

Thank you for your thoughtful review and questions. Responses to each are below and also in the narrative highlighted in yellow.

1. The objectives for Year 2 are extremely ambitious, especially when relying upon only one full-time staff person and three others contributing less than 10% FTE. How can everything in this proposal be achieved?

The activities were scaled back as follows: 1) the newsletter was reduced from 12 to 8, the resource guide was more appropriately named and described as a Disability Information Pamphlet for Tribal Communities, and the advisory meetings were reduced from monthly to quarterly. The Native Center is supported by the Sonoran Center's Communications, Research, and Administrative teams. These personnel will assist with arranging trainings, producing products, and managing data. We are also in the process of hiring a Native student worker to assist with project activities.

2. What are the specific outcomes anticipated after Year 2 of funding? What products, events, research, knowledge, etc., will result? How, specifically, will these things be of value to Arizona tribal communities? The ADDPC year 1 funding was determined to be startup funding and outreach to the various Arizona tribal nations. How can you ensure that the project is moving forward with more concrete outcomes than just outputs (i.e. the number of meetings or newsletters developed)?

The overall focus of the Native Center is to increase knowledge, access, and use of culturally responsive disability services and supports that assist Tribal members with disabilities and their families to achieve their desired outcomes. Indicators of these are increased numbers of Tribal members that participate and utilize the resources of the Center. Anyone who attends a training or talking circle or receives a product or newsletter will be asked to complete a survey that asks about their satisfaction as well as impact questions regarding the knowledge they gained, if they will use it, if they thought it was helpful, and what additional information or assistance they would like to receive. A major outcome and emphasis of the first few years of the Native Center is building relationships and trust which lays the foundation for the future. One measure is repeat "customers" who access the Center and expanded communities who request a training or visit or to be a part of an activity being conducted.

3. How does the project account for/accommodate the differing cultures, traditions, languages, etc., of the various tribes in Arizona? For example, how will a Resource Guide for Tribal Communities be created in digital and accessible formats for tribes that do not have a written language?

The Resource Guide name was changed to more accurately reflect this proposed product. The Disability Information Pamphlet for Tribal Communities will be created for use in finding and accessing resources in Arizona related to disability.

The pamphlet will be a collection of resources for tribal individuals with disabilities, their families, and tribal communities as a reference for addressing individual needs.

There are not any tribal groups in Arizona who do not have a written language. This was confirmed through research and by the tribal Elder who has an extensive history working with tribal communities in Arizona. There are three major tribal language groups in Arizona including Uto-Aztecan, Ne-Dene, and Yuman. All 22 tribal groups in the state fall under one of the major language groups. Although there may be differences in dialect, most tribal languages are similar enough for speakers to understand one another despite those difference. In addition, due to the history of colonization, many Native people do not speak their tribal language and many who can speak their language are not able to read or write the language. Tribes have built language recovery programs and have members who are capable of translating the pamphlet. Money allocated as stipends will be used to support translation of the pamphlet into the three major tribal language groups.

4. The Evaluation Plan lists various ways data will be compiled but nothing specific about how it will be analyzed or utilized. Grouping information into themes for future use seems insufficient. Clarify your evaluation process.

A mixed method evaluation approach will be implemented. Evaluation of findings collected for year one webinars provides an example of how information can be collected and assessed in subsequent years of this grant. This is an example of the mixed method approach that will be undertaken. Information will be gathered, evaluated, and reviewed and outcome data/findings will aid in determining the needs of the tribal communities. For example, in the evaluation findings from year one, there was a focus on a need for employment resources and information for tribal individuals with disabilities in the participant evaluations. Consequently, year two activities will address that need by offering two training webinars on employment in tribal communities for individuals with disabilities. Thus, information collection, analyses, and assessment will drive the goals of this project. The evaluations also provide an opportunity to reflect learning outcomes through asking participants if their knowledge regarding a particular topic related to disability has increased due their participation in the webinar.

Meanwhile a qualitative approach will provide insight into nuanced information related to cultural and indigenous elements of tribes. Qualitative findings from the open-ended questions provides detail regarding participant feedback. Also, talking circles are recorded. The audio recordings will be reviewed and edited to ensure accuracy of the text. The text can then be coded, and the coded areas can be grouped to create categories. As a result, emergent themes can be identified. The themes reflect the feedback of participants and provide focus areas for NCD future goals. Themes also highlight important cultural elements of

tribal groups which can be included in interactions, meetings, and partnerships with the community. Weaving together qualitative and quantitative findings and data is often the most appropriate approach with tribal communities since the qualitative portion allows for reflection of cultural nuance while the quantitative data captures objective information.

Other information which is collected is webinar registration which reflects the role of participants, if they identify as tribal, if they are family members of an individual with a disability, or if they are acting in a professional capacity. Also, their geographic location is collected, as well as their contact information. Additionally, other information can be collected and examined related to outreach. The number of newsletters produced is not necessarily useful information, but evaluating the amount of newsletters distributed to tribal groups is meaningful since increasing outreach and access to information is a grant goal. It is possible to assess reach through tracking the number of shares via social media and website visits.

Training data will be collected from participants to assess their satisfaction, knowledge gains, and usefulness of the information. The website and newsletter will offer an opportunity for users to respond with their feedback on the relevance and meaningfulness of the information provided. One of the proposed talking circles will be conducted as an evaluation of partners to share their thoughts on whether the Native Center is addressing their needs and those of their community, and also whether it is making a difference for Tribal members with disabilities and their families. A survey for partners will be created and disseminated with questions similar to those for the talking circle as another means for the audiences of the Native Center to provide input regarding the impact of the work that is completed.

**Budget Clarification:**

1. Clarify the justification for both professionals listed in Contracted Services and how their work/consultation will support or augment the work by Christie Kelly, the new Director of Native Disability Center. Does the Sonoran UCEDD anticipate the actual utilization will diminish over the contract period or future years of this project? If costs will be adjusted after review, please resubmit a budget summary and budget narrative.

Jimmy Warne was the co-founder of O'yate Circle and is a Lakota Native who was raised in Arizona. He has relationships within the state and is engaging those connections to start and expand the Native Center. He advises on traditional ways and bridges the Indigenous perspective with existing disability service systems. He is a messenger who facilitates storytelling and promotes learning through sharing. As a family member, Mr. Warne also has the personal experience which adds to his credibility and understanding. He started the American Indian Disability Summit through a Talking Circle which is still continuing today 17 years later. He is advising and guiding our activities to assist with building a Native Center that is by and for the people and is

sustained overtime like the Summit. Mr. Warne has engaged elders who are providing input into the development of the Center and introduces us so that we are accepted by an expanded Tribal network. In addition he brings his national connections who are joining our webinars and sharing within their networks enhancing our reach throughout the United States and Canada.

Wayne Weston was hired as the director of O'yate Circle and is advising the project based upon his experiences. He is a traditional dancer, teacher, and healer and brings those respected ways and practices he has found helpful to guide our work. Mr. Weston attends pow wows, sweat lodges, and reservation events to promote engagement across the state of South Dakota. He has researched extensively about Arizona Tribes and introduces him self as a "relative". His experience with O'yate Circle and lessons learned are helpful in informing how we can best establish the Native Center. He will share his knowledge through trainings and local visits with Tribal leadership across Arizona.

The two consultants are mentoring and supporting our new director as she moves into that position. The consultants are like parttime employees contributing their time to complete the objectives and proposed work scope. We anticipate the on-going involvement of Mr. Warne due to his senior position and key role on the project. Mr. Weston's time is expected to reduce in subsequent years to be determined with the advancement of the Center and the need for his contributions.

The only budget change is within the stipend line item but not overall total as follows: Stipends for Native American people with disabilities @ \$50 per person X 18 people and \$500 per person for language translation X 3 totaling \$2,400.

**Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities  
Native Disability Center  
Year Two Proposal  
August 10, 2022**

**Executive Summary**

The goal of the Native Disability Center is to provide a Native focused program to increase knowledge of disability services, advocacy, and programs available to the 22 reservation communities and off reservation urban communities with significant Native American populations in partnership with Tribal members and Nations. The talking circles, informal and formal meetings with partners, and webinar evaluations during year one provided valuable feedback for year two grant goals. Year two goals will be addressed through four objectives. **Objective 1:** Provide employment-related information, resources, and training to individuals with disabilities, their families, and tribal disability service providers. **Objective 2:** Increase access to services related to disability through acting as a center for information, partnerships, and collaborations with disability, education, and Vocational Rehabilitation service providers around Arizona and in proximity to tribal communities. An indigenous culturally relevant outreach and education curriculum will be developed through a decolonized disability model that can be shared by the Native Disability Center. **Objective 3:** Ongoing outreach to tribal communities, tribal groups and organizations, and partners that work with individuals with disabilities in tribal communities. **Objective 4:** Develop a Tribal Community Advisory Committee for the Native Disability Center for ongoing feedback regarding needs, barriers to accessing resources, and increasing knowledge related to disability services for tribal communities. Two talking circles and three webinars were conducted with 564 recorded participants and others who were in person or watched the recordings.

The Native Center addresses a priority of ADDPC to increase access and inclusion of Tribal members with disabilities. The Native Disability Center responds to and supports the ADDPC targeted disparity goal to improve employment outcomes for Tribal youth with disabilities.

Native Center efforts will focus on engaging and responding to the needs of Tribal members with disabilities across the 22 Nations and communities in Arizona as well as those individuals who reside in urban areas. A website, monthly newsletter, listserv, and in person visits will enhance communication and resource sharing statewide. Activities to date have created opportunities for individuals to share their needs and preferences of what they would like from the Native Center. The resulting trainings, products, and activities will be designed in response to the input of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families with mechanisms in place for on-going feedback to ensure quality and effectiveness. Data collected and personal stories will illustrate the anticipated outcomes and impact experienced by participants.

## Overview of Funded Program

The Native Disability Center is focused on meeting a well-documented need in Arizona – the establishment of a central hub of information, trainings, and resources designed to enhance awareness, services, and supports that are responsive to and in partnership with, Tribal members and Nations across the state. The goal of the Native Center is to *provide a Native focused program to increase knowledge of disability services, advocacy, and programs available to the 22 reservation communities and off reservation urban communities with significant Native American populations.* The first year laid the foundation of initial activities for framing the Native Center with year two continuing that development with an emphasis on implementation and expansion. A diagram illustrating the Native Center to date is located in Figure 1. Activities and accomplishments completed in year one are highlighted below.

- A Native Center branding and logo were developed to identify affiliated activities and resources. A new website is in the process of development which was delayed pending university migration to a new platform. A brochure has been developed for dissemination.
- Staff attended the Arizona Tribal Leaders Summit Research Showcase on October 22, 2021 and had a display table to introduce the new Native Center to the Tribal Leaders in attendance. Many contacts were made with Tribal leaders and their representatives.
- NBC News provided an evening news story showcasing the new Native Center on December 7, 2021. News Story Link: [https://www.kvoa.com/video/group-aims-to-improve-employment-access-disability-services-for-tribal-communities/video\\_ea313a53-3cf1-5da4-b6d1-c4fff06211f4.html?fbclid=IwAR1e9GXNpjEy7ZNIrqa5lfMLpYhrf7RKnbyn1\\_CVD9IQz9DUBGb1sEn9GI](https://www.kvoa.com/video/group-aims-to-improve-employment-access-disability-services-for-tribal-communities/video_ea313a53-3cf1-5da4-b6d1-c4fff06211f4.html?fbclid=IwAR1e9GXNpjEy7ZNIrqa5lfMLpYhrf7RKnbyn1_CVD9IQz9DUBGb1sEn9GI)
- Invited presentation for the Native Center by Wendy Parent-Johnson with Kristen Mackey, state Vocational Rehabilitation and Nery Birdsell, Baboquivari High School, as an example of best practices for the Office of Disability Employment Policy webinar entitled “How Blended, Braided, or Sequenced Funding Can Help Drive Employment, Equity, and Inclusion” on March 22, 2022. A link to the recording and handouts is below:  
[View a Recording of the Webinar](#)  
[Access Presentation Slides](#)  
A follow up presentation with the same title was held in person and virtually for the National Association of Workforce Development Personnel Conference in Las Vegas on May 17, 2022. These were followed up by another webinar on August 11<sup>th</sup> focused on “In depth Q & A” in response to the overwhelming interest and questions from participants.
- On-site visits were conducted at Ak-Chin Tribal Leadership (Chairman Robert Miguel), Tribal Special Education and Tribal Youth Programs on March 31, 2022. Jim Warne, Wayne Weston and Treva Roanhorse conducted these on-site outreach efforts. Some meetings were rescheduled due to pandemic public health measures that vary per reservation community. Each Tribal Nation has

their own public health office and leadership determines the levels of Tribal shut-down and/or Tribal access.

- Time was dedicated to expanding connections and building relationships with individual Tribal members across the state affiliated with schools, Tribal VR, juvenile justice, early intervention, colleges, foster system, independent living as well as individuals with disabilities and family members. Native Center staff responded to questions and requests for information that were received.
- Native Center staff attended and presented at the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual American Indian Disability Summit on April 1, 2022 in Phoenix (and virtually) sponsored and co- led by the Sonoran Center. A display table with resources and presentation/talking circle session was conducted to get input and feedback on what Tribal members wanted for the Native Center.
- The Youth Disability Summit was held on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022 and saw 145 virtual attendees, including youth, family members, and professionals from Arizona and across the country. Youth leaders affiliated with a Native Center program, *Finds Their Way*, facilitated the event. A talking circle was held with attendees.
- Staff Development Training was provided by Jim Warne, project consultant from Oyate' Circle and Warrior Society Development. LLC, on April 5, 2022. This was an introduction of the new Native Center's presence within the Sonoran Center and addressed "Indian 101" cultural and disability issues. The Native Center will continue in-house staff development opportunities to increase effectiveness of other Center programs that may work with Tribal members with disabilities.
- Initiated a monthly webinar series in May 2022 with three completed and one more scheduled for year one with planned continuation through year two.
  - Internalized Oppression & Critical Stress Debriefing, Wayne Weston, Oyate Circle Coordinator University of South Dakota Sanford Health School of Medicine Center for Disabilities, May 25, 2022
  - History of American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS), Treva Roanhorse, Former Executive Director for Navajo Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), June 17, 2022.
  - Indigenous Perspectives of Disability, Jim Warne, Director of Community Engagement University of South Dakota Center for Disabilities UCEDD, Sanford School of Medicine and Warrior Society Development. LLC, July 20, 2022

Recordings are available on our youtube channel: [Native Center for Disabilities Webinar Series Playlist](#)

- The U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy's, Senior Policy Advisor for Native/Tribal youth reached out to Wendy Parent-Johnson and requested monthly meetings to discuss ways to share information, resources, and best and promising practices. Christie Kelly has now joined the meetings. They are disseminating our Native Center information across federal partners. Plans include development of a shared *Policy Primer* focused on Indigenous model best practices and systems change.

## Year Two Plan

The talking circles, informal and formal meetings with partners, and webinar evaluations provided valuable feedback for year two grant goals. Year two goals will be addressed through four objectives.

**Objective 1:** Provide employment-related information, resources, and training to individuals with disabilities, their families, and tribal disability service providers.

Much of the feedback from the evaluations indicated there is a need for information, outreach, and resources related to employment for tribal members with disabilities. The webinar was attended by individuals, family members, as well as state agencies, medical/health care workers, tribal Vocational Rehabilitation professionals, public school employees, education professionals, tribal members, and organizations that work with tribal individuals with disabilities.

Qualitative feedback from the webinar evaluations was prompted by three open-ended questions. The questions were: 1.) What topics would you like covered in future webinars? 2.) Please provide any suggestions/comment that may help us improve our trainings and webinars. 3.) What needs do you see in your community that you hope will be addressed? Responses from participants included 13 comments and suggestions related to employment, job training, employer training, and how to assist individuals with disabilities in seeking and finding employment. A total of 37 responses were provided for the three open-ended questions so employment concerns/issues were almost half of the total responses. Consequently, the first objective is focused on addressing that need. The Native Disability Center will conduct two trainings, which are outlined below.

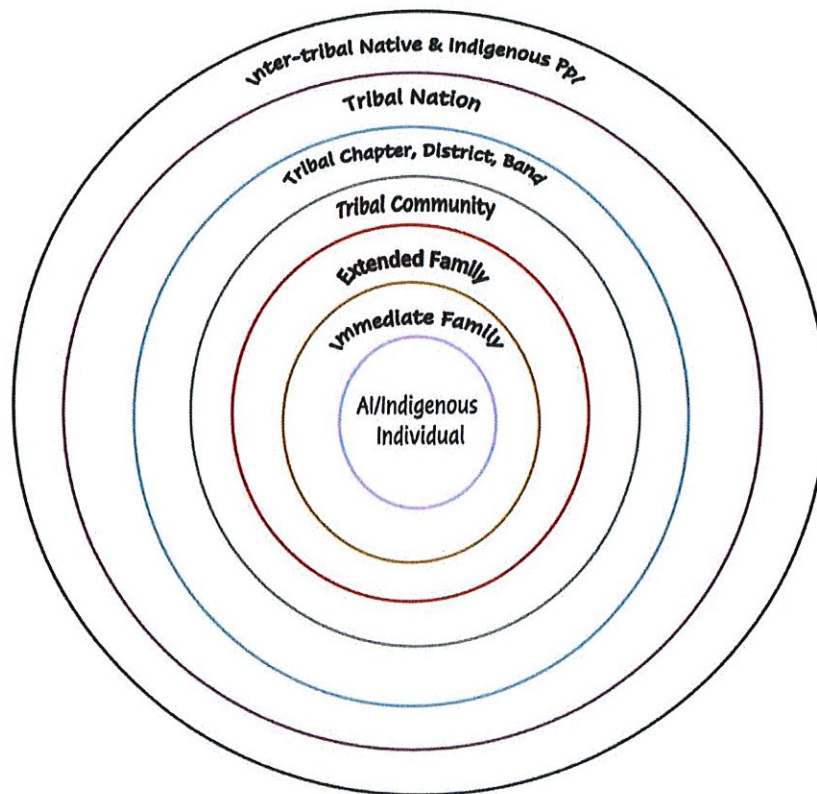
- Conduct a training webinar on employment programs and resources (including Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs) in Arizona for individuals with disabilities. Learning Outcomes: Participants will know where to find disability employment information/resources, direct support for employment training and preparation, and what VocRehab programs can provide for themselves, a family member, or client.
- Conduct a training webinar on employment. How to prepare for employment if you have a disability. What do you need to know (e.g., skills, training, certifications) to get a job? Where to find information on employment preparation in tribal communities and in urban areas. What schools have training programs for individuals with disabilities? Learning Outcomes: Participants will know how to prepare for employment and if they need additional training or education before obtaining a job. Participants will have knowledge about resources in Arizona and tribal communities that provide direct services related to employment preparation.

**Objective 2:** Increase access to services related to disability through acting as a center for information, partnerships, and collaborations with disability, education, and Vocational Rehabilitation service providers around Arizona and in proximity to tribal communities. An indigenous culturally relevant outreach and education curriculum will be developed through a decolonized disability model that can be shared by the Native Disability Center.



- Develop a model for Decolonizing Disability

Building a sustainable model which can provide the means to indigenize disability will provide a pattern which can be shared with other tribal groups and organizations. The decolonized disability model development is based upon the Native belief all people are born with gifts and strengths as well as the acceptance of colonization as a destructive force in the lives of Native individuals. Brayboy (2005) has explained, "By colonization, I mean that European America thought, knowledge, and power structures dominate present-day society in the United States" (p. 430). Therefore, colonization is a pervasive dynamic built into the fabric of U.S. society. In order to decolonize (and indigenize) disability there must be active processes to counter widely accepted colonized notions about disability. According to Fellner (2018), "...decolonizing is a verb. It is an active, intentional, moment-to-moment process that involves critically undoing colonial ways of knowing, being, and doing, while privileging and embodying Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing" (p. 284). An active means to decolonize disability would be to rebuild the *layers of support* encircling a Native individual-referred to as "circles of support". The circles of support model for decolonizing disability are outlined below in image 1.



This model will provide a visual representation for tribal members, partners, and collaborators on how they can support communities work towards decolonizing

disability. Image 1 also provides a basis for how traditional circles of support were sustainable. Native individuals were supported by immediate family, extended family, and tribal community members and when one circle of support was not available or accessible, another layer prevented complete isolation and neglect. Rebuilding the layers of support for tribal individuals can aid in building and reinforcing relationships in tribal communities. The simple model also provides a foundation for creation of a training curriculum which can be easily replicated and shared. A final purpose of the model is to provide a visual representation for how outreach and communication can be accomplished in tribal communities. The goal is to get information, resources, and working knowledge to the families and individuals in the inner most circles of the model. However, the other layers should be included as part of ongoing communication and outreach. Conducting outreach through all the layers provides consistency and assurance that the needed information and resources get to the individual with the disability and their families. The decolonizing disability model (as a simple model) will provide latitude for different tribal communities to include specific cultural nuances in how they accomplish their goals related to disability, which will encourage empowerment and sovereignty of each tribal community.

- Build ongoing and sustainable partnerships with tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs, tribal schools, tribal colleges, and direct service providers through conducting in-person or virtual meetings with groups bi-annually. Outcomes of meetings will be to share knowledge, information, and updates regarding the Native Disability Center.
- Develop a decolonized disability model curriculum for outreach and education to share with partners, groups, and organizations that work with tribal individuals with disabilities. The model is outlined in Image 1.
- Creation of a Disability Information Pamphlet for Tribal Communities which can be used to find and access resources in Arizona related to disability. The pamphlet will be a collection of resources for tribal individuals with disabilities, their families, and tribal communities as a reference for addressing individual needs.

There are not any tribal groups in Arizona who do not have a written language. This was confirmed through research and by the tribal Elder who has an extensive history working with tribal communities in Arizona. There are three major tribal language groups in Arizona including Uto-Aztecan, Ne-Dene, and Yuman. All 22 tribal groups in the state fall under one of the major language groups. Although there may be differences in dialect, most tribal languages are similar enough for speakers to understand one another despite those difference. In addition, due to the history of colonization, many Native people do not speak their tribal language and many who can speak their language are not able to read or write the language. Tribes have built language recovery programs and have members who are capable of translating the pamphlet.

Money allocated as stipends will be used to support translation of the pamphlet into the three major tribal language groups.

**Objective 3:** Ongoing outreach to tribal communities, tribal groups and organizations, and partners that work with individuals with disabilities in tribal communities.

- Create a Tribal listserv for individuals, family, and organization that work with tribal individuals with disabilities. The Tribal listserv will include partners, collaborators, tribal organizations, tribal schools, and service providers. The listserv will focus on dissemination of information in a virtual format using email.
- Disseminate information, knowledge, and resources to tribal groups in Arizona through a newsletter that will be distributed 8 months of the year. A newsletter will provide an opportunity for mass outreach on a regular basis to ensure consistency of communication with partners. The Native Center Director will work with the Communication Director to develop content for the newsletter.
- Provide four presentations, webinars, and trainings to tribal communities in Arizona on information, resources in Arizona, employment, and disability. The Native Disability Center will offer to provide education on the decolonized disability model to providers that work with tribal communities.
  - Presentations on the Native Disability Center and the purpose of the Center
  - Cultural education on the decolonized disability model to providers that work with tribal individuals with disabilities.
- Conduct three talking circles with tribal communities to continue building relationships of trust, continue communication, and incorporate input from tribal members into ongoing implementation plans.
  - Year II: Tribal Nation based talking circles located in strategic geographic locations (i.e., Northeast, Northwest, Central and Southern)
  - Phoenix and Tucson have significant Tribal populations and will be a target location for additional Talking Circles

**Objective 4:** Develop a Tribal Community Advisory Committee for the Native Disability Center for ongoing feedback regarding needs, barriers to accessing resources, and increasing knowledge related to disability services for tribal communities. Community feedback is crucial in work with tribal communities, and this will provide a means for ongoing feedback which will assist in meeting overall grant objectives.

The Tribal Community Advisory Group will be made up of individuals with disabilities and their family members from tribal groups in the state of Arizona. The advisory group will provide ongoing information and feedback to the Native Disability Center relative to their unique needs as tribal individuals with disabilities. The committee will also provide feedback on the Native Center related to information sharing. The advisory committee feedback on training will be key for achieving all grant objectives. The advisory group will contribute to the long-term sustainability of the Native Disability Center through providing an opportunity for the committee members to act as leaders and self-

advocates through their roles as committee members. As the tribal members gain in knowledge and experience related to disability, they will become centers for information, awareness, and advocacy for their tribal communities. The advisory committee will also provide a sense of community for the members since many tribal individuals live in remote locations and may experience feelings of isolation. Being a person with a disability can enhance feelings of isolation so the advisory committee will provide an opportunity for the members to share their experiences and connect with other tribal individuals who have had similar experiences.

- The Tribal Community Advisory Committee will meet **once a quarter**.
- The Native Center Director will schedule, coordinate, and facilitate the initial meetings. Later meetings may be facilitated by committee members to provide leadership experience for the members. Meetings will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour and will take place on the Zoom platform.
- Recruitment for the committee will take place during the outreach efforts of the Native Disability Center Director, which will include meetings with tribal groups, organizations, and tribal colleges.

### **Systems Change Efforts**

The primary focus of the Native Center is to provide an indigenous approach to disability awareness, available services, and tribal specific programs. All our training (i.e. webinars and on-site) are developed through an indigenous lens to ensure that tribal members with disabilities and family members understand the parameters of disability that include physical, mental, emotional and behavioral disorders that may impact full inclusion into society including education, recreation, vocation and culture. This approach will impact communities and individuals that want to improve their quality of life with attention to indigenous cultures and disability with cultural competence.

Indigenous philosophies include: **1. Respect; 2. Inclusion 3. Family Dynamics and 4. Recruitment of Native practitioners to provide appropriate skills, knowledge, role models, and sufficient personnel to positively impact diverse and underserved communities for generations to come.** Our first-year planning and development process utilized the Native talking circle philosophies stated. The Native Disability Center recognizes the important role that we play in enhancing Native focus and inclusion for underserved populations in Arizona.

### **Activities Left to Complete by September 30<sup>th</sup>**

- The August Native Center Webinar is schedule for August 24, 2022, with Christie Kelly as the lead presenter. Title: Decolonizing Disability Rebuilding Support for Individuals with Disabilities and their Families within in Tribal Communities
- Talking circle are scheduled for August 31<sup>st</sup> and September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Protocols for the talking circles will be completed by August 26, 2022.
- Webinar evaluations for each webinar and talking circle will be collected to procure a wealth of information and feedback using Qualtrics.

- In person meetings will be made the week of **September 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup>** by Jimmy Warne, Christie Kelly, and Wayne Weston to conduct outreach and engage more tribal members and communities with Center activities.
- Wendy Parent-Johnson and Christie Kelly are visiting the Navajo Nation and meeting with Tribal VR and school personnel on September 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **Describe Barriers**

Filling the Native Center Director position took considerable time to recruit and hire a qualified candidate who was Native American with disability experience and connections to Arizona Tribal communities. Christie Kelly, the Native Center Director brings a wealth of experience and perspectives to increase the effectiveness and cultural approach for Arizona Tribal Nations and members with disabilities. She is from the Navajo Nation with awareness of the Arizona tribal experience, and she is also Tulalip and has personal experience with inter-Tribal issues. She will lead our team of Native disability scholars with cultural roots in service provision allowing for the indigenous approach to disability that the Native Center will continue to apply and make available to our Tribal members with a disability. [Introduction Message Video](#)

The following section explains the approach and rationale for conducting project activities from a traditional perspective. While this takes longer, we feel it is a critical and essential step to build the foundation for accomplishing the important work to follow. To understand the full picture of what “Native Disability Center” and it’s sister program, “Oyate Circle” have in common and the uniqueness’s each has to offer in each region. It is always important to find a relationship when working with different Nations through a pan-Indigenous approach showing how ceremonies, philosophies, language, customs, and other commonalities that connect us. Oyate Circle began its journey as introducing the program through a Oceti Sakowin (Seven Council Fires) connection and educating about how important that connection was to our ancestors. The Supreme Court identifies Tribal Reservations and Tribal Nations. In South Dakota there is only one Nation “Seven Council Fires” with several bands created into Reservations throughout the Midwest. In Arizona there are 22 Tribes which are created by the US Government who defined Tribe’s status as a Reservation. To build that sense of Nationhood it is important to study the relationships with the Tribes as Nations to see how many nations exist in Arizona. An example the Navajo are Athabascan speakers, closely related to the Apache and more distantly to other Athabascan-speaking peoples in Alaska and Canada. Another example is the O’odham nation that have four Reservations (Tohono, Gila, Salt and Ak-Chin and their relationships with each other as a Nation. Papago and Pima are still used but many Tribes are going back to their original language reference as a people, as a Nation. Seeing that relationship with each Nation helps with connecting the nations together to provide optimal services.

## **Community Partners**

Native Center staff have relied on collaborations with our many partners around the state affiliated with related programs including the Sonoran Center, Finds Their Way:

Communities for Youth Transition, My Health My Choice, Tohono O'odham Community College Partnership, pre-Employment Transition Services, Kessler Virtual Supports, Self-Advocacy Coalition, and Employment First to gain their insights to inform development activities. New partnerships with specific involvement in year two include:

- Navajo Nation Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services has committed funding and partnership to work with youth and adults with disabilities that need specialized culturally appropriate services and approach to ensure employment outcomes. This new partnership will develop new service models and innovative services to complement existing disability services that may be available to tribal members with a disability (letter of support).
- Jim Warne talked with the Ak-Chin Tribal Chairman, Robert Migual regarding new developments and will meet in September for updates and planned events for the Ak-Chin community.
- Salt River Pima Maricopa has expressed interest in hosting a Talking Circle as well as other events related to Tribal VR employment and placement needs that are in development (letter of support).

### **Evaluations Findings and Feedback from People with I/DD and Family Members**

**# Individuals with Disabilities = 44**

**# Family Members = 35**

**# Professionals Trained = 395**

**# Tribal Affiliated = 130**

(\* Note: numbers reflect only those who provided these demographic data)

A brief summary highlighting evaluation feedback from webinar participants and talking circles including people with disabilities and family members are described below. Attachment 5 provides a detailed summary of evaluation findings.

Drawing from the evaluation information from webinars retrieved on August 8, 2022, 83 individuals have completed the online evaluation. Of the total responses from the evaluations, 94% of participants agreed or strongly agreed their knowledge and/or skills on topics discussed during the webinar increased due to attending the event. In addition, 94% of participants who completed the evaluation agreed or strongly agreed they were satisfied with skills and knowledge they gained from attending the webinar. Most of the participants (84%) agreed with the statement that the webinar provided information relevant to their needs. We heard from individuals during the talking circle such as a grandmother who shared that her adolescent grandson with a developmental disability whom she is raising "there are no services for him" and a veteran with a disability telling us about the needs he had for services that were lacking.

### **Targeted Disparity**

The new Native Center is aware of the disability, poverty, education disparities and public health issues for Tribes in Arizona. The reservation communities in Arizona represent rural isolation, poverty, lack of access to disability support services and the

highest disability rates in the U.S. Section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act identifies American Indians/Alaska Native populations as having the highest disability rate but also as the most underserved and unserved. This results in American Indians with disabilities facing exclusion from economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and culturally appropriate support systems.

The Native Disability Center responds to and supports the ADDPC targeted disparity goal: *By 2026, the Council will strengthen a program that increases meaningful employment opportunities for transition aged youth with I/DD (ages 14-22) from the Navajo Nation by supporting a focus on training, technical assistance, direct services, and resources.* We anticipate impacting transition and employment outcomes for 20 Navajo youth with disabilities through participation in pre-Employment transition Services, Project Search, and Tribal/State Vocational Rehabilitation employment supports.

## **Evaluation Plan**

A mixed method evaluation approach will be implemented. Evaluation of findings collected above for year one webinars provides an example of how information can be collected and assessed in subsequent years of this grant. This is an example of the mixed method approach that will be undertaken. Information will be gathered, evaluated, and reviewed and outcome data/findings will aid in determining the needs of the tribal communities. For example, in the evaluation findings from year one, there was a focus on a need for employment resources and information for tribal individuals with disabilities in the participant evaluations. Consequently, year two activities will address that need by offering two training webinars on employment in tribal communities for individuals with disabilities. Thus, information collection, analyses, and assessment will drive the goals of this project. The evaluations also provide an opportunity to reflect learning outcomes through asking participants if their knowledge regarding a particular topic related to disability has increased due their participation in the webinar.

Meanwhile a qualitative approach will provide insight into nuanced information related to cultural and indigenous elements of tribes. Qualitative findings from the open-ended questions provides detail regarding participant feedback. Also, talking circles are recorded. The audio recordings will be reviewed and edited to ensure accuracy of the text. The text can then be coded, and the coded areas can be grouped to create categories. As a result, emergent themes can be identified. The themes reflect the feedback of participants and provide focus areas for NCD future goals. Themes also highlight important cultural elements of tribal groups which can be included in interactions, meetings, and partnerships with the community. Weaving together qualitative and quantitative findings and data is often the most appropriate approach with tribal communities since the qualitative portion allows for reflection of cultural nuance while the quantitative data captures objective information.

Other information which is collected is webinar registration which reflects the role of participants, if they identify as tribal, if they are family members of an individual with a

disability, or if they are acting in a professional capacity. Also, their geographic location is collected, as well as their contact information. Additionally, other information can be collected and examined related to outreach. The number of newsletters produced is not necessarily useful information, but evaluating the amount of newsletters distributed to tribal groups is meaningful since increasing outreach and access to information is a grant goal. It is possible to assess reach through tracking the number of shares via social media and website visits which will be also be tracked.

Training data will be collected from participants to assess their satisfaction, knowledge gains, and usefulness of the information. The website and newsletter will offer an opportunity for users to respond with their feedback on the relevance and meaningfulness of the information provided. One of the proposed talking circles will be conducted as an evaluation of partners to share their thoughts on whether the Native Center is addressing their needs and those of their community, and also whether it is making a difference for Tribal members with disabilities and their families. A survey for partners will be created and disseminated with questions similar to those for the talking circle as another means for the audiences of the Native Center to provide input regarding the impact of the work that is completed.

### **Other Funding**

Navajo Nation, Department of Dine' Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services partnership funded July 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023.

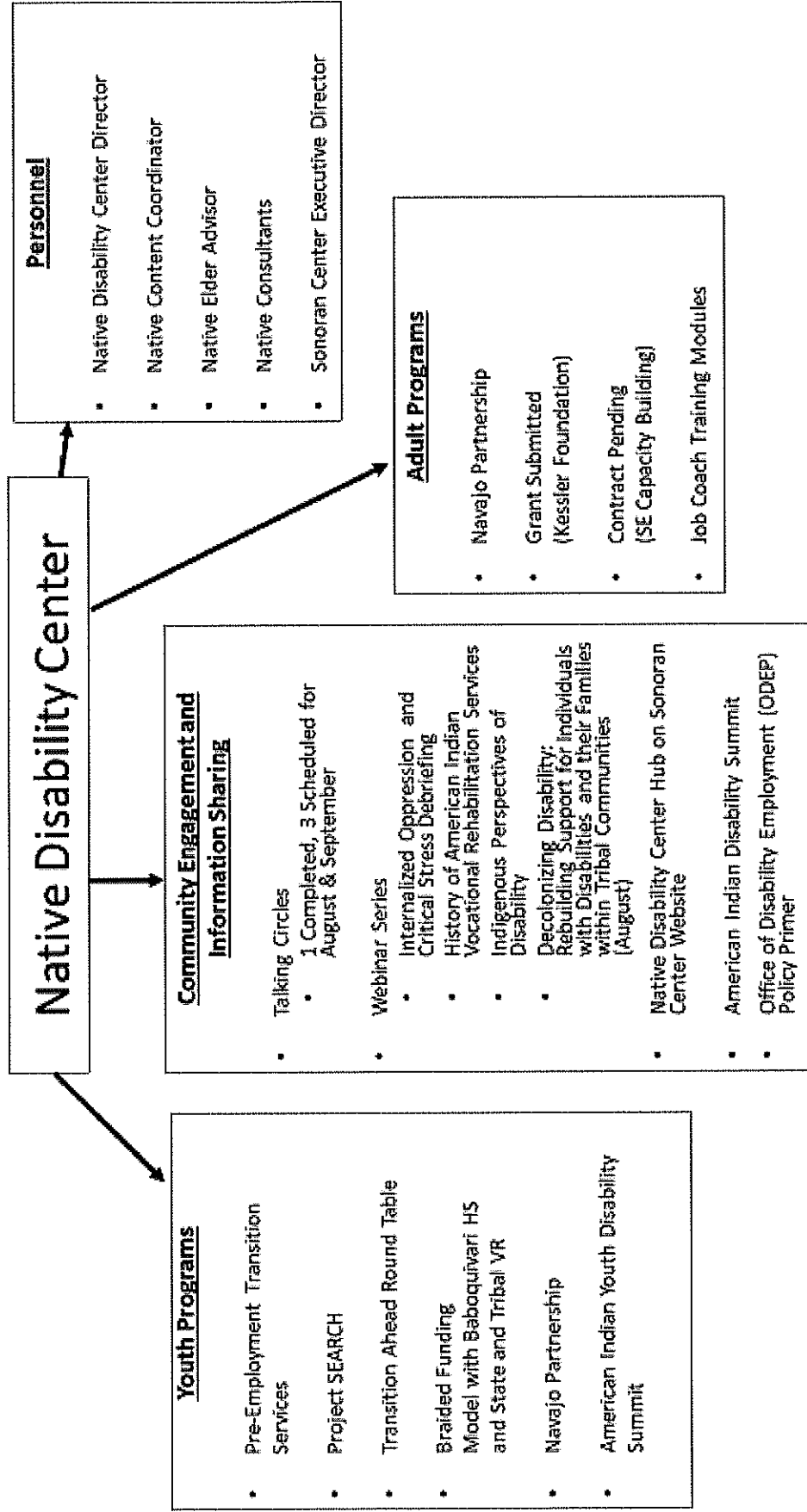
Indigenous Employment Services: Enhancing Outcomes and Opportunities for Tribal Members with Disabilities, 1/1/2023 through 12/31/2024, submitted to the Kessler Foundation. Decision pending notified as one of eleven finalists.

### **Sustainability**

The Native Center continues to develop into a resource for Tribal members with a disability, family members and organizations that want to partner for improved disability service and training supports. Training workshops and resources developed through the Talking Circles and information gathering from community events and Tribal conferences will be focused on reducing disparities experienced by Tribal members with disabilities. The Sonoran Center now has a new CORE program focused on disability issues for Arizona Indian Country. Continued funding and support will provide time and resources for this new program to become sustainable and permanent within the Sonoran Center CORE program foundation for future generations. The continued impact of this Center will address disability needs for Indian Country for future generations.



Figure 1:



## **Attachment 1: Year Two Timeline and Implementation Plan**

First Quarter: October, November, December 2022

- Request and attend meetings with Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation partners on Tohono O’odham, Navajo Nation, Pascua Yaqui, White Mountain Apache, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, Gila River Indian Community, and Hopi Vocational Rehabilitation
- Attend the Native American Women’s Conference in November to share information about NDC
- Outreach to Tribal Colleges and Universities in Arizona: Tohono O’odham Community College, San Carlos Apache Tribal College, Dine College
- Outreach to Tribal Organizations: Tucson Indian Center, Phoenix Indian Center, Inter-tribal Council of Arizona, Native Health, Native American Disability Law Center
- Outreach to leadership in tribal communities: Ak-Chin Indian Community, Cocopah Indian Tribal Headquarters, Colorado River Indian Tribes, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, Fort Yuma Quechuan Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, Kaibab Band of Paiute, San Carlos Apache, San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe, Yavapai Apache Tribe, and Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe
- Identify hosts for 3 Talking Circles-outreach to potential hosts
- Disseminate communications/informational documents among partners
- Analyze data from the webinar evaluations
- Newsletters and Listserv established and implemented
- Attend Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia in Native Americans Conference-Ak-Chin Hotel and Casino October (networking and establishing connection)
- Evaluate information from talking circles-create reports
- Continue the monthly webinar series planned as follows:
  - October - Darold Joseph, NAU – Find Your Spirit Journey in Special Education
  - November - Beverly Warne: Advocacy and Cultural Aspects of Disability
  - December - Heath Ducheneaux – Youth Transition, ALFA Camps and school coffee shop at Pine Ridge High School

Second Quarter: January, February, March 2023

- Recruit new participants and hosts for talking circles and webinars
- Continue Data Analysis for Talking Circles and Webinars
- Outreach to Tribal k-12 Education Departments and Schools: Salt River Schools, White Mountain Apache Schools, and Baboquivari School District
- Schedule and attend meetings with tribes: Ak-Chin Indian Community, Cocopah Indian Tribal Headquarters, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, Fort Yuma Quechuan Tribe
- Regular and consistent Tribal Community Advisory Committee established

- Monthly newsletter sent out and listserv in use for outreach and information sharing
- Conduct first Training on Employment and Disability for Tribal people and their families-Feedback evaluations collected
- Training feedback data and information cleaned and organized
- Submit report to ADDPC and present at Council meeting as needed
- Continue the monthly webinar series planned as follows:
  - January – Dr. Don Warne, Johns Hopkins AI Health, Medical Aspects of Disability in Indian Country
  - February – Panel presentation by Tribal VR, Tribal College, and Tribal Education representatives
  - March – Youth and adults with disabilities panel presentation sharing their journeys

Third Quarter: April, May, June 2023 – Review first half of Year II activities and evaluate

- Finalize a more detailed Decolonized Disability Model elements and identify critical components for replication
- Creation of resources and culturally appropriate disability materials based upon ongoing feedback from the advisory committee, talking circles, and webinar evaluations
- Ongoing evaluations, surveys, formal and informal conversations with tribal community members evaluated and assessed
- Conduct second training for Employment and Disability for Tribal people and their families
- Schedule and attend in person meetings with tribes: Hualapai Tribe, Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, San Carlos Apache, Yavapai Apache, and Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe
- Engage with K-12 schools, Tribal Colleges, Tribal VR, and adult services to develop clear Transitions processes with materials needed, establish system for providing updated information to schools
- Continue monthly webinar series responding to requested topics

Fourth Quarter: July, August, September 2023

- Compile qualitative and quantitative data and information collected from webinars and talking circles-create visuals for reports
- Expand outreach to tribal communities that request support or assistance
- Conduct two Native Center Training Workshops (for Year II)
- Review and analyze training feedback
- Submit report to ADDPC and present at Council meeting outcome of year two
- Continue monthly webinar series responding to requested topics

**Attachment 2: Budget**

**Budget Request Form**

Contractor Name: Arizona Board of Regents, University of Arizona (PI: Dr. Wendy Parent-Johnson)


Contractor Address: 1521 E. Helen St. Tucson AZ 85721  
Street Address City State Zip

Project Name: Native Disability Center (Year 2)

Budget Category	Requested ADDPC Funds	Non-Federal Cash Match	Non-Federal In-Kind Match	Total Program Cost
Personnel/Salaries	50,797	-	-	50,797
Fringe Benefits	15,893	-	-	15,893
Supplies / Operating Expenses	7,400	-	-	7,400
Travel	7,400	-	-	7,400
Rent or Cost of Space	-	-	-	-
Contracted Services / Professional Services	27,601	-	-	27,601
Administrative / Indirect Costs	10,909	-	40,000	50,909
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>120,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>160,000</b>

It is understood that Non-Federal Funds identified in this budget will be used to match only ADDPC Federal Funds, and will not be used to match any other Federal Funds during the period of the ADDPC funded Project.

Additional description and background information shall be included as a budget narrative, including for match. The contractor agrees to submit additional background information to the ADDPC upon request.

 Digitally signed by Alexis Bantel  
 Date: 2022.08.03 11:41:57 -07'00' for Sangita Pawar, PhD, MBA

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Vice President of Operations

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Title of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
 520-626-6000

Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
 sponsor@email.arizona.edu

Email

## Native Disability Center Budget Narrative

### Personnel/Salaries

**Wendy Parent-Johnson, Principal Investigator (1.0% FTE)**, will be responsible for project oversight, supervision, monitoring, and completion of activities as proposed. She will ensure integration of Native American Disability Center information and activities across the work of the UCEDD focused on enhancement of culturally and linguistically responsive services.

**Christie Kelly, Director of Native Disability Center (80.0% FTE)**, will be responsible for overseeing the day to day activities of the project, visiting and developing relationships with all 22 Tribal communities, facilitating advisory council and stakeholder input, promoting the Center, responding to request received by the Center, contributing to product development, and generating additional resources.

**TBH, Student Worker (4.0% FTE)**, will be responsible for developing marketing and communication materials, resources, and products for sharing and dissemination.

### Fringe Benefits

The University of Arizona defines fringe benefits as direct costs, estimates benefits as a standard percent of salary applied uniformly to all types sponsored activities, and charges benefits to sponsors in accordance with the federally-negotiated rates in effect at the time salaries are incurred. The rates used in the budget are as follows: UA Employees @ 31.9%, Student Employees @ 2.0%.

### Supplies / Operating Expenses

**Travel for Project Consultant & Project Advisor:** The Project Consultant and Project Advisor will travel to Arizona to develop and implement the Center. Costs are estimated at ~\$833 per trip for six trips and include economy-class airfare, lodging, per diem, and ground transportation at university-approved rates. *Note: Since the Project Consultant and Project Advisor are not employees of The University of Arizona, these expenses will be categorized as operating expenses and not travel expenses.* (~\$833 per trip \* 6 trips = \$5,000)

**Stipends:** Stipends will be provided to Native American people with disabilities and family members for each panel, presentation, video, or webinar. (48 persons \* \$50 per person = \$2,400)

### Travel

In-state travel is requested to support travel around the state to visit Tribal communities and members by project staff. Costs are reimbursed at a rate of \$0.445 per mile at an

estimated 14,483 miles = ~\$6,445. Additional funds are requested to support per diem and hotels for long-distance travel in Arizona estimated at 15 days per diem @ \$45 = \$675 per day and two nights of lodging @ \$140 per night. ( $\$6,445 + \$675 + \$280 = \$7,400$ )

### **Contracted Services / Professional Services**

**Consultant:** Jimmy Warne, Project Consultant (9.6% FTE), will be responsible for leading and directing project activities, functioning as liaison with urban and rural Tribal members, conducting talking circles, building Tribal liaisons, establishing provisions for on-going user input and feedback, meeting with Tribal communities to share about the Center, conducting trainings and information sharing sessions, guiding website design, and providing mentorship for leadership development. (200 hours \* \$100 per hour = \$20,000)

**Subaward with University of South Dakota:** Wayne Weston, Project Advisor (9.5% FTE), will be responsible for Center start-up, assisting the project director, providing training and technical assistance, building sustainability, developing relationships with Arizona Tribal members, advising the UCEDD on incorporating the Center into operations, and guiding implementation of the Center. Mr. Weston is the director of Oyate Circle at the Center for Disabilities UCEDD at the University of South Dakota and will bring that experience to inform our project. ( $\$6,910$  Direct Costs +  $\$691$  Indirect Costs =  $\$7,601$ )

### **Administrative / Indirect Costs**

Indirect costs are budgeted at the ADDPC-stipulated rate of 10% of total direct costs. ( $\$109,091$  Direct Costs \* 10% =  $\$10,909$ )

### **Cost Match**

Cost match is committed using indirect costs foregone at the ADDPC-stipulated rate of 25% of total projects costs. ( $\$160,000$  Total Project Costs \* 25% =  $\$40,000$ )

### **Attachment 3: Key Personnel**

The AZ Native Center is now administered by Christie Kelly, a doctoral candidate and Navajo/Tulalip Tribal member who will serve as Director for the Native Center. She will be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day activities of the project, visiting and developing relationships with all 22 Tribal communities, facilitating advisory council and stakeholder input, promoting the Center, responding to request received by the Center, contributing to product development, and generating additional resources. She will manage the listserv and website, develop the monthly newsletter, coordinate the webinar series, and complete analyses of evaluation and participant satisfaction data.

Wendy Parent-Johnson is the Executive Director of the Sonoran Center and Principal Investigator for the project. She will be responsible for project oversight, supervision, monitoring, and completion of activities as proposed. She will ensure integration of Native American Disability Center information and activities across the work of the UCEDD focused on enhancement of culturally and linguistically responsive services. She will conduct outreach and develop partnerships, share information through state and national meetings and presentations, and contribute to product and resource development.

Jimmy Warne is a Project Consultant and subject matter expert who will provide guidance and inform development and implementation of the Native Center and projects within the Native Center. He will conduct outreach and function as liaison with urban and rural Tribal members, conduct talking circles, build Tribal connections, establish provisions for on-going user input and feedback, meet with Tribal communities to share about the Center, conduct trainings and information sharing sessions, guide website design, and provide mentorship for leadership development

Wayne Weston is a Project Advisor and Director of the South Dakota Oyate Circle. He will provide input for Native Center start-up, assist the project director, providing training and technical assistance, build sustainability, develop relationships with Arizona Tribal members, advise the UCEDD on incorporating the Center into operations, and guide implementation of the Center.

Treva Roanhorse is our Elder Advisor for the Finds Their Way Youth Transition program, under the umbrella of the AZ Native Center. She brings her extensive experience as the former Executive Director of the Office for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services OSERS for Navajo Nation. She is instrumental as a traditional Navajo woman and her inclusion of all indigenous Tribal Nations in Arizona and throughout the nation. She has advocated for disability issues on the Hill several times and has experience in federal regulatory processes and amendments to existing federal acts that need to address Indian Country. Her addition to the AZ Native Center team as an advisor for the Finds Their Way program is invaluable from an indigenous and professional development perspective.

# THE NAVAJO NATION

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JONATHAN NEZ | PRESIDENT    MYRON LIZER | VICE PRESIDENT

August 10, 2022

Dr. Wendy Parent-Johnson  
Executive Director  
Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities  
1521 East Helen Street  
Tucson, AZ 85721

Dear Dr. Parent-Johnson:

This letter is written in support of the continuation of the Native Disability Center. The Navajo Nation Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (Navajo Nation OSERS) fully supports and is delighted to continue to collaborate with you on this project.

Navajo OSERS and the Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities are long-time collaborators and partner on multiple activities, projects, and events. We look forward to continuing these efforts as an active participant on your proposed project in partnership with Tribal Nation leaders, representatives, service providers, vocational rehabilitation services, Tribal members with disabilities and family members and our youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD). The approach focused on improving ID/DD awareness, services available, and an infrastructure from an indigenized approach through traditional Talking Circles representative of the 22 Tribal Nations in Arizona and four implementation pilot sites will provide the essential development, planning, and implementation so critical for enhancing services and systems change.

We are pleased to continue to be a part of this important project and will share the resources of our organization to support this work. We wish you the best of luck on your proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paula S. Seanez".

**Paula S. Seanez, Director**

Department of Diné Education  
Navajo Nation Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services





**SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY**  
**VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION**  
10,005 E. OSBORN RD. / TWO WATERS BLDG B  
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA 85256-9722  
PHONE (480) 362-2650

August 8, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter and offer our full support for the Sonoran University Center for Excellence in Disabilities' (UCEDD) Native Center grant application. The Sonoran UCEDD has a fifteen-year history of working together with people with disabilities, families, and community partners to promote inclusion, outcomes, and systems change. The proposed work plan focuses on addressing the identified needs of stakeholders and contributing meaningful solutions for the many challenges experienced by individuals, families, providers, and systems in Arizona.

We commend the overarching goals which align with ours to: 1) Enhance and expand opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities to attain personal life outcomes; 2) Build capacity to achieve inclusive and equitable access for persons with developmental disabilities and their families from underserved communities; 3) Enhance social inclusion for individuals with developmental disabilities; and 4) Build capacity to promote promising and evidence-based practices through workforce development of current and future professionals.

Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Vocational Rehabilitation and the Sonoran UCEDD have continued to collaborate and partner on multiple activities, projects, and events. We plan to continue those efforts and are committed to working with the Sonoran UCEDD in the next five-year plan to enhance access, opportunities, and full community participation for all Arizona citizens with disabilities and their families. We look forward to our work together to address current gaps in the state through developing model practices, promoting innovative supports, enhancing universally designed and culturally responsive service capacity, and increasing career pathways and leadership opportunities for people with disabilities.

The SRPMIC Vocational Rehabilitation Program is one of six American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs in Arizona. We are entering our tenth year of service to American Indians with disabilities who live on or near SRPMIC. We have served over 700 individuals residing on the SRPMIC service delivery area near Scottsdale, AZ, with all different types of disabilities. The focus and purpose behind the Native Center's grant is absolutely congruent with the purpose and goal of our services.

The SRPMIC VR Program supports the Sonoran Center's effort in continuing work with our Community as partners. We look forward to the grant being funded and working closely with the programs. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

**Melanie Murray, Vocational Services Manager**  
Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community  
Vocational Rehabilitation Program  
[melanie.murray@srpmic-nsn.gov](mailto:melanie.murray@srpmic-nsn.gov) 480-362-5435

PO Box 46316  
Phoenix, AZ 85063

602-425-5135 (Phone)  
602-333-7605 (Fax)

<https://diverseabilityincorporated.org>

[mellie@diverseabilityincorporated.org](mailto:mellie@diverseabilityincorporated.org)



August 8, 2022

Dr. Wendy Parent-Johnson  
Executive Director  
Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities  
1521 East Helen Street  
Tucson, AZ 85721

Dear Dr. Parent-Johnson:

This letter is in support of continuation for the Native Center for Disabilities, which will become the hub for all Native focused grants under the Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities.

Diverse Ability Incorporated is a partner on the Finds Their Way: Communities for Youth Transition grants, and is actively supporting this important initiative through participating on the Cross Tribal Talking Circle Collaborative; conducting an Arizona Youth Leadership Forum conference in a tribal community each grant year; providing additional youth leadership training experiences as requested; supporting implementation at pilot sites; engaging Indigenous Arizona Youth Leaders to guide and inform project activities, and providing resources for Indigenous youth across the state.

Diverse Ability Incorporated is grateful to be a partner in this endeavor, and we look forward to the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to this project, as well as to the work of the Native Center for Disabilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Melissa Santora".

Melissa Ann "Mellie" Santora  
Visionary Founder

## Attachment 5: Evaluation Findings

Drawing from the evaluation information from webinars retrieved on August 8, 2022, 83 individuals have completed the online evaluation. Of the total responses from the evaluations, 94% of participants agreed or strongly agreed their knowledge and/or skills on topics discussed during the webinar increased due to attending the event. In addition, 94% of participants who completed the evaluation agreed or strongly agreed they were satisfied with skills and knowledge they gained from attending the webinar. Most of the participants (84%) agreed with the statement that the webinar provided information relevant to their needs. The webinar also provided practical and useful information to participants as 80% reported they agreed or strongly agreed the information and resources provided could be applied to their work. Participants represented a diverse group 49% responded they identify as white, while 30% reported they identify as Native American with 14 different tribes being reflected.

Seventy one percent of the participants reported they do not identify as having a disability and 58% reported they are a family member of an individual with a disability. Of all those who responded to the evaluation, 29% reported they identify as having a disability. Qualitative feedback was prompted by posing three open-ended questions. The questions posed were: 1. What topics would you like covered in future webinars? 2. Please provide any suggestions/comment that may help us improve our trainings and webinars. 3. What needs do you see in your community that you hope will be addressed? Responses from participants included 13 comments and suggestions made related to employment, job training, employer training, and how to assist individuals with disabilities in seeking and finding employment. There were 6 comments and suggestions about interest in

future content related to mental health and mental health concerns for tribal people. There were four comments made regarding empowerment and advocacy work in the evaluations and nine comments regarding behavioral health and mental health related concerns. Other issues suggested by participants were increasing outreach and availability of services.

A review of the complete data sheet for registration indicated there were 152 participants total registered for the talking circle and 44 self-reported having tribal affiliation. Many of the participants were from Arizona (119), 23 were from South Dakota, and ten were from states other than Arizona and South Dakota. Arizona state agencies were well represented as 41 of the participants were from the Department of Economic Security or the Division of Developmental Disability. Of those who registered for the webinar, 23 were from tribally affiliated organizations including vocational rehabilitation programs, tribal k-12 schools, and tribal colleges. Most participants identified as professionals, 18 identified as advocates, self-advocates or other. Eight of the individuals reported they identify as an individual with a disability, a parent, or family member of an individual with a disability. Of the total who registered 115 were in attendance of the event.

A webinar was held on June 17, 2022, which had 98 participant registrations. Of the total participants who registered, 27 reported they had some type of tribal affiliation.

The potential participants included 18 Individuals who identified as a person with a disability, a family member or parent of someone with a disability, an advocate/self-advocate, or other. Others who registered identified as professionals. Seventeen Arizona state agencies including Department of Economic Security and Division of Developmental Disabilities planned to attend the webinar. The webinar was well-attended by education institutions as 26 participants reported an affiliation with a college, university, a public or tribal school. Most of the individuals who registered were from cities in Arizona, followed by South Dakota, and a few participants reported being from California. Therefore, this webinar had the potential to provide important outreach to a range of individuals who work with individuals with disabilities. There were 62 individuals who attended the webinar on June 17<sup>th</sup>, so many of the individuals who registered were able to attend.