NEVADA DEPARTMENT
OF
NATIVE AMERICAN AFFAIRS

Strategic Plan 2026-2031

5500 Snyder Ave., Carson City, NV 89701

Our Guiding Principles:

Our Vision

The Vision of the Nevada Department of Native American Affairs is to improve and elevate the quality of life and affirm rights of American Indian people residing the State of Nevada.

Mission Statement

The Nevada Department of Native American Affairs serves to empower and advance American Indian people residing in the State of Nevada through effective partnerships and consultation for:

- **MATTERS OF EDUCATION**
- **AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES**
- **PROMOTION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
- **ACCESS AND EQUITY IN HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**
- **FACILITATE MATTERS OF SOVEREIGNTY, CIVIC ENGAGMENT INCLUDING REMEDIATION OF PAST INEQUITIES**
- **PRESERVATION, PROMOTION OF CULTURAL RESILENCY**

The geographical region of the Great Basin is a vast, arid region of the western United States characterized by its internal drainage, meaning that water flows into the area but doesn't drain out to the ocean. The first people of the land adapted to the region's climate by developing unique hunting and gathering strategies. Still today, the Great Basin Tribes are known for their resilience, flexibility, and adaptability in the face of challenging environmental conditions.

Background

The Department of Native American Affairs (DNAA) is a State agency established by statute as a result of the 2023 Nevada Legislative cycle (NRS 233A), it was preceded by the Nevada Indian Commission starting in 1965 to address matters affecting the social and economic welfare of American Indians residing in Nevada. This includes issues related to Indian affairs and federal and state control, responsibility, policy, and operations impacting such individuals. Initially called the Nevada Indian Commission, it was created to mediate Tribal-State relations and to address Tribal concerns and issues with the Governor.

DNAA activities focus on fostering cooperation and enhancing communication between Tribes, the State, local governments, and related public agencies. Their mission is to improve education, employment, health, well-being, and the socio-economic status of Nevada's American Indian residents, while also supporting Tribal sovereignty, economic opportunities, and community development.

The department functions as a liaison between the State and the 20 federally recognized Tribes, which include 28 Tribal communities. DNAA assists State agencies and Tribes on matters affecting Nevada's American Indian population and provides a platform for considering American Indian needs and issues. It acts as a conduit for channeling concerns related to Native American Indians or Tribal interests through the appropriate network and serves as a point of access for Tribes to learn about Nevada State government programs and policies.

During his tenure, Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak signed AB44 into law which formally established the Stewart Indian School Cultural Center & Museum in statute and provided an operating budget, plus he signed AB270 which provided for the director to designate certain buildings and grounds for special events.

Planning Process

The DNAA initiated strategic planning in the Spring 2025, following a positive Nevada Legislative session for the Native American community. This session resulted in several significant achievements, including the creation of the Nevada Tribal Health Authority and gaining a seat on the Silver State Health Insurance Exchange Board of Directors, which was a monumental step towards ensuring that the healthcare needs of the Native American community are adequately represented and addressed at the state level.

The DNAA Executive Director Stacey Montooth scheduled a public meeting on June 17, which was well-attended by key stakeholders including the Nevada Indian Commissioners, department staff, and various public participants who joined via ZOOM. The meeting underscored the department's commitment to transparency and inclusive decision-making processes.

Under the guidance of Dr. Joshua Bonde, the attendees conducted a comprehensive PESTEL analysis to evaluate external political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal factors that could pose risks or create opportunities for the department's initiatives. This analysis helped in identifying potential challenges and areas for growth.

The stone masonry craftsmanship immediately is evident upon entering the now 110-acre property at 1 Jacobsen Way, Carson City, Nevada.

Furthermore, the department identified essential stakeholders to provide feedback on the strategic plan. These included tribal leaders, community organizations, healthcare providers, educators, and other relevant parties whose insights were crucial in shaping a responsive and effective strategy.

By involving these groups, the department aimed to ensure that the strategic plan would be holistic and reflective of the diverse needs and aspirations of the Native American community in Nevada.

Strategic Vision

The DNAA strategic planning team is excited to establish the first strategic plan for this new executive-level department. Over the next five years, the team aims to enhance the voice of Native Americans in Nevada government. With the drive of the staff and support from stakeholders and the community, their ambitious vision is achievable.

The strategic plan includes several key initiatives designed to empower Native American communities and ensure their representation in policy-making processes. Among these initiatives are participation in advisory committees comprised of Native American leaders, the development of programs tailored to address specific issues faced by these communities, and the promotion of cultural awareness and accuracy within government operations.

The first modern day powwow at the Stewart Indian School was held in 1990. It has been an annual celebration on Father's Day weekend ever since. The 3-day, free, public event brings together Native American dancers, drummers, artists, and crafters to celebrate our heritage.

Additionally, the department plans to collaborate with educational institutions to create opportunities for Native American youths, such as scholarships and internships. Economic development will also be a priority, with efforts focusing on supporting Native-owned businesses and fostering partnerships that benefit Tribal economies.

As part of the strategic plan, the department is committed to regular assessments and transparent reporting to measure progress and adapt strategies as needed. By building strong relationships with Tribal governments and ensuring active participation in decision-making, the department aims to create lasting positive impacts for Native Americans in Nevada.

Strategic Goals

The strategic planning group convened to discuss their priorities collectively. These priorities include the need for training programs, raising awareness about the DNAA, encouraging greater civic engagement within the community, conserving the Stewart Indian School and its legacy, and promoting increased inter-Tribal partnerships. This feedback forms the foundation for establishing the guiding goals of the Department for the next five years.

The goals are detailed with specific, attainable objectives, strategies for achieving these objectives, and measures of success. They are intended to serve as institutional drivers. Furthermore, the goals are designed to be adaptable; in the event that priorities shift or new opportunities emerge over the next five years, the goals must remain flexible. The group unanimously agreed that the plan should be considered a living document.

+ **Provide Information and Training on State Consultation**
+ **Communication and Marketing**
+ **Advisory Boards**
+ **Stewart Indian School**
+ **Intertribal Partnership**

At least 20,320 Native American children lived at Stewart during the 90-years of which the United States government operated an Indian Boarding School at the site. When the school abruptly shuttered in 1980, the State of Nevada took over jurisdiction of half the original property. Besides the Department of Native American Affairs, five other state agencies are based on campus including corrections, buildings and grounds, capital police, public safety, and the Police Officers Standard Training (POST).

Goal 1: Provide Information, Training on State Consultation

The planning group identified that consultation was one of the most important functions for which the DNAA was created. Effectively the DNAA is to act as an intermediary between State and *Local* governments and Tribal governments. There is an inconsistent approach to consultation, ranging from sending a letter to true relationship building, and consensus building. Through following the course of actions below; this goal is meant to provide a platform for state government to learn how to consult with Tribal governments, and for Tribal governments to learn how to provide meaningful input into state policy.

Further as required by NRS, the annual Governor's State-Tribal Summit is meant to be an opportunity for the Nevada Governor to learn about issues affecting American Indian residents of the state, and an opportunity for the Tribal governments to learn about state-based initiatives which will impact Tribal communities.

Through the goals outlined below, a better foundation for communication between Tribal and non-Tribal governments can be facilitated and through time established.

Goal: Conduct Quarterly Liaison Meetings

- Strategic Plan:
  - Plan, execute quarterly state Tribal liaison meetings
  - Invite Federal partners to these meetings
  - Provide training on relevant topics
  - Provide a platform for communication between liaisons and their respective reporting bodies

- Benchmark of Success:
  - Execution of four liaison meetings a year
  - Increase by 3% in year-over-year participation from agencies and government bodies

Goal: Execute Annual Governor / Tribes Summit

- Strategic Plan:
  - Plan, execute annual meeting of the Governor with Tribal government representatives from the 28 Tribes located in Nevada, and any geographically impacted surrounding Tribes.
- Benchmark of Success:
  - Execution of the annual Governor's State-Tribal Summit
  - Year 1 at least 60% participation (17 Tribes)
  - Year 2 at least 70% participation (20 Tribes)

Goal: Facilitate Native Voices Training

- Strategic Plan:
  - Design orientation training to provide new state leadership Native American history plus current affairs / issues
  - Design a follow-up class for state leaders whose departments directly work with Tribal governments and communities

- Benchmark of Success:
  - Year 1, identify similar courses in other states to see what works and what does not, begin designing Nevada course
  - Year 2, roll out inaugural course with request for post course feedback
  - Year 3, revise course and begin work on follow-up course

Goal 2: Communications and Marketing

The DNAA strategic planning group noted there is a misconception in the Tribal community about what exactly is the responsibility and work of the DNAA. This goal is meant to increase communication between the DNAA and American Indians residing in Nevada. Through increased communication and feedback the DNAA can be more receptive and attentive to the needs and goals of the Indigenous people meant to be served by the Department.

Goal: Annual Survey

- Strategic Plan:
  - Build annual survey to be distributed amongst Tribal stakeholders and leaders asking what sort of help they need from DNAA in dealing with state government
  - Administer the survey, collect and compile the results
  - Analyze to see how DNAA, through its actions, is impacting Tribal communities across the State

- Benchmark of Success:
  - Year 1 construct survey
  - Year 2 administer first survey electronically, subsequent years paper surveys can be considered if requested
  - Identify trends, find opportunities for engagement and collaboration

The former Bureau of Indian Affairs Superintendent's home now houses Nevada's Department of Native American Affairs. Constructed in the late 1920's the building contains a wrap around deck and massive porch, three fireplaces including one in an outdoor courtyard, a basement, an attic, two jack and jill bathrooms, and an attached garage. When originally built, the house also included a guest cottage behind the main house.

Goal: Increase Social Media Engagement

+Strategic Plan:

- Year 1 focus on increasing social media followers on Facebook, currently (7/2025) there are ~3,300 followers.
- Year 1 create profiles on other platforms (ie. Instagram, LinkedIn, BlueSky, etc.)
- Year 1-5 monitor analytics for trends in geographic distribution of followers, and impactful content.
- Year 2-5 tailor mission specific content in packages which create the most impact in order to most efficiently spread messaging

+Benchmark of Success:

- Year 2 increase in at least 1,000 followers on Facebook
- By end of Year 1, create a profile on at least one new platform
- Year 2 add ongoing track analytics
- Year 3-5 monitor social media regularly (may end up having to be part of a staff members job duties)

Goal: Track Email Distribution

+Strategic Plan:

- Year 1 and ongoing, curate email list of staff, business associates, politicians, participants in programs, and volunteered emails from special events.
- Year 2 create an engaging regular email blast via a mass email service to get the word out about initiatives and programming.
- Year 2 and on monitor email analytics via mass email service for engagement and adapt.
- Year 3-5 build email following

UNLV is home to a growing network of Native-led programs, student organizations, and community events that center Indigenous identity, presence, leadership, and futures. The UNLV Native Youth College Camp brings together Native students in grades 10–12 for a week of college exploration and cultural connection. Through campus tours, hands-on workshops, and conversations with professionals, students begin to imagine their futures in higher education and beyond. The camp also creates space to build friendships across Tribal communities and learn in a supportive, Indigenous-centered environment.

- Benchmark of Success:
  - Year 1 creation of curated email list, with the roll of each contact noted
  - Year 1 start with simple email update via mass email service
  - Year 2 and on refine content and grow the email list.
  - Year 3 at least 700 individual contacts on the email list.

Goal: Website Hits

- Strategic Plan:
  - Year 1 work with public relations firm to find visitation analytics
  - Year 1-2 work with public relations firm to refine and make most accessible the website.
  - Track website visitation analytics and adapt

- Benchmark of Success:
  - Year 1-2 identify what is the most useful metrics of engagement with the public relations firm
  - Year 2 and forward, work to see an increase in year over year website visitation.
  - Year 2-5 generation of data on website visitorship

Goal 3: Advisory Boards

In 2024 election turnout was down over almost every demographic group, with the exception of Native Americans. Native American election participation saw a dramatic increase and was the highest increase in participation of any other group. This pattern has been noticed by policy makers, who would like to better understand how this trend happened. Here we acknowledge the importance of engagement and aim to get more Native Americans involved in civic engagement. We also strive to be more proactive and send a representative of the planning group to DNAA related advisory board meetings to actively participate in the business of these committees and to see how the DNAA can be more responsive in real time.

Goal: Civic Engagement

+Strategic Plan:

- Year 1 work on engagement plan with schools with Native students on the importance of civic engagement while identifying needs and motivations of young people in getting engaged
- Year 2 deploy engagement plan to get in classrooms and spread the word
- Year 2 work with Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) institutions to provide support for Native students to be more civically engaged
- Year 3 develop a Native American Leadership class taught by respected Nevada Native leaders
- Year 1 and onward work with the Nevada Secretary of State office on facilitating voting opportunities for all Native communities

+Benchmark of Success:

- Begining of Year 2, completion of engagement plan with schools
- Year 2, visit at least 1 school in Northern Nevada, and 1 school in Southern Nevada as part of the outreach
- End of Year 2, have established contacts at NSHE institutions who facilitate the needs of Native learners and be a contact for help in engagement
- Year 4 execute a Native Leadership Class, gauge success to develop regular program

Goal: Plan, Execute Annual Joint Meeting with Indian Education Advisory Committee

+Strategic Plan

- In order to be more responsive and synergistic with the Indian Education Advisory Committee (IEAC) plan, execute annual Commissioners meeting jointly with IEAC

+Benchmark of Success:

- Successfully plan, execute annual meeting of DNAA Commissioners and IEAC

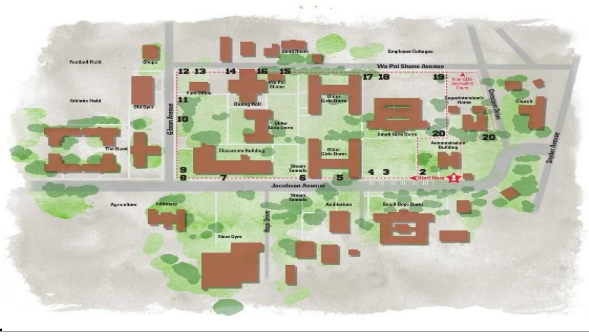
Goal: Commissioners Assigned Program/Mission Area Report Back Bi-Annually From Subject Relevant Boards, Committees Serve as DNAA Facilitators

+Strategic Plan

- In order for DNAA to be most responsive to the needs of the community, DNAA facilitators will participate in relevant subcommittees, boards, and commissions to be the voice of the DNAA and to collect information on needs and projects

- Benchmark of Success:
  - Ongoing will be a bi-annual report from DNAA facilitators at Commissioners Meetings on what they have heard and learned serving in these other organizations

Composed of 20 stops, the Stewart Indian School Trail is 0.6 miles on paved surfaces winding throughout the 63 buildings that still stand on these historic grounds. Explore and experience this interactive cell phone guided tour, highlighting key historic buildings and landmarks across the campus. Audio is of Native American elders, most who attended the Indian boarding school. The trail audio also is available using QR codes and at https://stewartindianschool.com/walking-trail/ .



Goal 4: Preservation, Promotion of Stewart Indian School

The Stewart Indian School was a Native American boarding school operated by the federal government from 1890 to 1980. The Indian boarding schools are notorious for the harsh early years and militaristic style of forced assimilation. In the post World War 2 era, the late 1940s, the campus environment evolved and the government embraced Native American culture as for some of the 20,300+ Native children it ended up being a desirable place to attend high school. Preserving and telling that complicated story is part of NRS 233A. Ownership of part of the school property was given to the state via a quit-claim by the federal government.

Goal: Investigate Nevada Revised Statute Legal Authorities Surrounding Stewart Campus

- Strategic Plan:
  - Year 1-2 research NRS property history since 1980 to assess the legal ownership and property lines.
  - Year 2-3 determine controlling agencies and rolls of DNAA and sister agencies on the property.
  - Year 2-5 formulate management plan of the 110 acre campus and historic structures which fits within the legal authority

- Benchmark of Success:
  - Year 2 have property surveyed and boundaries clearly marked
  - Year 3 create a policy manual on different agencies and their obligations on the campus
  - Year 5 complete a management plan which takes into account all aspects of the historic campus.

Goal: Investigate Logistics of Having the Campus Surveyed for Unidentified Graves

- Strategic Plan:
  - Year 1 and ongoing identify funding and resources necessary to complete a survey of the campus for unmarked graves
  - Ongoing, if logistically possible, fundraise for and conduct survey

- Benchmark of Success:
  - Year 1, write report detailing possibility of conducting survey
  - Ongoing, if feasible conduct the survey once funding is available
  - Year 5 and ongoing complete and update survey report of results

According the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS), the truth about the U.S. Indian boarding school policy has largely been written out of the history books. There were more than 526 government-funded, (often church-run) Indian Boarding schools across the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries including the Stewart Indian Boarding School. American Indian children were forcibly abducted by government agents, sent to schools hundreds of miles away, and beaten, starved, or otherwise abused when they spoke their Native languages. Over 200 Tribal communities throughout the region have ties to Stewart. It was initially known as the Carson Indian Training School before the official name changed to honor of U.S. Senator William Morris Stewart. Other names it was known by include Stewart Institute, Carson Industrial School, and Carson Indian School.

Goal 5: Intertribal Events

The strategic planning committee identified a need to host and facilitate more intertribal events for the Great Basin Tribes to foster good relationships and cooperation between all of our people.

Goal: Plan, Execute Annual Stewart Father's Day Powwow

- Strategic Plan:
  - Year 1, reflect on 2025 powwow and collect feedback.
  - Year 1-5, revamp and modify powwow based on needs and feedback
  - Plan, execute annual powwow

- Benchmark of Success:
  - Execution of the annual powwow
  - Bring in at least 200 registered dancers a year
  - Identify donors to help make the powwow financially self-sufficient
  - Year 2-5, increase vendor participation until a maximum sustainability is identified

Goal: Plan, Execute Nevada Tribes Legislative Day

- Strategic Plan:
  - Every biennium (odd years) plan, execute Nevada Tribes Legislative Day
  - Identify the most pressing political topics of the session for the Native community and have and education session on those issues and related proposed legislation

- Benchmarks of Success:
  - Odd years host Nevada Tribes Legislative Day
  - Ongoing, identify political topics of most importance to communities in Nevada

Goal: Examine Restarting American Indian Achievement Awards Banquet & Silent Auction

- Strategic Plan:
  - Year 1 determine if Tribal communities have the desire for restarting the annual Achievement Awards event
  - Year 2 if feedback is not favorable identify some sort of other intertribal function to plan
  - Year 2 if feedback is positive, begin planning Achievement Awards function for even years or non-legislative years
  - Year 3 identify venue and plan
  - Year 3 execute Achievement Awards event

- Benchmark of success:
  - Year 1 sending out survey to see what the desire is for the event and compile that data
  - Year 3 venue booked and event executed
  - If data is not favorable abort before end of year 2

Native Americans are the guardians of the environment often leading the way to a healthier Mother Earth. The core of our Indigenous being is the environment because for our Native people it is not just a place, but the most vital part of our culture, spirituality, and survival.

2025 Nevada Department of Native American Affairs

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