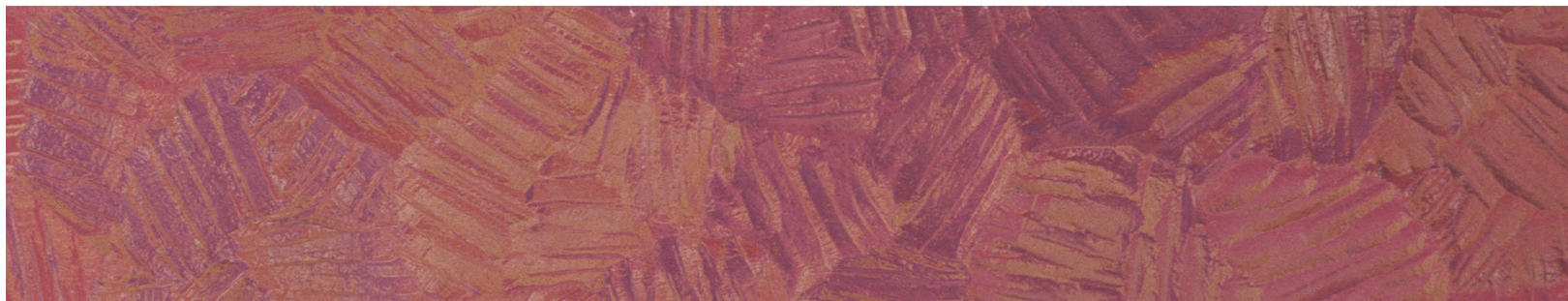




**North Carolina
Commission of Indian Affairs
Annual Report 2020-2021**



NC★DOA
Department of Administration



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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 North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs (Commission) seeks to provide a unified voice for American Indians and Indian tribes in North Carolina. It is a privilege to reflect upon our past endeavors as we face new challenges and pledge to become even more effective in our mission of advocacy for the American Indian population in North Carolina.

2021 was a challenging year for North Carolina generally and for American Indians in particular. This annual report provides a summary of Commission programs and an explanation of activities for the state fiscal year ending June 30, 2021. The Commission serves as the lead state entity that addresses and advocates for the needs and concerns of North Carolina's tribes and native communities. The Commission works to accomplish its goals and objectives through various partnerships, collaborations and funding from the NC General Assembly, state and federal agencies. We acknowledge the support of the many individuals, state tribes and organizations who are represented on the Commission.

On behalf of the Commission, we want to thank Governor Roy Cooper, the North Carolina General Assembly, Pamela Brewington Cashwell, Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Administration, and the people of North Carolina for supporting our efforts.

The Annual Report includes a summary of our accomplishments, program activities and services provided during FY 2020-2021. The report also includes a summary of all funding received this fiscal year.

Most sincerely,



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 from the speaker of the N.C. House of Representatives and the president of the Senate. Ex-officio members include representatives from two statewide youth organizations, the North Carolina Native American Youth Organization (NCNAYO), the North Carolina Native American Council on Higher Education (NCNACOHE), and a representative from the NC Department of Cultural Resources, State Archaeologist

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 serves at the pleasure of the Commission membership. The director employs staff to administer programs and provide administrative support to the NC Commission of Indian Affairs. The director must discharge his responsibilities, in accordance with the administrative, budget, and management policies of the North Carolina Department of Administration and guidelines associated with programs administered by the commission. The director reports to the secretary of the North Carolina Department of Administration, with respect to the administrative functions of the Commission and to the membership of the Commission with respect to the advocacy work of the Commission.

The Commission held four quarterly meetings during FY 2021: September and December 2020 and March and June 2021. During each meeting, Commission members addressed issues concerning the needs of North Carolina's American Indian citizens, and heard reports from standing committees, the executive director and Commission staff.

Commission of Indian Affairs Members

Chairman: Reverend Ricky Burnett, Lumbee Indian Tribe

Vice Chairwoman: Mrs. Shirley Freeman, Waccamaw-Siouan Tribe

Secretary-Treasurer: Mrs. Isabell Freeman-Elliot, Coharie Tribe

Members*:

- Secretary Pam Cashwell / Designee: David Elliott, NC Department of Administration (Secretary Machel Sanders/ Designee; Betty Marrow-Taylor)
- Secretary Kody Kinsley/Designee David Locklear, NC Department of Health and Human Services (Secretary Mandy Cohen/ Designee David Locklear)
- Secretary Elizabeth Biser/ Designee: Sharon Martin, NC Department of Environmental Quality (Secretary Michael Regan/ Designee: John Nicholson)
- Commissioner Josh Dobson/ Designee: Julie Ryan, NC Department of Labor (Commissioner Cherie K. Berry/ Designee: Jennifer Haigwood)
- Secretary Anthony Copeland/ Designee: George Sherrill, NC Department of Commerce (Secretary Machel Sanders/ Designee: Betty Marrow-Taylor)

- Gerald Goolsby (Daniel Locklear), President Pro-Tem Appointee
 - Wanda Burns-Ramsey (Reappointed), NC Speaker of the House Appointee
 - Isabell Freeman Elliott and Lenora Locklear, Coharie Tribe
 - Gladys Hunt and Helen Cook, Cumberland County Association for Indian People
 - Joshua Rory Welch and Carolyn R. West (Sam Lambert and Marvel Welch), Eastern Band of the Cherokee
 - Shelia Kay Wilson (Jennifer Baxter-Revels), DeVane Burnette Sr., Guilford Native American Association
 - Karen Harley (Jeffrey Anstead), Charles Richardson, Haliwa-Saponi Tribe
 - Furnie Lambert, Larece Hunt, Ricky Burrett, Lumbee Indian Tribe
 - Constance Mitchell, Meherrin Indian Tribe
 - Walter Baucom, Rebecca LaClaire (Jesse Jacobs), Metrolina Native American Association
 - Dorothy Crowe, Sappony Indian Tribe
 - William Anthony (Tony) Hayes, Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation
 - Danny Bell, Triangle Native American Association
 - Elton Ray Jacobs, Chief Micael Jacobs (Shirley Freeman), Waccamaw-Siouan Tribe
- *Previous members noted in parenthesis*

Ex-Officio Members:

- State Official Ex-Officio for Cultural Resource Advisor: John Mintz (State Archaeologist)
- NC Native American Youth Organization: Zianne Richardson, Co-Chair; Brayden Nokosi Locklear Co-Chair
- NC Native American Council on Higher Education: Vacant

Funding Summary

Program Revenue

Description	State Appropriations	Federal Funding	Earnings
NC CIA	\$353,542	\$0	\$0
State Recognition	\$39,810	\$0	\$0
Indian Child Welfare	\$40,417	\$0	\$0
Housing and Urban Development	\$0	\$4,644,156	\$20,270
HUD Cares Act	\$0	\$121,035	\$0
Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act	\$0	\$416,606	\$0
Action Partnership	\$0	\$55,280	\$0
Low Income Energy Assistance Program	\$0	\$87,736	\$0
Victims of Crime Act	\$0	\$229,369	\$0
Family Violence Prevention Act	\$0	25,000	\$0

*Chart includes carry forward funds

Total Revenues

State Appropriations	\$433,769
Federal Revenue	\$5,579,182
Earnings	\$20,270
Total Funds	\$6,033,221

Programs and Services

Division programs focus on developing partnerships and collaborations with local, state and federal resources in order to develop and implement services for American Indian senior citizens, veterans, families, children and students, as well as those native residents experiencing life-changing circumstances including victimization. Listed below are some highlights of each program.

[American Indian Workforce Development Program](#)

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is designed to help 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. Congress passed the Act in 2014 with a wide bipartisan majority; it is the first legislative reform of the public workforce system since 1998. The WIOA Section 166 program is a federal grant program dedicated to serving the employment needs of American Indian, Alaska Native 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 the eight state or federally recognized tribes.

There are currently 58 participants in North Carolina's WIOA program. The WIOA program director and three program coordinators worked diligently through the pandemic to promote the program's services such as financial help with tuition, books and fees, as well as assistance with career counseling, job searches and resume preparation. Staff attended in-person community events, as well as webinars and virtual meetings. They also participated in the Lumbee homecoming obtaining 100+ signatures from individuals who visited their booth. Commission staff participated in a Haliwa-Saponi luncheon and provided information on the agency's various programs. Additionally, staff participated in the Coharie pow-wow and obtained over 60+ signatures of American Indians interested in programs offered through the Commission.

The allocated \$416,606 WIOA program funds were used to assist American Indian students ages 18 and up with employment and training needs.

The program coordinators were able to provide 40+ American Indians with employment as contact tracers with Community Cares North Carolina. Additionally, workforce development staff and partners sent more than 100 names to Community Cares NC and two individuals from the Waccamaw Siouan Tribe were hired as supervisors for contact tracing in their area.

The WIOA program director and coordinators also assisted many American Indians who lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March 2020, staff have successfully helped more than 300 individuals start their unemployment claims and have continued to assist others in applying for unemployment due to businesses shutting down and cutting back.

The WIOA program continues to accept new applicants and each program coordinator is compiling a waiting list as they prepare for the new grant cycle. The WIOA program strives to reach and serve as many American Indian participants as possible.

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program

The domestic violence and sexual assault program works in collaboration with the Council For Women and Youth Involvement by establishing advocates within tribal communities. This program provides service and referrals to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking. It is funded through the Family Violence Prevention Act (FVPSA) and Victims of Crime Act (VOCA).

Housing Assistance Program

The Housing Choice Voucher Program is funded annually by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide 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.

The North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs received \$4,509,041 from HUD to provide housing assistance and utility reimbursement payments for 845 eligible low-income families during the fiscal year.

Rental assistance was provided to eligible families in Columbus, Halifax, Hoke, Granville, Person, Sampson and Warren counties.

The Section 8 housing choice voucher program applied for two additional competitive HUD funds. The Housing and Urban Development Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD VASH) program combines Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance for homeless veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The program anticipates serving five veterans in Granville and Person counties. The Mainstream Voucher program will provide rental assistance for households with a non-elderly person with a disability currently transitioning from, or at risk of entering, an institutional setting in North Carolina. The Mainstream Voucher will provide rental assistance to 30 participants that may choose to lease in Columbus, Cumberland, Durham, Granville, Halifax, Hoke, New Hanover, Orange, Person, Robeson, Sampson, Wake and Warren counties.

The agency continues to maintain 20 project-based vouchers for the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Project in Hoke County at Parish Place and Sandy Ridge Apartments.

The North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs Housing Choice Voucher Program continues to implore all potential landlords or homeowners to participate in the program, as housing is greatly needed throughout the areas served.

Indian Child Welfare Program

Using \$40,417 in grant funds from the NC Department of Health and Human Services, the Indian Child Welfare Program began efforts to recruit and train American Indian parents statewide and encourage them to become foster families. The goal of the program is to increase the number of American Indian homes that are licensed to care for children. Training is provided through the Commission by incorporating the Trauma-Informed Approach to partnerships, parenting training and individual family training through the Deciding Together

program. Additionally, retention strategies are explored to retain foster families, which may be done through family support groups in tribal communities.

Assistance is provided to the Department of Health and Human Services agencies in all 100 counties. The program is also responsible for providing training opportunities to stakeholders regarding Indian Child Welfare.

Community Engagement and Education

The Commission develops and engages Indian communities through numerous outreach efforts. These efforts serve a multiple of purposes: to educate, inform and build trust in marginalized communities. They also connect American Indian communities to important government services. Some of the engagement and educational activities in the area of Indian child welfare include:

- Staff updated tribal enrollment officer contact list and provided the information to DHHS for reference.
- Provided technical assistance, support and coaching to foster parents who participated in Commission of Indian Affairs training.
- Provided support and education to Indian families with child welfare involvement.
- Collaborated with Waccamaw Siouan Tribe on foster care matters associated with the adoption of children by a non-relative.
- Completed 10-week Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting training offered to prospective foster parents in Robeson County.

Supporting Undergraduate Native Students (SUNS) Program

The SUNS program's theme was "Making College Dreams a Reality." This program is a college educational access and retention program that offers financial assistance to income eligible American Indian students enrolled full-time in an accredited North Carolina-based community college or university to help students pursue their educational goals. It is funded annually by a small grant received from the NC Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Social Services Office of Economic Opportunity through Community Services Block Grant federal funds.

During the fall and spring semesters, the SUNS Program provides educational scholarships, incentive payments and supportive services to eligible program participants. Educational scholarships are available to students for required tuition, fees, books, supplies, equipment, and uniforms for currently enrolled classes. Approximately 50 college students are served each year.

Six students graduated during this fiscal year. Two of those outstanding SUNS Program graduates, Phoenix Locklear and Gavin McPherson, are featured here.

Each of these young men is to be commended for his accomplishments and success in the face of a global pandemic. Not only did they each pursue vigorous fields of study (Biology and Mechanical Engineering, respectively) they also both graduated with honors.

Phoenix Locklear graduated Cum Laude from UNC-Pembroke in November 2020 with a bachelor's degree in biology. He was accepted into the Physician Assistant Program at

Methodist University and plans to dedicate his medical career to studying hematology oncology and plans to return to Robeson County to practice medicine.

Gavin McPherson graduated Cum Laude from NC State University in May 2021 with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. Gavin accepted a position as a systems engineer with RoviSys in Holly Springs. He said he is "forever grateful" for the financial support and the words of encouragement provided by the SUNS Program during his four years of college.

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, Commission 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 the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program services available through county social service departments.

- Outreach efforts included hosting energy education events in American Indian communities, attending major American Indian events such as the North Carolina Indian Senior Citizens Coalition Conference, North Carolina Museum of History – American Indian Heritage Month Celebration, North Carolina Indian Unity Conference, Tribal PowWows, community meetings and events to promote the program. In addition, presentations were made at churches, community centers, civic and non-profit organizations in the designated service counties. Staff made presentations to the Eastern Carolina Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials and the program director met with county social services staff to stay informed about changes to the program, deadlines to apply and additional programs and services available to families in need.
- Outreach efforts were shifted from in-person meetings to telephone calls, email and direct mailings to past participants during the pandemic. In addition, posters and informational materials were placed in various businesses, churches, community/civic centers and tribal offices throughout the counties' service area. Through these efforts the program was able to provide information to 7,257 families on LIEAP services and other commission programs and community service available in the designed service areas.
- Households which included someone age 60 or older or an individual receiving disability benefits and services through the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services are eligible to sign up for assistance from December 1 – 31. All other households may apply from January 1 – March 31, or until funds are exhausted. Interested individuals should contact their local social services department for application dates and for additional information on available LIEAP, crisis and weatherization services.

Impact of COVID-19 on the NC Commission of Indian Affairs

American Indians were reluctant to participate in contact tracing efforts or to get vaccinated. Therefore, the Commission of Indian Affairs worked with the NC Department of Health and Human Services to develop videos to assure the population that vaccines were safe. Secretary Cashwell and others participated in the videos to lend their support. The Lumbee tribe even developed a separate video, which featured American Indians from the faith community encouraging others to get vaccinated. In addition, the Commission's Workforce Innovations Opportunities Act Program staff were instrumental in assisting with the recruitment of contact tracers throughout the Indian communities. The WIOA staff also worked with the Small Business Administration to assist American Indian businesses with their applications for pandemic recovery funding.

The Commission held several virtual tribal leaders' listening sessions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. NC Secretary of Health and Human Services Dr. Mandy Cohen, along with other state officials, spoke directly to tribal leaders about the COVID-19 pandemic and related challenges.

Additionally, the Commission distributed personal protective equipment, or PPE, masks, hand sanitizer, gloves, and other safety items to American Indian communities. The Veterans Administration donated 25,000 masks. Several tribes donated masks to the Commission for distribution to American Indian communities. These items were distributed by staff during their work while traveling to American Indian communities.

Tribal Recognition

Since 1976, the Commission has administered procedures for the state recognition of previously unrecognized American Indian tribes and organizations in North Carolina. Authorized by N.C.G.S. 143B-406, the Commission administers tribal recognition procedures, as established under Chapter 15 of the North Carolina Administrative Code.

A 12-member Recognition Committee, composed of representatives of each American Indian tribe and urban American Indian organization, makes recommendations to the full Commission. The Meherrin Tribe of Hertford County was granted state recognition under these procedures in 1986. In 1997, the historic 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.

Groups currently petitioning for state recognition include:

1. **Tuscarora Nation of N.C. (Maxton, NC):** The Recognition Committee rejected the group's petition for state recognition in May 2019 and the Commission of Indian Affairs denied the group state recognition that September after determining it to be a splinter group.
2. **Cherokee Indians of Hoke and Surrounding Counties (Red Springs, NC):** Technical assistance documents were sent to this group who subsequently sent a revised Notice of Intent and Membership Roll to the Commission. They provided supplemented documentation but were determined to be a splinter group, and thus denied state recognition in September 2021.
3. **Roanoke-Hatteras Indian Tribe (Elizabeth City, NC):** The group filed a petition in 2019 and told the Commission they would be submitting genealogical documentation. This group remains in the technical assistance process; they remain in pending status.
4. **Catawba Indian Nation (Rock Hill, SC):** Technical assistance documents were forwarded to the group in June 2018. No additional information has been provided to the Commission.
5. **Caananite African American Native Nation (Charlotte, NC):** This group was sent denied state recognition in February 2018. Following that action, they informed the Commission that they planned to hire a genealogist. The Commission then provided them with technical assistance documents and has been told the group is working on a new petition.
6. **Nuluti Equani Ehi Tribe (Belton, Texas):** They were denied state recognition in February 2018 and have not submitted a new letter of intent seeking recognition. Their status remains pending.
7. **Laurel Band of Chickamauga Shawnee Group:** This group contacted the Commission inquiring about the recognition process and indicated they were considering submitting a petition. Commission staff provided technical assistance documents and directed them to online resources. No further information has been submitted. Their status remains pending.

8. **Cheroenhaka Group:** This group contacted the Commission inquiring about state recognition and indicated that they descend from the Yamasee and plan to submit a petition. Staff provided technical assistance documents and directed them to online resources. No further information has been submitted. Their status remains pending.
9. **Chowanoke Tribe (Apex, NC):** This group contacted the Commission regarding state recognition, but never followed up with information. They have on several occasions contacted the NC General Assembly regarding state recognition, but to date those efforts have been fruitless. It should be noted that some of the group's leadership were formerly leaders and members of the Meherrin Indian Tribe and represented the Meherrin tribe on the NC Commission of Indian Affairs and the NC Indian Housing Authority.

Recognition Research Project:

Recognition Program staff with the assistance of interns from UNC Law School performed a survey of the recognition process in other states. This information will serve as a resource for the Commission regarding state recognition matters.

Staff Guidance Documents Created:

Staff has drafted technical assistance documents for state recognition, which can be used by the state Recognition Committee and future Commission staff as a guide for state recognition, as well as future petitioning groups. These documents have been posted on the NCDOA website under the Commission of Indian Affairs section on the Tribal Recognition Program.

Event Highlights

Each year the Commission collaborates with state recognized tribes and organizations to co-sponsor various activities and events. Additionally, the Commission provides staff support for Indian conferences, workshops and other special events. While some events (such as the Senior Citizens Annual Conference) were cancelled due to the pandemic, Commission staff supported other events virtually.

North Carolina Indian Unity Conference

The 46th Annual North Carolina Indian Unity Conference was held virtually in March 2021 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Sponsored by the United Tribes of North Carolina, in collaboration with the Commission, tribes and organizations, the conference drew more than 150 participants. Commission employees provided staffing support for the event such as taping virtual workshops and presentations, serving as session facilitators, moderators and recorders as well as speaking during the conference.

North Carolina Indian Youth Unity Conference

The 2021 North Carolina Indian Youth Unity Conference also was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Conference was sponsored by the NC Native American Youth Organization. The NC Commission of Indian Affairs provides staff support to the conference and lead workshops. More than 200 youth (ages 14 to 18) from Indian tribes and organizations across the state participated in the conference. The conference highlights included workshops on employment and training opportunities, date rape awareness, housing resources, financial aid opportunities, Native American Youth Organization pageants, and scholarship awards.

American Indian Heritage Month Celebration in North Carolina

Governor Roy Cooper proclaimed November 2020 as the state's 26th American Indian Heritage Month. In collaboration with the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, the annual North Carolina American Indian Heritage Celebration was held and produced virtually through the NC Museum of History due to the pandemic. United Tribes of North Carolina commissioned a poster for American Indian Heritage Month, and the Commission coordinated numerous activities associated with the celebratory month. Other celebration highlights included:

- More than 30,200 viewers/participants from 78 North Carolina counties, 26 other states and Canada,
- More than 15,000 views of the *LIVE! Music and Dance* which featured emcee JD Moore (Waccamaw-Siouan), War Paint Singers and Smokey River Coharie Drum, an amazing roster of dancers, and special guest Brooke Simpson (Haliwa-Saponi),
- Four workshops on Education Day reached 600+ classrooms,
- Fourteen presentations with hosts Arvis Boughman (Lumbee), Sharon Berrun (Haliwa-Saponi), and Cayla Colclasure, museum intern and Mellon Fellow from UNC Chapel Hill.
- Virtual workshops, presentations and panel discussions on both days featured 24 artists, storytellers, cultural specialists and knowledge keepers from tribes across the state.

North Carolina American Indian Fund

The North Carolina American Indian Fund Initiative is a collaborative effort between the Commission and Indian tribes and organizations in the state. The fund was established because the resources for meeting the human and economic needs of Indian communities are very limited. Additionally, the creation of the fund is in response to the need for dedicated funding for scholarships, health, human services, education, and tribal organizational infrastructure programs. The Triangle Community Foundation, located in the Research Triangle Park, manages the NC American Indian Fund which funded 16 scholarships for North Carolina American Indian college students.

Tribes and Organizations holding membership on the Commission

Membership Tribes

Coharie Indian Tribe

7531 N. US Hwy 421
Clinton, NC 28328
Phone (919) 564-6909
Fax (919) 564-2701

Eastern Band of Cherokee

PO Box 455
Phone (828) 497-2771
Fax (828) 497-7000

Haliwa-Saponi Tribe

PO Box 99
Hollister, NC 27844
Phone (252) 586-4017
Fax (252) 586-3918

Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina

PO Box 2709
Pembroke, NC 28372
Phone (910) 521-7861
Fax (910) 521-7790

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

Membership Organizations

Cumberland County Association for Indian People

2173 Downing Road
Fayetteville, NC 28301
Phone (910) 483-8442
Fax (910) 483-8742

Guilford Native American Association

PO Box 5623
Greensboro, NC 27435
Phone (919) 273-8686
Fax (919) 272-2925

Metrolina Native American Association

8001 N. Tryon Street
Charlotte, NC 28262
Phone (704) 926-1524
Fax (704) 347-0888

Triangle Native American Society

PO Box 26841
Raleigh, NC 27611
Phone (919) 996-9822