



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING

Urban Indian Tribal State Partnership  
Meeting Minutes  
January 30, 2009  
Doubletree – Detroit, MI



ISMAEL AHMED  
DIRECTOR

Present: Ismael Ahmed (DHS Director), John Wernet (Governor's Office), Dennis Knapp (DNR), Osvaldo "Ozzie" Rivera (DHS), Ron Corlew (DHS), Jocelyn Vanda (DHS), Deb Hodge-Morgan (DHS), Margaret Warner (DHS Wayne County Director), Shelly Wood (DHS), Sharon George (North American Indian Association - NAIA), Barbara Herter (NAIA), Tom Myers (Michigan Indian Legal Services - MILS), Michelle White (DHS IOS), William Markham (Grand Rapids – Healthy Start), Marylou Mahoney (DHS), Kay Andrzejak (DHS), Jackie Gant (Native American Business Alliance – NABA), Victoria Guzman (NABA), Sonya White-eye (NAIA), Dianna Pyles (DHS), Art Brant (NAIA), Jerilyn Church (American Indian Health & Family Services - AIHFS), Elreta Dodd (DHS), Judy Pierzynowski (Nokomis), Andy Chosa (AIHFS), Alberta Jave Lawrence (MSU Student), Anne Hodge (Nokomis), Michael Rosenurans (Nokomis), Angel Sorrells (Court Improvement Program, State Court Administrators Office), Maribeth Preston (Court Improvement Program, State Court Administrators Office), & Stacey M. Tadjerson (Director, Native American Affairs, DHS).

**I. Opening Prayer (Sharon George)**

**II. Welcome & Address from DHS Director (Ismael Ahmed)**

Jocelyn Vanda introduced Mr. Ismael Ahmed to the meeting participants. Meeting participants were invited to introduce themselves prior to Mr. Ahmed's conversation.

Mr. Ismael Ahmed welcomed all participants and indicated in these challenging economic times that DHS is "holding the line of programs & services;" while demonstrating the massive change in the child welfare system in Michigan as a whole. He highlighted recent overrepresentation initiatives and recommendations made by a Racial Equity Report published earlier this month; as well as the appreciation and value of the Native American representation at the Child Welfare Improvement Task Force (CWITF) January meeting. New Children's Rights Settlement mandates overviews were shared including the changes in licensing of relatives; Child Welfare staff training (Child Welfare Training Institute – CWTI); and the crosswalk between new IV-E funding.

Furthermore, Mr. Ahmed regarded the creation of an Urban Indian Tribal State Meeting as a meaningful dialogue with community leaders around DHS "point-of-entry" services for Native Americans in Michigan (See attached *Talking Points* for summary).

Mr. Ahmed extended an open invitation to contact him directly if you have any questions, comments, or concerns at: [ahmedi@michigan.gov](mailto:ahmedi@michigan.gov).

**III. Governor's Office Update (John Wernet)**

Mr. Wernet provided a brief synopsis of the past Urban Indian Meetings he attended and the Off-Reservation Indian Agenda; under the direction of Donna Budnick, Michigan Department of Civil Rights.

Mr. Wernet indicated that Governor Granholm is pleased today's meeting is taking place to continue building bridges for Tribal populations in Michigan.

#### **IV. Interagency & Community Services – ICS (Jocelyn Vanda)**

Jocelyn Vanda, Interagency & Community Services (ICS) Director, greeted the participants with a hearty introduction to the Interagency & Community Services (ICS) division; which houses Refugee Services, Migrant Affairs, Volunteer Services; and Native American Affairs (NAA). Jocelyn illustrated the significant attention special population initiatives have within DHS under the current administration as demonstrated by the organizational structure of departments. Jocelyn explained her role in spreading interagency issues across systems adding that this venue was a perfect example of such value-added information sharing.

Jocelyn Vanda introduced Stacey Tadgerson, Director of Native American Affairs for DHS to the Urban Indian Tribal State Partnership (Professional Bio was disseminated).

#### **V. Introductions & Ground Rules (Stacey Tadgerson)**

Stacey reviewed the agenda and logistics with the participants. Handout materials were provided to supplement the meeting and included: Agenda, Native American Affairs updates, Urban Indian contact lists, legislation pertinent to Native Americans; and a meeting evaluation.

Stacey facilitated a round-robin discussion around “Ground Rules” for this meeting and future Urban Indian Tribal State Meetings to provide a safe & respectful environment for dialogue and decision-making (See attached *Ground Rules*).

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

- 1. Stacey will type and disseminate the Ground Rules.**
- 2. Participants may add new Ground Rule suggestions at any time in the future. The rules generated today are merely a starting point.**
- 3. Participants will employ the Ground Rules at meetings.**

#### **VI. Urban Indian Organization Historical Overviews**

##### **A. American Indian Family Services (AIFS)**

Fay Givens was not in attendance. Future overviews will be requested.

##### **B. American Indian Health & Family Services (AIHFS)**

Jerilyn Church, Director, provided a historical of Urban Indian health centers indicating that their clinic is one of 34 Urban Indian Health Centers in the country. Founded out of the “Daughters & Sons of Tradition grassroots movement in the Detroit area,” they are funded by the Indian Health Service (IHS), Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS). Ms. Church pointed out to participants, that ironically IHS originated in the Department of War.

Furthermore, Ms. Church indicated that currently AIHFS does not receive Department of Community Health (DCH) monies; a challenge she is endeavoring to remedy. Recent developments include becoming a Medicaid enrolled provider; and AIHFS is presently encouraging clients to apply for Medicaid. Ms. Church also shared the “historical distrust” around

getting clients to enroll. Basically, she stated a resistance to apply due to a belief of healthcare as an “entitlement” due to treaty agreements (free healthcare and education in exchange for land).

Finally, Ms. Church provided a brief overview of the services they provide including Traditional Medicine. Traditional Medicine is a cost covered by IHS but not Medicaid (See AIHFS brochure for full description of services). A Community Forum is being scheduled to complement the Strategic Plan work being conducted presently. Ms. Church will send invites at a later date.

C. Grand Rapids – Healthy Start Program

William “Bill” Markham, Director, highlighted the transformation of the Grand Rapids – Healthy Start Program originally run by Inter-Tribal Council (ITC) for 10 years. In 2006 the Grand River Tribe took over administration, is the main fiduciary, has AAA certification presently, and mainly provides Substance Abuse/Mental Health services now through DHS funding.

Grand Rapids – Healthy Start program is working on CARF & staff certification to increase funding. They provide an array of services including: counseling, outreach & transportation for elders, Strengthening Families programming, Cultural Programming (Annual Sobriety Walk, Annual Harvest Feast, Three Sisters Garden, and various teachings & community gatherings).

Finally, Mr. Markham shared that the Tribe recently conducted a Needs Assessment Survey and should have results soon and will provide reports to those who request. They currently do not have a mentoring program, however, have in the past. Mr. Markham would like to see more training/technical skills opportunities for youth.

D. Michigan Indian Legal Services (MILS)

Tom Myers, Attorney, highlighted that their organization provides council for Native American persons in matters of Indian Law. They publish a newsletter available on their website. Recently, they won a significant Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) case in the Michigan Court of Appeals (Empson vs. Crago) pertaining to Voluntary Guardianship. MILS main office in Traverse City, MI: 1.877-968-6877.

E. Native American Business Alliance (NABA)

Jackie Gant, Director, shared her national organization’s mission to provide entrepreneurial technical assistance to Native American business owners. There will be a NABA Annual Conference in Mt. Pleasant, MI where a business boot-camp (in conjunction with MSU) will be assisting those interested in becoming owners of businesses develop business plans, and complete federal documentation to become a business (See attached brochure for more details).

F. North American Indian Association (NAIA)

Art Brant, NAIA Board member, provided a summary of the North American Indian Center (NAIA) history. They are the oldest Indian center in Detroit. Originating as the North American Indian Club in the 1940’s via Mr. Peters; and housed in the Detroit YMCA building (recently destroyed for new Comerica Park). In 1972, the Board filed for non-profit status; and in 1973 received 501 (c) 3 status. In 1973, their site was in Cass Corridor at the Salvation Army, then moved to a building on John R. Finally, they moved to Plymouth Rd. where they are currently.

Basically, they have provided 68 years of service to Native Americans in the Detroit area; keeping social programs and history alive for Native American youth & adults in urban areas.

Sharon George, Interim Director, highlighted the current array of services including: Employment & Training program (Employability Skills, Job Training), Seniors Program, Traditional Program, and Family-to-Family (Parent Partner Program/DHS Contract).

See attached brochure for more service details.

G. Nokomis Learning Center (Nokomis)

Judy Pierzynowski, Volunteer, provided Nokomis' historical overview indicating that it was established by a MSU professor in 1996. Their mission is to teach about people of the Three Fires. They provide tours for local schools; and curriculum for youth includes: Medicine Wheel Teachings, sacred plants of Michigan, a new grant program targeting reading to children; and various seminars on modern/traditional cultural issues, and craft night.

Recently, in an effort to streamline their programs and services Nokomis became a volunteer-based program and no longer employs staff. There is also a recent initiative to develop a culturally-grounded 12 step program.

H. Southeastern Michigan Indians (SEMI)

Sue Franklin extended her regrets that she could not join us today due to bereavement. Future overview to be requested.

**ACTION ITEM:**

1. **Urban Indian Organizations will send marketing materials with their mission, goals, etc.. to Stacey for dissemination.**
2. **Maraget/Ron/Michelle/Debora/MaryLou will continued work to increase identification of Native Americans & referral to Family-to-Family program at NAIA.**
3. **Wayne County DHS staff will inquire about getting IOS county email alerts for Wayne County to Michelle White.**
4. **Stacey is working on an ICWA Poster in partnership with SCAO and will soon have these disseminated to all DHS county offices, facilities; and state court buildings.**
5. **Urban Indian organizations were encouraged to talk to Latino organizations (per Mr. Rivera) to develop linkages to address early identification of Native Americans in care.**
6. **Data measures need to be addressed as lack of data available on American Indians is critical to funding sources.**
7. **Increase ICWA & cultural competency training in urban areas.**
8. **Add ICWA & cultural competency training for New Supervisors, Directors, And Executive Staff.**
9. **Develop advocacy group for Native Foster parents & youth.**

**VII. State Partner Program Overviews**

Ozzie Rivera, DHS – School of Social Work Liaison; & Race Equity initiatives in Wayne County, Saginaw, & statewide Tribal areas. Working collaboratively with Native American Affairs (NAA).

Dennis Knapp, DNR – Currently working with the Tribes around hunting, fishing, & gathering; will forward relevant “Green Living” initiatives to urban Indian organizations & Native American Affairs (NAA).

Shelly Wood, DHS – Currently working on the Child & Family Services Review (CFSR) initiatives. Recent Tribal panel at the CFSR Kickoff was shared, along with an upcoming invitation to participate in the CFSR Focus Group on 2/19/09 after the Tribal State Partnership (TSP) Meeting in Mackinaw City adjourns (1pm).

Angel Sorrells & Maribeth Preston, State Court Administrators Office (SCAO) – Court Improvement Plan program, currently working on several projects including Data Measures (improving what gets measured), ICWA Committee (developing a Benchbook & training for Judges and Court staff), Overrepresentation initiatives, and Training (See SCAO website for more details).

**ACTION ITEMS:**

1. **Dennis Knapp will forward “Green Living” resources to participants.**
2. **CFSR Focus Group 2/19/09 at 1pm in Mackinaw City, MI after the Tribal State Partnership Meeting.**

**VIII. Urban Indian Roundtable Discussion**

A brief round-robin discussion about what participants would like to accomplish at Urban Indian Tribal State Partnership Meetings took place.

Stacey facilitated a S.W.O.T./S.C.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses/Challenges, Opportunities, & Threats) of meeting participants around DHS & community agency Native American issues (See attached SWOT/SCOT).

**ACTION ITEMS:**

1. **Stacey will type flipchart results of SWOT/SCOT and disseminate to participants.**

**VIV. Urban Indian Issues Roundtable Discussion Next Steps**

Priorities were generated from the SWOT/SCOT results.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

1. **Stacey will type flipchart results of SWOT/SCOT Priorities and disseminate to participants.**

**X. Wrap-up & Next Meeting**

This meeting will be bi-annual. Next meeting TBD.

**ACTION ITEM:**

1. Stacey will schedule a meeting in 6 months (around September) in either Grand Rapids or Lansing.
2. Meetings will be in Urban areas on a rotating basis.

## XI. Miscellaneous

### Resources

- Child Welfare Settlement: [www.michigan.gov/dhs](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs)
- Tribal Web Sites: <http://www.michigan.gov> (Tribal Government tab on left margin)
- Voices for Action-2008 Poverty Summit: [www.michigan.gov/poverty](http://www.michigan.gov/poverty)
- Child Welfare Improvement Task Force: [www.michigan.gov/cwitf](http://www.michigan.gov/cwitf)
- Native American Affairs: [www.michigan.gov/americanindians](http://www.michigan.gov/americanindians)

### NEXT MEETING:

**Pencil in a “tentative” on your calendars as a memory-minder! The next meeting will be in 6 months; location TBD on a rotating basis.**