

Indian Affairs Newsletter – Summer 2018

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Governor Cooper's Hometown Strong Meeting in Robeson County

Governor Cooper and his Hometown Strong Team traveled to Robeson County on May 15th and 16th. The purpose of the meetings was to hold meetings and listening session with local government officials. The Governor and his team meet with Chairman Harvey Godwin, members of the Lumbee Tribal Council and staff on the first day. The Hometown Strong Team fanned out over the Robeson County and met with the leadership at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Mayors and City Manager throughout the county over a two-day period. The goal of the Governor's Hometown Strong Team was to listen to community leaders and gather information regarding their needs and concerns. A common theme throughout the meetings was that infrastructure, high-speed internet and job creation was the greatest need throughout the county. I was invited to sit in on these meetings and was honored to be a part of this engaging series of meetings.

The National Conference of State Legislatures Engagement

I travelled to Atlanta, Georgia in early June to underscore the importance of the 2020 US Census for the American Indian population. On June 8th, a panel of minority representatives spoke during the National Conference on State Legislatures regarding the importance of the 2020 US Census. I spoke about the advantages and importance of the census and its impact on Native communities for future funding, how the US

Census need to conduct outreach to these communities, as well as issues that could hinder the participation in the Census for native communities. These issues include the use of technology and computers will be utilized to conduct the 2020 census, how the census will use internet to collect data and how rural American Indian committees do not have access to the internet. The census results determine funding for many federal and state programs, therefore, tribal leaders should encourage everyone to complete a census form on April 1, 2020. The National Conference of State Legislatures is a bipartisan organization of state lawmakers bringing ideas of the people to Capitol Hill. There were a number of American Indian state legislator in attendance!

2018 NC Indian Youth Unity Conference

The conference was held at Methodist University in in June. The commission sponsored 25 students through its Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Program. Approximately 220 students attended the conference. The students elected new officers and they are:

2018 Summer Interns

Nathaniel Jacobs – (Coharie) Will be assigned to the state recognition staff and will assist with state recognition program. Additionally, he assisted with the development of the Commission's Indian Times Newsletter.

Alexandra Bailey -Is assigned to our Section 8 Housing Program and will assist with the development of Family Self-Sufficiency materials, design a proposed

Indian Affairs Newsletter – Summer 2018

outreach strategy for this program. Additionally, she assisted with the development of the Summer Edition of the Commission's Indian Times Newsletter.

Tuscarora Tribe of North Carolina Petition Update

The State Recognition Committee completed its Findings and Deficiencies regarding the Tuscarora Nation of North Carolina's Petition for State Recognition on January 25, 2018. We forwarded a copy of that information to the petitioner on January 27, 2018, by Certified Mail. The Petitioner has 180 days to respond to the Findings and Deficiencies. Not less than (30) prior to the expiration of the initial response period, the Petitioner may request and will be granted an additional 180 days to respond. The Petitioner has responded and requested and was approved an additional 180 days to respond, therefore, the Petitioner must respond now by January 29-2019.

Commission Member Vacancies - Effective June 30, 2018

- **Indian Tribes**

Lenora Locklear-Coharie
Sam Lambert- Eastern Band of the Cherokee
Charles Richardson-Haliwa-Saponi
Rickey Burnett – Lumbee (Completing term of office for Daniel Locklear)

- **Indian Association:**

Roy Maynor – Cumberland County Association for Indian People
Walter Baucomb-Metrolina Native American Association
Lana Dial-Triangle Native American Association

These positions will be filled by the tribes and associations holding seats on the NC Commission of Indian Affairs.

NC Indian Housing Authority Vacancies Effective June 30, 2018

Vivian Carter Maynor- Coharie Indian Tribe
Earlene Stacks-Metrolina Native American Association

Larry Jones – Sappony Indian Tribe
Dorothy McAuly-Cumberland County Association for Indian People
Clarice Dial-Triangle Native American Society

Program Updates

Economic Development Program - Supporting Undergraduate Native Students (SUNS) Program *Kimberly Hammonds, Program Manager*

After reporting for the past year that the Community Services Block Grant funding received from the NCDHHS - Division of Social Services/Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) would end June 30, 2018 due to changes made to the NC Administrative Code, I am pleased to report that OEO informed us in early April 2018 that we would continue to receive funding for FY 2018-19 in the same amount (\$55,280) to operate the SUNS Program.

The SUNS Program is designed to educational opportunities and supportive services to income eligible American Indian college students to improve academic success and lead to graduation. SUNS identifies qualified American Indian

Indian Affairs Newsletter – Summer 2018

students enrolled full-time in an accredited North Carolina based community college or university and assist them in pursuit of their educational goals. Services provided include book voucher reimbursement, semester completion, academic excellence, travel attendance and graduation incentive payments. In addition, we provide supportive services to assist students with emergency expenses.

SUNS was created in 2003 with a CSBG in the amount \$35,623 and currently our grant amount is \$55,280, these funds are used to provide direct services to students. To date, we have provided services to 732 American Indian college student and at the end of FY 2016-17, 75 American Indian college students successfully graduated. We look forward to another successful year of

providing supportive services to American Indian college students.

Low Income Energy Assistance Program

Peggy Ammons, Program Manager

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program that provides a one- time vendor payment to help eligible households pay their heating bills.

Our goal is to provide educational and outreach to all our participating communities for the American Indians and Veterans. These services are provided by Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) at the local DSS offices. The counties we serve are: Bladen, Columbus, Cumberland, Halifax, Warren, Harnett, and Sampson. The goal of the NC Commission of Indian Affairs LIEAP program is to operate an education and outreach program

designed to promote public awareness in American Indian communities in our seven counties, to ensure that eligible households, especially elders, veterans and disabled individuals with young children, are informed and encouraged to apply for the LIEAP program services available at the local county department of social services. We are funded by a grant thru the NC Department of Health & Human Services for \$87,736.

To increase program awareness within our communities of service, we threw a kick-off session in each county. To date, we have executed a successful event in each of our seven counties.

Our staff have attended three major area events for American Indians: The American Indian Heritage Celebration, Indian Unity Conference, and the NC Indian Senior Citizens Coalition Conference. Attending these allows our staff to network and spread awareness about our program, while engaging with our tribal communities.

Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Prevention Program *Lori McLain, Program Manager*

The Commission of Indian Affairs is pleased to report new funding has been received under the Victims of Crime Act. This new funding enables us to hire part-time advocates with the goal of raising awareness of domestic violence and promoting services for those who have been impacted by domestic violence in rural communities with American Indian populations. These qualified advocates have been hired and are now serving Robeson County, Person County, Columbus County, and Bladen County as an integral part of our outreach efforts.

Faye Martin has been hired for Person County and is placed with Safe Haven in

Indian Affairs Newsletter – Summer 2018

Roxboro. Tyra Oxendine has been hired to serve Robeson County at Enlightening Native Daughters in Pembroke. Kim Archie has been hired to serve both Columbus and Bladen Counties, and is working out of the Waccamaw-Siouan Tribal Center.

We have reapplied for one of the domestic violence grants we presently receive. We have applied for funding in the same amount to continue supporting our current programming. This grant was submitted on June 18th.

Section 8 Housing

David Grigsby, Program Manager

The Veterans Administration Supportive Housing (VASH) HUD program assists homeless veterans in need of supportive services such as mental health counseling, job training, and substance abuse services. Since its inception in 2008, this program has provided 85,000 vouchers, significantly reducing the rates of homelessness among our veterans.

Earlier this year, the Durham Veterans Administration office extended an invitation to the Commission to apply for housing vouchers under the VASH program, an opportunity we were excited to take advantage of. We were informed in April that HUD had granted our program 5 vouchers. The VASH vouchers will be administered with the same process as we currently administer the Housing Choice Vouchers. The funding for the new vouchers will be in addition to our regular allotment from HUD.

At this time, we have contacted the VASH coordinators in Durham and Fayetteville and are looking forward to expanding our services, as well as working alongside those who have served in our armed forces.

Indian Child Welfare Program ***Annie Francis, Program Manager***

The Commission of Indian Affairs received \$60,000 during FY 2017-2018 to address specific needs with child welfare. This quarter's focus has been on educating community partners on Indian Child Welfare Law and best practices for partnering with native children and families. Over 200 child welfare partners (social workers, guardian ad litem, administrators, and attorneys) participated in Indian Child Welfare Act, ICWA, training provided on January 26, 2018 and April 5, 2018. The Indian Child Welfare Symposium held on January 26th was the first ICWA training offered in eastern North Carolina and was held in partnership with the Administrative Office of the Courts and the National Indian Child Welfare Association. The Indian Child Welfare Gathering held on April 5th engaged community partners who work directly with families. Service providers were challenged to reflect on their practices and develop strategies for improving their services to American Indian children, both children protected by ICWA as well as non-federally recognized native children who could also benefit from best practice in the spirit of ICWA.

The next educational event for the community, *Indian Child Welfare Training 101*, is scheduled for August 17, 2018 and will be held in Raleigh, North Carolina. For more information on how to register, please contact, Annie M. Francis, Director of Indian Child Welfare, at 919-807-4448.

Tribal Recognition Program ***Elizabeth Walker, Program Manager*** ***Lydia Locklear, Paralegal***

The Commission of Indian Affairs was successful this year in receiving funding from

Indian Affairs Newsletter – Summer 2018

the General Assembly for the Tribal Recognition Program. This Program assists the Commission and the Recognition Committee in reviewing completed petitions for State Recognition and provides technical assistance to petitioning groups. Over the years, a work backlog had developed due to the lack of funding to properly manage the petitioner files and request for assistance. With the funding, the Commission added three new staff members: Anita Finger-Smith, a genealogist and historical researcher; Lydia Locklear (Lumbee), a recent law school graduate from Michigan State University College of Law; and Liz Walker, an attorney with a background in Federal Recognition rules and procedures. The Tribal Recognition Program also includes an experienced manager, Elk Richardson (Haliwa-Saponi), and an intern for the summer, Nathaniel Jacobs (Coharie/Lumbee), who has recently been accepted into the University of North Carolina for this fall.

The Tribal Recognition Program has made progress with the help of the new staff members. With the Staff's help, the Recognition Committee completed its review of the Tuscarora Nation of North Carolina's Petition and finalized a report on the Preliminary Findings and Deficiencies. Upon the completion of this review, the Staff addressed the following pending petitioning groups: the Nuluti Equani Ehi Tribe and the Canaanite African American Native Nation. Additionally, the Staff has been in contact with many other potential petitioning groups.

Recently, the Staff began a project to create a shared electronic document system to facilitate the management of files, correspondences, and other documents relevant to the petitioning groups. The Staff has also drafted Technical Assistance

documents for the Recognition Committee's review. The documents are designed to assist petitioners with the requirements for a documented petition. In May, the Staff presented the documents to the Recognition Committee for its review and approval. The Technical Assistance documents are currently on the Commission's website.

Staffing Updates - Vacancies

- **Indian Child Welfare Program -** Annie Francis has been named Director of the Program. Ms. Francis was previously employed in the program as a trainer.
- **Domestic Violence and Awareness Prevention Program –** Lori McClain resigned in April to take a job with the Guardian Ad Liden Program in Southeastern North Carolina. We have posted this position and will fill the vacancy once the interviews have been completed.