



July 18, 2025

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
2359 RHOB, Capitol Complex
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman DeLauro:

I am writing to request your support for restoration of funding for Department of Labor (DOL) Native American Employment and Training Program in the FY2026 Labor, HHS and Education Appropriation Act which is being considered for funding appropriations on July 24, 2025. I am requesting that your committee make the following changes in the FY2026 Appropriations Act:

- ★ Funding at no less than the FY2024 and FY2025 enacted level of \$60 million for Section 166 grants to tribes and tribal organizations.
- ★ Appropriations report language to protect the DOL Division of Indian and Native American Programs (DINAP), the office that administers Native American employment and training programs in DOL/ETA.
- ★ Appropriations report language to protect the role of the Native American Employment and Training Council (NAETC).

The Department of Labor provides employment and training grants to 165 tribal governments and Indian organizations under Section 166 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). These grants provide employment assistance to thousands of low-income and unemployed American Indians and Alaska Native people in rural and inner-city areas of the United States that some of the highest rates of unemployment. The recommendations above stem from three critical issues described below that are very concerning for tribes.

Critical Issue No. 1: Appropriations

The Administration's proposed 2026 budget for DOL/ETA proposes to eliminate funding for Native American Employment and Training programs and instead consolidate it with state employment and training programs. This would take funds intended for tribes and put the funds under the states' authority. Although, there is no clear indication that these funds would actually be transferred to states and earmarked for services to tribal entities. While some tribes may have good working relationships with states, many larger tribes do not. Native American grants have traditionally operated separate from the states and have had success in doing so.

If line-item funding for Native American programs is not restored, we recommend that a percentage of the appropriation to the states, equaling not less than \$60 million, be reserved for the Native American comprehensive services program (also known as the adult Program) and that DOL's current funding formula be used for allocating funds directly to tribes and Native American nonprofits from DOL, rather than the states. This is currently done with the Native American youth program (see Sec. 127 (b) (1)(A) of WIOA) and this method is supported by both the states and the tribes.



Critical Issue No. 2: DINAP

The Division of Indian and Native American Programs (DINAP) has been reduced to three staff members since employees have been placed on administrative leave and others have accepted the Deferred Resignation program (DRP) offer. The DINAP office is responsible for safeguarding federal funds by monitoring grants and preventing waste, fraud and abuse and ensuring that grant funds are used to train and employ low-income and unemployed Native American people. DINAP manages an advanced case management system and data collection system that verifies grantee employment outcomes with unemployment insurance wage records. The performance outcomes for Native American programs are comparable to and in some cases, above performance outcomes reported by the states.

DINAP and the grantee program was originally created in the early 1970's long before Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs. The original grant program was known as the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) program. The DINAP office is mandated by statute. Section 166 (i) (1) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) states that the Secretary shall designate a single organizational unit within the Department of Labor that shall have primary responsibility for the administration of the Native American Program. Therefore, we ask the Appropriations committee to ensure that DOL complies with the requirements of WIOA by keeping the DINAP unit intact with adequate staffing to carry on the mission of this office.

Critical Issue No. 3: NAETC

Section 166 (i) (4) of WIOA requires that the Secretary establish a Native American Employment and Training Council (NAETC) to facilitate consultation on the Native American Employment and Training Program. NAETC is authorized by statute and is required to meet twice a year. Consultation with the NAETC is in the best interest of both DOL and Native American communities and therefore, we ask that the appropriations committee ensure that DOL adheres to the requirements of WIOA to consult with the Council at least twice a year.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this very important matter.

Respectfully,

Lorraine P. Edmo
Board Chair
Native Professional Advancement Center,
Powered by the National Indian Youth Council