

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE
COMMISSION ON AMERICAN INDIAN & ALASKA NATIVE AFFAIRS

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Monday, October 6, 2021

CAIANA Public Statement on ABQ Indigenous Peoples’ Day

On behalf of the Albuquerque Commission on American Indian and Alaska Native Affairs, we join in celebration and recognition of Indigenous People’s Day and in solidarity for justice for our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Woman.

We want to take a moment to also acknowledge the traditional territory of the Tiwa speaking Tribes of Sandia and Isleta Pueblos, whose ancestral land we call Albuquerque home. In addition, the Indigenous tribes of New Mexico that include the Pueblos of Acoma, Cochiti, Jemez, Laguna, Nambe, Ohkay Owingeh, Picuris, Pojoaque, San Felipe, San Ildefonso, Santa Ana, Santa Clara, Kewa, Taos, Tesuque, Zia, Zuni, and the Apache Tribes of Fort Sill, Jicarilla, Mescalero, and the Navajo Nation.

Of these resilient Indigenous tribes in existence today, we are but a small fraction left after over five-hundred years of colonization by Spanish, Mexican, and United States governments. As the City of Albuquerque makes headway on addressing challenges affecting the Native population, which have predated any administration or political agenda, we all must continue to learn about, educate ourselves and others, advocate for, challenge and change the systems and policies that have historically caused harm and promoted racism against Indigenous Peoples. Today, our Native relatives of Albuquerque are still experiencing one of the highest rates homelessness, in 2019, 30% of our Native children in NM were still living in poverty, the highest of any race or ethnic group according to a NM Kids Count Report, and we are ranked second for the highest number of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Woman cases as reported by the Urban Indian Health Institute. We need to keep doing better.

Today, Albuquerque has one of the highest percentages of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) affiliated with federally recognized tribes (CDC). In addition, over 400 Indigenous tribes are represented in Albuquerque alone consisting of 8.2% of the population. The Native urban population and tribes continue to have an ever-growing presence and voice. We continue to live, since time immemorial, and before borders, as educators, entrepreneurs, environmentalists, agriculturalists, and scientists. We are contributors to policy, health, law, government, business, education, and the arts. We are advocates, activists, leaders,

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facilitators, nation builders, and change makers. We are leaders and participants using our power and voice to bring about transformative change and healing so we no longer have to survive, but thrive.

We want to recognize all our Indigenous relatives and tribes who are not acknowledged by the U.S. federal government, our relatives to the north, the First Peoples of Canada, and those who have since time immemorial we have traveled to, traded with, and exchanged goods and innovations with in Mexico, Central, and South America. Our collective indigenous history on this continent is a shared history. One where we consider ourselves stewards of the land, land we are connected to by language, belief and livelihood. Land we all have an obligation to protect.

In closing, we want to thank the Native community of Albuquerque and our allies for being here with us and to those who are watching virtually. We want to thank everyone for coming together in these most unprecedented times. We ask everyone to continue to support each other with kindness, compassion and empathy, because the work is hard and we will continue to be challenged in unforeseen ways. As the Commission, we thank you for your support as well and we want to express our continued mission and efforts to encourage, strengthen, and promote recognition and respect for the culture of Native people and our contributions to the City of Albuquerque, the state of New Mexico, and all across the country.