



**LOS ANGELES CITY/COUNTY NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION
APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JULY 21, 2026**

The July 21, 2026, Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian (LANAIC) meeting was at the County of Los Angeles Hall of Administration, Sybil Brand Room 372, 500 W. Temple Street, Los Angeles, California, 90012.

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgment

Chairperson Mark Villaseñor called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. and read the Los Angeles County Land Acknowledgment.

Invocation

An invocation was provided by Vice Chairperson Bryce Lewis-Smith.

Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Mark Villaseñor
Vice Chairperson Bryce Lewis-Smith
Chrissie Castro (Remotely - Just Cause)
Denise Escoto
Dr. Andrea Garcia
Vivian Garcia
Shawn Imitates Dog
John Only A Chief (arrived during item 6.1)
Mona Morales Recalde
Ted Tenorio

Absent: Secretary Dr. Caroline Bhalla
Treasurer Rene' Williams
Dawn Jackson
Rudy Ortega Jr.

Staff: Alexandra Valdes, LANAIC Executive Director
Julien Tan, LANAIC Administrative Manager

Quorum was met.

Commissioner Introductions

Commissioners provided brief introductions, including their names, appointing office, and tribal affiliation.



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Public Comment

No public comment was submitted for the meeting.

Presentation

7.1. Care First Community Investment Updates, Joey Williams (LANAIC CFCI Designee)

Joey Williams, the LANAIC's designee on the County's Care First Community Investment (CFCI) Advisory Committee, presented updates on the CFCI program.

Commissioner Dr. Andrea Garcia thanked Joey for serving as the designee, for his ongoing engagement with the community, for being a strong voice, and for his work ensuring dollars reach community members. She asked whether, given it is now 2026 and the Justice, Care and Opportunities Department (JCOD) has developed new ways of engaging with the community, appointed commissioners can contribute more data and expertise. She inquired what Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and tribal partners might say about creating more intentional engagement opportunities and identifying what types of support are most needed. She emphasized finding appropriate fits between what CBOs and tribes can offer and what the community requires, asking how the commission can help and how to ensure they are fulfilling their responsibility to engage stakeholders effectively.

Joey noted that the land acknowledgment currently read at CFCI meetings should move beyond statements and be supported by financial investment. He shared that he encouraged the CFCI Advisory Committee to prioritize getting money back to the community rather than relying solely on symbolic gestures. He expressed desire to return to the trusted messenger model CFCI utilized previously for receiving community feedback. He noted that while many organizations focus on job training, there is a shortage of available jobs. Unemployment continues to affect many communities in Los Angeles County, not only Native people. He also discussed homeownership challenges, stating that the County cannot "build its way out of it," and emphasized continued housing funding. He added that education support should extend beyond universities to include trades and crafts, acknowledging that many people want opportunities to create and work with their hands.

Commissioner Dr. Garcia asked whether, in addition to the County underspend, there had also been underspending on the community side. Joey Williams clarified that there was no underspend on the community side. Joey shared that when underspending was identified, the County Supervisors had already developed a plan to allocate those funds.

Alexandra responded to the earlier questions about organizations. She explained that funding distributed through The Amity Foundation covered only one year, and the large dollar amounts combined with the short 12-month period made it difficult for organizations to build sustainable



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programs. She noted operational constraints, including hiring and staffing challenges, and emphasized the misalignment between funding levels, time horizons, and what organizations realistically can implement.

Joey Williams added that when discussions occurred regarding the full \$7.5 million (rather than just the \$3.5 million), the CFCI Advisory Committee had initially believed they had \$12 million to allocate. He stated that he wants the County to make good on that, suggesting \$2 million this year and \$2 million next year as part of honoring that commitment.

Alexandra noted that although the County intended to reach smaller organizations, the contract language still imposed barriers such as high insurance requirements, creating structural misalignment with the organizations they hoped to reach. Joey Williams agreed, noting that requirements such as prior funding history restrict new or smaller organizations. He emphasized that commissioners allocate dollars and identify funding areas (rental assistance housing, community-based health services, mental health, youth development and education, business support, non-custodial services, and reentry programs) but have no control over which organizations ultimately receive grants.

Alexandra added that similar issues affected the CFCI AIAN childcare funding opportunity. There are no existing daycare facilities to build upon, and creating daycare facilities from scratch is a major undertaking. Native entities are trying, but by the time a facility is built, funding may no longer be available. She noted community desire for childcare but also geographic dispersion, making implementation challenging. Joey Williams stated that Amity may allow Sacred Paths and UAI to develop a voucher program instead.

Commissioner Chrissie Castro agreed with Alexandra and explained that she had a background in early childhood development consulting and she had shared the childcare RFP with colleagues who found that the funding was inadequate for building a sustainable early childhood facility and that the only feasible option was a voucher system, yet the RFP did not reflect that. She recommended involving community-based organizations earlier in the RFP writing process so they can offer input. Joey Williams agreed and noted uncertainty about whom Amity and JCOD consult during the process. Commissioner Chrissie Castro asked whether Sacred Path and UAI could attend a future meeting to report on childcare work and share any barriers they are experiencing. Alexandra agreed to reach out to Sacred Path and UAI.

Commissioner Dr. Garcia noted that the Commission should be contacted directly or that a procedure should be in place to provide input and feedback for the CFCI program.



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Action Items

6.1. Adopt the June 16, 2026, Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC) Unapproved Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Dr. Andrea Garcia and seconded by Commissioner Shawn Imitates Dog to approve the unapproved June 16, 2026, LANAIC Meeting Minutes as presented.

The motion passed.

YES	Villaseñor, Lewis-Smith, Castro, Escoto, Garcia, A., Garcia, V., Imitates Dog, Morales Recalde, Only A Chief, Tenorio
NO	
ABSTAIN	
ABSENT	Bhalla, Williams, Jackson, Ortega Jr.

6.2. Adopt proposed panelists and moderator for LANAIC 50th Anniversary Event at The Huntington on October 12, 2026

A motion was made by Commissioner Shawn Imitates Dog and seconded by Vice Chairperson Bryce Lewis-Smith to adopt proposed panelists and moderator for LANAIC 50th Anniversary Event at The Huntington on October 12, 2026.

The motion passed.

YES	Villaseñor, Lewis-Smith, Castro, Escoto, Garcia, A., Garcia, V., Imitates Dog, Morales Recalde, Only A Chief, Tenorio
NO	
ABSTAIN	
ABSENT	Bhalla, Williams, Jackson, Ortega Jr.



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6.3. Adopt a 2026 Native American Heritage Month Theme

Roll call votes were taken for the 2026 Native American Heritage Month Theme (the vote breakdown is below), and “A Legacy to Urban Indian Leadership” was selected.

2026 Native American Heritage Month Theme (Round 1)

	Bhalla	Castro	Escoto	Garcia, A	Garcia, V	Imitates Dog	Jackson	Lewis-Smith	Morales Recalde	Only A Chief	Ortega	Tenorio	Villaseñor	Williams
Living Truths: Fifty Years of Community Care	Absent						Absent				Absent			Absent
From Foundation to Future														
Still We Rise														
Carrying the Light for Our Future Generations														
Carrying the Fire		X				X								
Building the Fire														
Honoring Our Past. Shaping Our Future.			X		X				X			X		
50 Years of Advocacy. Partnership. Progress.														
A Legacy of Indigenous to Urban Indian Leadership				X				X		X			X	



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2026 Native American Heritage Month Theme (Round 2)

	Bhalla	Castro	Escoto	Garcia, A	Garcia, V	Imitates Dog	Jackson	Lewis-Smith	Morales Recalde	Only A Chief	Ortega	Tenorio	Villaseñor	Williams
Honoring Our Past. Shaping Our Future.	Absent	X	X				Absent		X		Absent	X		Absent
A Legacy of Indigenous to Urban Indian Leadership				X	X	X		X		X			X	

6.4. Approve the LA City/County Native American Indian Commission pages of the Department of Arts and Culture Website

A motion was made by Commissioner Dr. Andrea Garcia and seconded by Commissioner Mona Morales Recalde to approve the LA City/County Native American Indian Commission pages of the Department of Arts and Culture Website

The motion passed.

YES	Villaseñor, Lewis-Smith, Castro, Escoto, Garcia, A., Garcia, V., Imitates Dog, Morales Recalde, Only A Chief, Tenorio
NO	
ABSTAIN	
ABSENT	Bhalla, Williams, Jackson, Ortega Jr.

Discussion Items

8.1 Discuss AIAN Homelessness in LA County

No discussion was had.



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8.2 Discuss Impacts of Federal Administration on LA County's AIAN Community

Alexandra Ferguson reported on the OMB budget impact and rules changes discussed at the prior meeting. She stated that the County authorized departments to submit feedback. Alexandra decided not to publicly identify program names because doing so would not be strategic in the CSAIBG context.

She noted that the Department of Arts and Culture submitted comments expressing concerns about infringement on rights, particularly emphasizing impacts on arts and culture. This comment was referenced in a New York Times article titled "[White House Faces Stiff Pushback on Subjecting Grants to Political Review](#)."

Chair's Report

9.1 General Updates

No report was provided.

Executive Director's Report

10.1 LA County Draft Tribal Consultation Policy Update

Alexandra provided a brief update on the Draft Tribal Consultation Policy process. She shared that following the June meeting she shared the draft policy with Commissioners and requested feedback. She received one commissioner response noting they had reviewed the policy and had no edits. She explained that the policy will need to be read twice by the Board of Supervisors before adoption and that the consulting team is continuing its work. The goal is for the policy to be adopted through a Board motion, ideally in November 2026. Alexandra encouraged commissioners who have not yet done so to review the draft policy.

10.2 FY2026 LA County Single Audit

Alexandra provided a brief update on the Single Audit since the SGB is now meeting quarterly. She noted that CSAIBG is included in the County's single audit, as it is part of federal programs. Alexandra explained that she previously participated in single audit work at WDACS in 2021, where auditors request documentation and departments must submit the required materials. She stated that her and Julien along with the Arts and Culture Admin team have been working on this audit work over the past couple of weeks.



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10.3 CSBG Desk Review

Alexandra reported that the California Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) team had notified her that they will begin a desk review of the CSBG program. She shared that the desk review is a truncated monitoring and that CSD performed a full monitoring of the program in 2025 and that her and Julien will be working with CSD on documentation submittal. She also emphasized that monitoring their CSBG subcontractor is also required and that Julien will be performing a desk review of Pukuu later this year.

10.4 2026 LANAIC Community Elections Update

Alexandra shared language from the LANAIC Bylaws regarding community elections. She stated that commissioners will have a more extensive discussion at next month's meeting. She asked commissioners to review the bylaw language between now and then, noting that updates are needed in light of the Trump administration.

Committee & Ad Hoc Committee Reports

11.1 Mayoral Appointed Commissioners

No report was provided.

11.2 50th Anniversary Planning Ad Hoc Committee

No report was provided.

11.3 2026 Native American Heritage Month Planning Ad Hoc Committee

Alexandra reported that the Commission still has not secure a City Council office to host the 2026 NAHM in chambers presentation. Vice Chairperson Bryce Lewis-Smith will reach out to a potential host. Commissioner Chrissie Castro offered to contact her own connection if Vice Chair Lewis-Smith's outreach does not result in a host.

Commissioner General Comments on Non-Agenda Items

Commissioner John Only A Chief reported that he spoke with Scott Black, CEO of American Indian Health & Services, regarding the new clinic. He asked whether the facility would focus more on dental or medical services, noting that he had secured 19 dental chairs and wanted to understand the percentage allocation. Scott Black indicated that dental services would be provided across various communities, likely through mobile vans.

Commissioner Only A Chief described the recent event at the American Indian Health Services site as positive. However, he noted that there is currently no timeline for the clinic's opening because several city-required utility and permitting sign-offs are still pending. He estimated the



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opening could be approximately two years away unless the organization begins contracting work sooner. For example, windows had to be removed to install the dental equipment.

He concluded that once completed, the clinic will be a beautiful building that will significantly benefit community members.

Commissioner Only A Chief asked for an update on the open seat on the Commission. He noted that in earlier years openings took significant time to fill and asked what the Commission is doing to increase awareness of the vacancy. He stated that he personally plans to share information at a powwow to encourage community interest.

Alexandra responded that the Fifth District (Supervisor Barger) manages its own appointment processes and outreach efforts. She offered to connect with anyone Commissioner Only A Chief may have in mind. She also noted that an additional vacancy will open in August for the Third District and advised commissioners to direct interested individuals to Supervisor Horvath's website.

Commissioner Ted Tenorio announced that Supervisor Solis is once again hosting a veteran's job fair at the Pomona Fairplex this Friday, the 24th, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in Building 4. He noted that additional information is available on Supervisor Solis' website, where flyers have been posted. Commissioner Tenorio added that he will be attending the event.

Announcements/Future Agenda Items

No announcements/future agenda items were provided.

Commission Adjournment

Chairperson Villaseñor announced that the next LANAIC meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 18, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. in the Hall of Administration, Room 372, located at 500 W. Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 P.M.