

The Commission of Indian Affairs wants to thank you for your continued support! For more information including details on upcoming events, visit the Commission of Indian Affairs' [website](#).

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