



# LOS ANGELES CITY/COUNTY NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION

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*Executive Director*

December 8, 2025

**Subject:** Advancing Belonging, Visibility, and Cultural Safety for Native American People in Los Angeles

Dear LA County Board of Supervisors and Mayor Bass,

On behalf of the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC), we write to share our recommendations and calls to action following the release of the [Native American Homelessness Data Dashboard](#) by our CEO Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative (ARDI) partners.

This dashboard affirms what Native leaders, service providers, and community members have long expressed: that Native American people in Los Angeles experience disproportionate rates of homelessness, and yet remain invisible within mainstream systems of care, data, and decision-making.

Earlier this year, through the Native American Housing and Home Summit and the release of the AIAN Housing and Home Community One-Pager (attached), our community clearly articulated that moving from homelessness to home means not only addressing physical shelter but restoring belonging, visibility, and cultural safety.

## Community-Informed Priorities and Requests

In alignment with the findings of the dashboard and our ongoing engagement process, the Commission respectfully calls upon City and County leadership to take the following actions:

## Representation and Leadership

- Establish formal Native American subject matter expertise on decision-making bodies addressing homelessness and housing, including the LA County Department on Homelessness, the LA County Affordable Housing Solutions Agency, and relevant City housing and cultural commissions.
- Maintain and strengthen the American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Coordinator and Deputy Chief Equity Officer roles within the new LA County Department on Homelessness. Continue the work of County's Internal AIAN Working Group on Homelessness and expand the staffing to include more AIAN expertise in the areas of community engagement, AIAN specific development and policy.

### Land and Cultural Belonging

- Fulfill the intent of the 2019 County Board motion to assess available property that can be used for a Native American Cultural District and/or culturally supportive housing.
- Engage in government-to-government consultation with the first peoples of these lands—Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash Nations— to discuss proposals, regulations, and policies that may affect tribes, respecting their inherent sovereignty and right to self-determination.

### Resource Equity

- Create a dedicated housing matcher and AIAN case conferencing process to improve outcomes for Native people experiencing homelessness.
- Adopt culturally responsive housing policy language in both City and County frameworks to institutionalize equity and accountability.
- Direct funding to local Tribes and Native-led organizations to deliver culturally supportive housing and services.

### Call to Partnership

The release of the dashboard provides a renewed opportunity for our City and County to act on long-standing commitments to Native equity. We urge our partners to use this data not only to inform policy, but to invest in self-determination and healing for Native people in Los Angeles.

The LANAIC stands ready to collaborate with your offices to turn these priorities into action.

With appreciation for your partnership and leadership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink on a yellow background, reading "Shawn Imitates Dog".

Shawn Imitates-Dog  
Chairperson  
Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission

### Attachments and Links

- [LA County Native American Data Dashboard](#) (Nov 2025)
- AIAN Housing and Home Community One-Pager (October 2025)
- Native American Housing and Home Summit Videos ([Recap](#) and [Keynote](#))

# Native American Community Input on How to Move from Houselessness to *Home* In Los Angeles

## The Takeaway

Native American people in Los Angeles desire **belonging**, **visibility**, **cultural safety**, and **self-determination**.

Native people in LA feel erased by mainstream culture, by our educational system, and by our larger systems. We are rarely included in data and reports, and have less access to resources as a result. **Visibility** in systems, data, everyday signage and art, in education, and beyond is an important antidote in helping Native people feel **belonging** in LA.

Many Native people often seek services from Native serving organizations, regardless of distance or travel time. Not only is this indicative of our desire to be seen as our full selves and feel like we're part of community (**cultural safety** and **belonging**), but it underscores how our agencies move beyond invisible boundaries physically, and in how we incorporate *love* into services.

Lastly, Native people know best how to engage and serve our people. While we value the importance of partners and allies, we ultimately wish to be able to **self-determine** our own future, not one that is defined by others or systems entrenched in colonial worldview and practice.

Over years of listening and learning, our community has made it clear that this is more than just fixing houselessness. We aim to heal not only the physical, but the cultural, and spiritual homelessness that has resulted in removal of Indigenous people from our homelands and cultural ways of being. We are looking to make LA a safe and healing *home* for current and future generations.

### Community Needs

- **Native American Cultural District:** Native people desire a safe place to gather, and reconnect with cultural identity, traditions, and ways of being. This could strengthen belonging, visibility, sense of place and cultural pride, as well as things like the Native workforce, economy, and culturally supportive housing.
- **Culturally Supportive Housing:** Housing with culturally specific services and practices to enhance residents' well-being, identity, and sense of belonging.
- **Tribal Consent and Consultation:** The first peoples of these lands, the Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash Peoples, deserve the respect of tribal consultation. That is, the formal government-to-government dialogue between government agencies and tribal Nations to discuss proposals, regulations, and policies that may affect tribes, respecting their inherent sovereignty and right to self-determination.

### Systemic Responsibilities

#### Equity in Data and Policy:

- Ensure that best practices on Native data are incorporated into every work product. Update point-in-time count methodologies to more accurately count Native people experiencing homelessness (e.g. respondent driven sampling).
- Streamline contracting processes across County departments with Native-led organizations and local tribes.
- Incorporate targeting questions into triage tools in order to ensure effective and equitable services.
- Develop a policy on culturally responsive housing in order to demonstrate the principles of targeted universalism and housing justice.

#### Equity in Resources:

- Donate publicly held lands to seed a Native American Cultural District and/or culturally supportive housing. This part of the 2019 [Board Motion](#) was never achieved.
- Fund Native-led organizations and local tribes directly.
- Given the complexity of LA's expansive geography, Native-led organizations could benefit from a dedicated housing matcher and/or specific AIAN case conferencing.

#### Equity in Representation:

- Native representation in the respective governance tables is imperative. Lack of Native representation at decision-making tables further silences our needs.
- An ongoing full-time "AIAN Coordinator" like the position currently housed at LAHSA position is imperative.
- An ongoing Deputy Chief Equity Officer in the new department is imperative.
- Continuing the work of County's Internal AIAN Working Group on Homelessness, currently led by the Homeless Initiative is imperative.

# Native American Community Needs, Systemic Levers, and Guiding Values to Move from Houselessness to Home

In the attached figure, the yellow/orange circles indicate community needs/desires, and the yellow boxes are the anchoring priorities in that work. The green circles indicate the conditions necessary to help achieve those community needs and desires, while the green boxes are the anchoring values.



Please refer to this [video](#), and these [illustrations](#) for more information.