

Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission



Official Sample Ballot

Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission
Community Elected Commissioner Elections
December 6 & 7, 2022

Please see final page of Official Sample Ballot for voting locations and times.

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Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission



Eligibility Requirements

Candidates

Eligible candidates meet the following criteria:

- Are 18 years old or older
- Are residents of Los Angeles County
- Are:

An enrolled member of a federally or state recognized American Indian or Alaska Native tribe, **OR** a member of an American Indian or Alaska Native community with a Certificate Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) and supporting genealogical documentation, **OR** A member of a United States or Alaskan Native Community with supporting genealogical documentation

Voters

Eligible voters meet the following criteria:

- Are 18 years old or older
- Are residents of Los Angeles County
- Are:

An enrolled member of a federally or state recognized American Indian or Alaska Native tribe, **OR** a member of an American Indian or Alaska Native community with a Certificate Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) and supporting genealogical documentation, **OR** A member of a United States or Alaskan Native Community with supporting genealogical documentation

Election Overview

The election of Community Elected Commissioners for the Self Governance Board are held every 4 years for the 5 positions. The elections are a plurality system.

Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission

2022 Community Elected Commissioner Candidates

Please see below for candidate biographies and statements, provided in alphabetical order based on last name.

Caroline Bhalla

Candidate Biography

My name is Caroline Bhalla and I am a member American Indian community of the Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin. I was raised in Oxnard, California. My mother grew up on the Menominee Indian Reservation in Wisconsin. As a child, I visited the reservation in the summers with my family. I carry those experiences with me throughout my professional and academic work.

I currently serve as the Executive Director of the USC Sol Price Center for Social Innovation, which has the mission of developing ideas and illuminating strategies to improve the quality of life for people living in low-income urban communities. In this role, I direct all activities and operations of the center while helping to expand the strategic vision and impact of our work.

At the Price Center, I have built a culture of inclusion, diversity and overall excellence: training students, diversifying staff, co-creating and managing community-based research and data projects and initiatives including Neighborhood Data for Social Change and the Homelessness Policy Research Institute (HPRI).

I previously served in the Price School's Office of Development and External Relations for five years. In this role, I was responsible for designing and implementing high-level policy events, including programs created to increase diversity and inclusivity at USC Price. There, I started the Women in Leadership Speaker series, which brought together women from all different sectors to discuss barriers and opportunities to success. I raised money for scholarships for underrepresented minorities to study at the USC Price School of Public Policy.

Throughout my ten years at USC, I have participated in podcasts that have discussed works written by and about the Native American community, often the only person on those panels who spoke from the Native American perspective. Additionally, I urged researchers at HPRI to write a brief—American Indian and Alaska Native Homelessness—which drew from Dr. Andrea Garcia's study of Native American Homelessness in Los Angeles.

Before returning to California in July 2011, I was the Associate Director of the New York University Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy, where I began as a research assistant in 2002. At NYU's Furman Center, I was the project lead on the annual State of the City's Housing and Neighborhoods report. As the Associate Director

I was responsible for human relations, finance and fundraising for the Furman Center. Prior to that, I worked as an Assistant Account Executive in a boutique public relations firm in San Francisco, Graham and Associates.

I earned my B.A. in Mass Communications/Rhetoric from the University of California at Berkeley, and received an M.A. in Culture and Communication from NYU's Steinhardt School of Education where my master's thesis focused on Native American Representation at the National Museum of the American Indian Education. I also earned an M.A. in American Studies from NYU's Graduate School of Arts and Science where I focused on the ethnic press.

Candidate Statement

I would like to serve on the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission to help advocate for Native American issues in our community. My professional experience working with a variety of public officials, advocacy groups, students, and community organizations has provided me valuable skills that would translate well to my service on this commission. In particular, I bring excellent facilitation and listening skills, as well as an understanding of public policy and governance issues facing the region. Further, the organizational and leadership skills that I have acquired over the past 20 years would be a great asset to the commission and the community. And, perhaps most importantly, I have a strong passion for uplifting Native American stories, and it would be an honor to do that work through this commission.

Denise Escoto

Candidate Biography

Hello Haahe Aloha I am Denise Escoto I am Northern Cheyenne and Native Hawaiian from the island of Kawai. I am very dedicated and take pride in servicing my native community and meeting their needs. I have over 22 years involvement and experience with the native community. My aspiration is to deliver true leadership and vision to our native community. I have the potential to view the present as it is and invent a future for our community. I am currently actively working for a Native American Indian Social Service agency. I have been working with them for 20 years. I have also worked with multiple agencies and projects within the native community TANF, Native American Diabetes Project, Walking Shield volunteer services, Students Run LA/UAll coaching our native youth to run the LA Marathon, COVID food services/supplies during the pandemic to our native families, worked with Baby2Baby on getting baby basic needs for our native babies. I also outreach in the community at Pow Wows, native community events, and conferences to provide resources to our community.

Denise Escoto

Candidate Statement

My goal is to provide the best possible assistance for Native American Indian Families, children and seniors in becoming self-sufficient by directing them into a path that best their needs in the areas of senior care, job development, domestic violence, culturally relevant support, childcare, transportation costs, teen pregnancy prevention, education, substance abuse, and mental health.

In today's difficult economic climate, I am aware of the need for efficient operation and am vigilant in identifying opportunities to streamline processes and reduce operating costs.

I will represent our community with professionalism and am able to establish and maintain relationships with our community, associates, and external partners at all levels.

I am confident that the community will benefit from my experience as well as my enthusiasm and commitment to quality service.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. I am looking forward to working for our community.

Shawn Imitates Dog

Candidate Biography

I have been involved in the American Indian and Alaskan Native community for over 15 years. I've sat on various boards throughout the Los Angeles Indian community.

During my time with the Southern California Indian Center, we did a handful of events promoting jobs in the entertainment industry for our community members. We hosted a series of panels and trainings with Human Resources professionals across the entertainment sector, that is something I hope to continue doing with other Native organizations. Many times, our community may not know of different career opportunities within the industry, and I would like to bring more visibility to them.

Throughout my time volunteering in the community, I've done various fundraisers with nonprofits to help support initiatives they had, including Annual Heritage Month Pow Wows, City Hall events organized by the Commission or Councilman Mitch O'Farrell's office.

Over the past five years while on the Commission, I have sat on the Pow Wow committee to help make it happen. In addition, I was on the Indigenous Peoples Day committee and Native Heritage Committee to help executive community events with Councilman O'Farrell's office.

I was also one of the original members of Red Circle Project and helped organize many of their community events over the years, including their Pow Wow that ran 10 years before the program closed.

I am also currently involved with the Autry's Native Voices as a Native Voices Support Committee to help bring more awareness and visibility to the program. Many of my dear friends are actors with the Native Voices at the Autry, and I want to continue helping bring light to the great work they do for our community. Many of our Native Voices members have gone off to do great work in major Hollywood productions and I feel this work needs to continue happening locally to create this talent pipeline and get on the big screen.

I've also organized many social gatherings for our Lakota community here in Los Angeles. It is very important we continue with the social gatherings to share stories, meals, our language, and our dance. When we initially started our gatherings, we had four Lakota elders that participated and told us to continue doing these as its very important for us to keep that sense of community in a large urban area. These words stuck with me and as we continue to come out of the pandemic, I will push to continue with these for the next generation.

While my profession is in the corporate sector, I have always used my role and connections to help organize different events, including fundraisers at my employer, youth outing at hockey games, or got a suite at a hockey or basketball game for our

youth and elders. I truly love working in our Indian Community in this capacity and want to continue doing so. The Los Angeles Indian Community is my family and I truly enjoy the work I get to do with them, and I hope to continue as a Commissioner.

Wopila Tanka

Candidate Statement

There are three areas of interest for me with the Commission that I would like to focus on: funding, career placements, and cultural/community events.

I was raised by my late grandmother Jennie Imitates Dog, who is also a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe from South Dakota. She spent the last 15 years of her life with me in Los Angeles. Majority of those years she was a client at United American Indian Involvement in their elder program. I recall those mornings she would get ready as she was so excited to get picked up and spend the day with other Native elders. The look on her face when she came home after a long day was priceless. The experience UAI gave her was something I will never forget, and I feel the Commission is a great resource for our Indian Organizations to continue doing the great work they do so other elders can have that same experience my grandmother had.

During COVID we had to do most events virtually, which was still a great way to keep us all connected through a tough time but coming out of this pandemic it is important to get back to community events. Being a Native, especially ones that has relocated from their homelands, it is tough, and our only sense of family out here can be our larger Indian community.

During my five years on the Commission, I have been honored to be a part of the planning committee that organized our community events. There is nothing more rewarding than bringing everyone together for a cultural celebration and seeing familiar faces. My hope is to continue with these events to give our community a place to come together for celebration and connectivity.

Dawn Jackson

Candidate Biography

My involvement in the LA Native American community spans more than 30 years. I was blessed to learn about community empowerment and self-governance from some of our most respected community leaders. Working alongside them to build a strong and resilient community provided invaluable guidance and a strong commitment to serve. I'm proud to currently serve as a board member of the American Indian Scholarship Fund of Southern California.

Serving as a community-elected Commissioner and member of the Self-Governance Board since 1994 has been a gratifying experience. I've been honored to serve in a variety of capacities; press liaison for a historic White House Urban Policy Initiative, a community hearing officer, an art curator and more recently as part of the team that successfully lead the call for Los Angeles to ban Columbus Day and to establish Indigenous Peoples Day.

As a professional in the entertainment industry, I served as the Chair of American Indian Registry for the Performing Arts and in 1992 co-founded First Americans in the Arts (FAITA), serving as Chair of the Board and Producer of the annual awards event empowering Native people in the entertainment industry. Over 300 outstanding achievement awards in film, TV, music, and theatre were presented over seventeen years.

Candidate Statement

It was instilled in me from an early age by my grandparents and others to serve and lift-up my community, whether on the reservation in Michigan or here in LA. I believe that continuing to represent the LA Native community as a Commissioner is the best way for me to do that. As the longest serving Commissioner, I carry institutional knowledge of what has come before, what worked and what didn't so as not to be repeated. My commitment to the community has never wavered, nor has my energy to work had waned. I've always felt that I would continue to serve and represent our LA Native community as a Commissioner for as long as the community wanted, and I hope to continue to do so for another four years. Miigwech!

Robert Judkins

Candidate Biography

Born and raised in the Echo Park area of Los Angeles, Robert descends from several generations of proud Native Americans and Angelenos. After attending the University of Southern California, Robert began his career in the Movie and Television Industry holding management positions at notable Hollywood Post Production facilities such as Technicolor, The Post Group, Complete Post, Matchframe Video, Cinema Research Corporation and Video Transitions Robert recently served 13 years as Manager of Production Application Development and Design for the National Football League at the NFL Network where he was responsible for On-Air production software and re-designing the NFL Networks Telestration software for remote and in-game laptop use. Robert also served as a Committee Co-Chair on the National Football League's Diversity Council.

Since leaving the National Football League, Robert has concentrated his efforts on Native American Communities, brining awareness, and exposure to Native American youth sports across the country. His most recent activity was as Executive Producer for the Television broadcast of the 2022 NABI (Native American Basketball Invitational) Championships on ESPN.

Robert's full-time focus and dedication is now to provide access to Professional athletes, Technology/Education experts, industry contacts, resources and exposure for Indigenous youth in addition to proudly serving the Native American Community.

Candidate Statement

My hope is to bring my experience in television broadcasting and sports to the Indigenous communities. Possible examples are a broadcast bootcamp and sporting opportunities in television. Any way that I can encourage our youth to succeed I will!

Kim Morales Johnson

Candidate Biography

My name is Kimberly Morales Johnson and I am tribal member of the San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians Gabrieleno/Tongva. I served on the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission 2001-2005 and returned in 2020. I work with the Gabrieleno/Tongva tribal communities as well as several academic institutions. I have served on the LANAIC 2022 Indigenous Peoples Day & Native American Heritage Month Ad Hoc Planning Committee, ensuring that Native people residing in Los Angeles City and County have a presence and voice in the City and County of Los Angeles.

Candidate Statement

I have enjoyed my past 2 years as a commissioner, I find our work has uplifted the Native people in several ways. We were responsive to the Covid-19 pandemic through providing free vaccination sites and information for our community. In addition, we have provided funding for housing, food and educational resources. I hope to continue as a commissioner, to work with all Natives in Los Angeles County through providing funding and taking time to bring an awareness to our unique needs as Native people.

Sample

Mona Morales Recalde

Candidate Biography

My involvement with the Native American Community is a lifelong journey. Some of my earliest memories are at Native events. I am a tribal member of the San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians Gabrieleno/Tongva. I participate in cultural preservation through attending Tribal meetings, revitalizing our language in song and dance, volunteering to work the land and providing education classes.

In various education offerings through the tribe, we work to learn about our native plants and how they were used. We work through the tribe to protect White Sage poaching and participate in bundling events when the sage is illegally extracted. Through our state protected land at Kuruvungna Springs in Santa Monica, I volunteer on a monthly basis. In addition, I participate in a Native Woman's group to provide exposure to Native issues beyond our local tribe to learn and listen. My family also participates annually in the Indigenous Peoples Day celebration.

Candidate Statement

My intention as a commissioner is to serve the native community and uplift the native voices and concerns in Los Angeles County. We are home to one of the largest native populations in the US and the needs are varied due to the size and complexity of the myriad of issues that impact our community. Through my participation, I hope to advocate on behalf of AIANs to ensure legislation is inclusive of our communities' needs. This requires a holistic view encompassing frp, understanding the needs, supporting legislation, funding and ensuring the services are utilized. Based on my professional and personal experience, I am capable and able to do this work. I view this as an opportunity to give back to the community that has supported me through the years.

Through my years of experience and travels in a professional capacity I have established leadership skills and adapted to a servant perspective of meeting people where they are at, being an active listener and providing thoughtful questions to complex issues. I focus on solutions and drive to find common grounds when varying perspectives are present.

What I hope to achieve is to make a positive impact for the AIANs in Los Angeles, supporting initiatives and providing a voice for a population that is often not heard. I hope as a commissioner to learn through listening and bringing my professional experience/education to the commission assisting with new initiatives and programs.

I plan to uplift the AIAN community's voice and concerns to LA City and the County by sharing the voice, we are here. I will support by attending events, using social media as an outlet and raising our voice and concerns in a thoughtful manner.

John Only A Chief

Candidate Biography

Nawa (hello) my name is John Only A Chief enrolled full blood member of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma. I was born and raised in Pawnee Oklahoma until the age of 10 years old. Not having a traditional family unit, I was a candidate for adoption (prior to the Indian Child Welfare Act) and was relocated to Los Angeles in 1972 where I became a ward of the Superior Court of Los Angeles for four years while my adoption was being finalized. Since that time, I made my home in and around Los Angeles County having attended Paramount Unified School District and graduating from Paramount High School, Class of 1980. I attended Cerritos College of Norwalk with an interest in Administration of Justice. I started a family and relocated to Pawnee, Oklahoma from 2002-2017 where I was given full custody of my son and daughter whom I raised as a single father. I returned to the L.A county area September 4, 2017.

I have outlined some timelines of interest I have been involved with in Los Angeles County and with my tribal government of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma.

- Los Angeles County community member from 1972-2002 returned 2017-present.
- Resided in Paramount CA and a graduate of Paramount High School 1980
- Attended Cerritos College 1980-1982 Administration of Justice
- Grassroots President of the Native American Community Action Coalition
- 1998-2002 Original founder/CEO of American Indian Changing Spirits and signed the first contract with the County of Los Angeles receiving unanimous Supervisor support, a big thank you to previous Supervisors Don Knabe and Supervisor Yvonne Burke.
- Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma 2002-2017
 - Title 7 Indian Education President 1 term and Vice President 1 term
 - Johnson O'Malley JOM President 1 term and Vice President 1 term
 - Council Energy Resource Tribes (CERT) Managed by David Lester, National member for Pawnee Nation Department of Environmental Conservation & Safety
 - Pawnee Chapter Native American Church treasurer, helped to incorporate with the State of Oklahoma
 - Pawnee Nation Utility Authority Chairman 2003-2011 presented to the Pawnee Business Council partnering with Indian Electric Co-operative to provide electricity on tribal lands.
 - Founder Pawnee Racksters Tennis, United States Tennis Association-Community Tennis Association member, Pawnee, Oklahoma
 - Elected to the Pawnee Business Council (PBC) 2007-2011 Council Seat #1, assigned to the following boards and commissions by President George E. Howell.

Budget Committee member, Housing Authority monitor, Human Resources Chairman, Utility Authority Chairman, Delegate by PBC resolution for the National Congress of American Indians, Tribal Economic Development Corporation (seated) Designated 2010 Census worker for the State of Oklahoma (7 counties for tribal recruitment, 2 extensions of service)

Candidate Statement

Why am I a candidate for the commission? I will advocate to bring a better Native awareness to the City/County of Los Angeles by making sure we are represented at all sponsored City/County public events. Providing information by way of outreach and communication with our native communities is crucial when serving. Los Angeles has had the claim of having the most native population over the years but we are still being overlooked in funding, housing, health and supportive family services. In most cases Native people get 1 location source of services (clinic, dental, vision, limited housing) while other minority communities receive multiple location services. We need to do better.

I do not just want to be on the commission, I will be serving as a commissioner. During my commitment I plan to continue the positive relationships established from previous commissions but also challenging and working in unity with the City and County administrations for our native peoples.

My plan for uplifting the AIAN community will be attending native community events and bringing any concerns I hear to the commissioners table so that through discussions we can create or enhance those areas. I realize I am only 1 voice at the table and I will encourage other like-minded commissioners to join me.

My motto for our Native community will be, "I Work For You" I heard this many years ago from Ernie Stevens Jr. Chairman of The National Indian Gaming Association, while addressing tribal nations during a NIGA conference.

Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission

Please select up to 5 candidates by marking the bubble to the right. If you vote for more than 5 candidates your votes will not be counted.

Community Elected Commissioners	Caroline Bhalla	<input type="radio"/>
	Denise Escoto	<input type="radio"/>
	Shawn Imitates Dog	<input type="radio"/>
	Dawn Jackson	<input type="radio"/>
	Robert Judkins	<input type="radio"/>
	Kimberly Morales Johnson	<input type="radio"/>
	Mona Morales Recalde	<input type="radio"/>
	John Only A Chief	<input type="radio"/>

If you want to write in the name(s) of a candidate(s) not listed above please write the names in the spaces below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission

Voting Locations & Times

American Indian Counseling Center

17707 Studebaker Rd # 208, Cerritos, CA 90703

Tuesday, December 6, 2022 – 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM

Wednesday, December 7, 2022 – 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM

(Note: Parking is located across the street and all visitors will have to go through security in the building.)

Pukuu Cultural Community Services

1019 2nd Street #2, San Fernando, CA 91340

Tuesday, December 6, 2022 – 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM

Wednesday, December 7, 2022 – 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM

United American Indian Involvement, Inc.

1453 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90026

Tuesday, December 6, 2022 – 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM

Wednesday, December 7, 2022 – 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM

(Note: Street parking only and must check in at the front reception desk.)