

National Indian Youth Council, Inc.
EMPLOYMENT STATEMENT OF POSITION

INTRODUCTION

Over the last year, the economic and financial crisis has hit the most vulnerable including the Native Communities. The unemployment and precarious employment conditions substantially affected many lives into hardships and increased the unemployment rate in New Mexico. An analysis of the 2009 Census indicates New Mexico has one of the largest Native American populations at 9% which is 180,000 out of 2,000,000 overall New Mexico populations. The national statistics reveal that only 24.9% of all Native Americans live on reservations, 75.1% live in non-reservation rural and urban areas in search of a better education, training, and employment. New Mexico's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 6.6 percent in August 2011. The national unemployment rate remained at 9.1 percent. Native American communities in New Mexico experience higher poverty rates of 30.8% which is more than the national rate of 25.3%. There is a strong correlation between poverty and unemployment in New Mexico leading to weak educational attainment.

Many of the Native people are facing difficulties finding employment exacerbating living situations and multiple barriers. The National Indian Youth Council, Inc. review and research different programs to improve the need of Native communities by advocating initiatives to support economic development, equip individuals with skills needed to reenter employment, and contribute to effective labor policies.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Founded in 1961, the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC) is the second oldest national Indian organization in the United States. For fifty years, the NIYC has worked to ensure that Indian people have equitable access to educational opportunities, health and social services, and employment. The NIYC promotes dignity and self-respect of all Indian people by developing leadership and encouraging economic development in Native Communities. Since its inception,

thousands of Indian people have received employment and training services which established NIYC as nationally and internationally respected leader and advocate. Since the 1980's the NIYC recognizes the potential in successfully maintaining various community support programs, including the Employment and Training Program with the CETA, JTPA and now the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program. Ultimately, this success has earned NIYC creditability within the urban Native American community, as well as with other entities.

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The NIYC has been at the forefront in creating jobs and providing training and educational opportunities for Native Americans living off the reservation in urban and rural communities. By establishing more than 150 worksites and working closely with local, accredited vocational schools, GED centers, community colleges, universities, local employers, and mandated partners, NIYC participants are able to obtain the necessary skills to secure gainful employment while achieving their educational and other life goals. The key to the NIYC success lies in the culturally relevant, individualized coaching and mentoring that each client receives.

An approach to prepare Native Americans, the NIYC is implementing a career pathway framework to prepare participants with the skills needed to engage in better employment and self-sufficiency.

GOAL #1

To provide career pathway framework to enable Native American participants to increase their job skills and knowledge by connecting a series of education and training programs provided through NIYC by integrating support services, work experience and tryout employment, and classroom training. It will increase and strengthen their potential and abilities to enter or retain employment with higher paying jobs and become self-sufficient to obtain a family-sustaining livelihood with rich traditions and cultures.

GOAL #2

To provide a literacy component that will strengthen the participant's ability to enhance their reading and comprehensive skills, math, science, and technology knowledge.

Currently, NIYC is looking at applying for programs to improve productivity, enhance employment opportunities, small business initiatives, and economic development. In addition NIYC will consult with other tribal departments, state governor's office, One Stop Career Centers, Workforce Boards, local agencies, post-secondary institutions and members of the business community to design and implement a shared career pathway plan, eliminating barriers and creating positive career pathways for participants..

Partners and NIYC Program

NIYC is building partnerships as an initial step of identifying various jobs coming to the area, job openings, trainings, supportive services, worksites, educational instructions, and job fairs. NIYC consult with the local technical, vocational and community colleges and universities to provide required certificates and licensures in the selected sectors. This institution will help tremendously in creating the necessary curriculum to meet the career pathway objectives to better educate, train, and prepare participants.

NIYC will continue to work with the business community, social service organizations, faith-based organizations, veteran's office, government sector and the Native American organizations to establish worksites in the urban areas of New Mexico. These worksites will foster on the job training, work ethics, promote professionalism, time management leading to employment opportunities.

NIYC has created a literacy program "Solutions for Native Success", a comprehensive case-management, training, and education program designed to serve young Native American adults who have not achieved reading proficiency, have minimal math skills and do not possess the basic computer skills necessary to secure employment. After completion of this program, participants will be able to read at acceptable level to apply for jobs, reenter post-secondary education, prepare documents on the computer, and perform job duties. Participants will capitalize on employment opportunities and prepare for advanced training or education necessary to obtain employment.

By capitalizing on these strategic partnerships with a strong participation and linkage among the partners, it will be a critical asset to enable the participants to utilize demand-driven and high paying jobs.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the National Indian Youth Council, Inc. will serve the Native American communities to incorporate the Career Pathways initiatives to connect employment, training, and supportive services to enable Native people to further their education and receive proper training leading to better and higher paying jobs. Connecting these services will be completed through critical partnerships and workforce relationships to weave employment and training services provided to the participant. In following this plan NIYC will be promoting self-esteem, self-sufficiency, self-confidence and a promise of success for each and every participant. Thus, all participants will become proactive, strengthen their literacy abilities, build a solid and strong confident character to choose a career pathway and complete the employment and training program positively.

CALL FOR ACTION

What are your concerns, recommendations and solutions? What is your supportive approach? Your voice is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

References

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