



**Native
Professional
Advancement
Center**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, July 15, 2025

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NPAC Responds to NAETC Charter Renewal, Renews Call to Protect Native Workforce Funding

Albuquerque, NM — Today, the Native Professional Advancement Center (NPAC) responded to the [Department of Labor's announcement renewing the charter for the Native American Employment and Training Council \(NAETC\)](#)—an advisory body required under Section 166 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to provide formal consultation on Native employment programs:

"The [Native Professional Advancement Center \(NPAC\)](#) acknowledges the Department of Labor's renewal of the charter for the Native American Employment and Training Council (NAETC), as required by Section 166(i)(4) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This renewal underscores what we already know to be true: that Native-led workforce development remains essential and federally protected under law.

"However, this action rings hollow when held against the backdrop of the FY 2026 budget proposal, which seeks to eliminate direct funding to WIOA Section 166 Native American programs and consolidate workforce dollars under state control. The federal government cannot claim to support Native consultation while attempting to dismantle the very programs that consultation exists to protect.

"NAETC exists to ensure that Native people have a voice in shaping programs that support our economic futures. But those voices must be paired with action—not erasure. For over 60 years, NPAC—formerly known as the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC)—has delivered culturally grounded, community-driven job training, education, and employment support to Native people across New Mexico. Our impact speaks for itself. Without WIOA Section 166, these services—and the futures they support—are at risk.

*"We urge Congress to reject the proposed budget cuts and uphold its responsibility to Native communities by fully funding WIOA Section 166. The Native American Employment and Training Program must not be eliminated. It must be protected, strengthened, and expanded." - **Darius Lee Smith, Executive Director for NPAC.***

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Founded in 1961, the [Native Professional Advancement Center](#), operating alongside the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC), has been a pioneering force in advocating for the rights and well-being of Native American communities. Born out of a desire to see a world where Native peoples can freely exercise their rights to self-determination and sovereignty, we have spent over six decades dedicated to the empowerment and advancement of Native Americans across the United States.