



AGENDA & NOTICE

LOS ANGELES CITY/COUNTY
NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2026, 6:30 PM

Meeting Location: County of Los Angeles Hall of Administration
Sybil Brand Room 372
500 W. Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

To Provide Public Comment: You may submit written public comment via email to contact@lanaic.lacounty.gov. Please note "LANAIC Public Comment" in the subject line. Please submit your public comment or documentation as soon as possible, but no later than 5 p.m. the night before the scheduled meeting. Public comment received after this time will be added to the next regular Commission meeting.

MARK VILLASEÑOR, Chairperson
Fernandeño Tataviam

BRYCE LEWIS-SMITH, Vice Chairperson
Citizen Potawatomi Nation

DR. CAROLINE BHALLA, Secretary
Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin

RENE' WILLIAMS, Treasurer
Colville Tribes

DENISE ESCOTO, Commissioner
Northern Cheyenne

CHRISSIE CASTRO, Commissioner
Navajo

ANDREA N. GARCIA, M.D., Commissioner
Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara

VIVIAN GARCIA, Commissioner
Cherokee

SHAWN IMITATES DOG, Commissioner
Lakota

DAWN JACKSON, Commissioner
Saginaw Chippewa

MONA MORALES RECALDE, Commissioner
Gabrieleno Tongva

JOHN ONLY A CHIEF, Commissioner
Pawnee Nation

RUDY ORTEGA JR., Commissioner
Fernandeño Tataviam

TED TENORIO, Commissioner
Tiguan Nation

VACANT, Commissioner

ALEXANDRA VALDES
Executive Director
Tlingit/Athabaskan

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. INVOCATION & LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

3. ROLL CALL

4. COMMISSIONER INTRODUCTIONS

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

6. ACTION ITEMS

- 6.1. Adopt the March 17, 2025, Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC) Unapproved Meeting Minute
- 6.2. Establish the 2026 Native American Heritage Month Planning Ad Hoc Committee
- 6.3. Approve Partnering with the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens to Host a Panel Discussion and Reception on the Evening of Monday, October 12, 2026, to Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the LA City/County Native American Indian Commission

7. PRESENTATION

7.1 *Christopher Columbus Statue Loan to the Craft Contemporary* – Lalena Vellanoweth, LA County Department of Arts and Culture - Conservation & Collections Manager, Civic Art Division & Frida Cano, Craft Contemporary - Senior Curator

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8.1 Discuss AIAN Homelessness in LA County

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

9. CHAIR'S REPORT

9.1 General Updates

10. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

10.1 General Updates

11. COMMITTEE & AD-HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

11.1 Executive Committee

11.2 Self Governance Board

11.3 50th Anniversary Planning Ad Hoc Committee

12. COMMISSIONER GENERAL COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

14. COMMISSION ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 16, 2026, from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Location: Hall of Administration, Room 372, 500 W. Temple Street, LA, CA 90012

Meetings are held in English. If interpretation in other languages or accommodations for persons with disabilities are needed, please contact the Commission at 213-738-3241 at least 3 business days before the meeting. The meetings of the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Contact: www.lanaic.lacounty.gov, contact@lanaic.lacounty.gov, or (213) 738-3241

Approved:



Chairperson Mark Villasenor



**LOS ANGELES CITY/COUNTY NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION
APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MARCH 17, 2026**

The March 17, 2026, Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian (LANAIC) meeting was at the County of Los Angeles Hall of Administration, Sybil Brand Room 372, 500 W. Temple Street, Los Angeles, California, 90012.

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Chairperson Mark Villaseñor called the meeting to order at 6:34 P.M. and read the Los Angeles County Land Acknowledgment.

Invocation

Vice Chairperson Bryce Lewis-Smith provided an invocation.

Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Mark Villaseñor
Vice Chairperson Bryce Lewis-Smith
Secretary Caroline Bhalla
Treasurer Rene' Williams
Chrissie Castro (joined after item 6.1)
Dr. Andrea Garcia
Vivian Garcia
Dawn Jackson
John Only A Chief
Rudy Ortega Jr.
Mona Morales Recalde (joined after item 8.1)

Absent: Denise Escoto
Shawn Imitates Dog
Ted Tenorio
Rich Toyon

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

Quorum was met.

Commissioner Introductions

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



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Public Comment

No public comment was submitted for the meeting.

Presentation

8.1 Updates on LA County Draft Tribal Consultation Policy & Implementation Plan – Jenna Tourjé-Maldonado, Kearns & West Lead Facilitator

Kearns & West Lead Facilitator Jenna Tourjé-Maldonado and Project Manager/Facilitator Christian Mendez provided the Commission with an [update](#) on the Los Angeles County Draft Tribal Consultation Policy and Implementation Plan. Alexandra encouraged Commissioners to share information regarding the Public Review Session with their respective communities when it becomes available, noting that broader participation will support the continued development of the policy.

Commissioner Mona Morales Recalde requested that a copy of the presentation be emailed to her. Commissioner Dr. Andrea Garcia shared that she attended in her professional capacity the employee Tribal Consultation Policy and Implementation Plan Development meeting in February. She said she felt reaffirmed upon hearing that County departments are committed to helping establish the policy. She noted that during the meeting for County Employees she attended, participants demonstrated meaningful engagement rather than passive attendance, and she expressed hope that this process will result in a strong and effective policy.

Commissioner Rudy Ortega Jr. shared that he attended a tribal meeting on the policy in February in his professional capacity and emphasized that consultation is essential for the community. He noted that although the Commission is now established, significant work remains, and current efforts represent only a small portion of what is still needed.

Alexandra shared that the finalized and adopted policy would fall under County Municipal Code Section 3. She explained that the policy's length may vary, but the goal is to have it adopted by the Board of Supervisors the end of the year. The accompanying implementation plan is expected to be supported by a Board motion. At that time, the Commission may also propose a policy sunset date to ensure the policy is revisited and updated at an appropriate cadence.



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Action Items

6.1 Adopt absentee excuses

A motion was made by Treasurer Rene' Williams and seconded by Secretary Caroline Bhalla for Commissioners Denise Escoto, Shawn Imitates Dog, Ted Tenorio, and Rich Toyon's absentee excuses for the March 17, 2026, meeting.

The motion passed.

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

6.2. Adopt the February 17, 2026, Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC) Unapproved Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Dr. Andrea Garcia and seconded by Secretary Caroline Bhalla to approve the unapproved November 18, 2025, LANAIC Meeting Minutes as presented.

The motion passed.

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

6.3. Adopt Draft FY26-27 Budget Request Letter to the Board of Supervisors

A motion was made by Treasurer Rene' Williams and seconded by Commissioner Mona Morales Recalde to adopt the Draft FY26-27 Budget Request Letter to the Board of Supervisors.

The draft letter was adopted unanimously.

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



**LOS ANGELES CITY/COUNTY NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION
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Discussion Items

7.1 Discuss AIAN Homelessness in LA County

Commissioner Dr. Andrea Garcia noted that Alexandra distributed an additional email regarding the Los Angeles County AIAN Homelessness Dashboard and encouraged all commissioners to review the information.

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

Commissioner Chrissie Castro reported that the State of California hosted a webinar on updates to HR 1, which outlines federal policy changes in health and human services and California's response. She noted that the Native American community will likely be affected, although it is unclear whether those impacts are already being felt. She offered to share the webinar information with the commissioners.

Alexandra added that the County's Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) recently held a webinar on strategies for maintaining benefits. She shared that she previously sent out the information to commissioners, but will distribute the recording to commissioners for review and assessment of its usefulness.

Chair's Report

9.1 General Updates

There were no general updates.

Executive Director's Report

10.1 General Updates

Alexandra reported that she has begun early planning discussions with Chairperson Mark Villaseñor regarding Native American Heritage Month, which is eight months away. She and Commissioner Dawn Jackson have been in communication with LA City Councilmember Imelda Padilla's office regarding reserving the Henry P. Rio Bridge Gallery at City Hall. The Commission has also reached out to the Office of Councilmember Imelda Padilla to gauge their interest in co-hosting this year's NAHM celebration. Alexandra will provide updates as they become available, and commissioners will likely discuss potential themes at the next meeting.

Alexandra and Chairperson Villaseñor also discussed options for commemorating the Commission's 50th anniversary, including whether to combine the celebration with NAHM, hold it separately, or potentially not link the two events.

Secretary Caroline Bhalla shared that Supervisor Holly Mitchell has inquired about the County's role in NAHM, noting that past celebrations have been more closely aligned with the City of Los Angeles. Commissioner Rudy Ortega Jr. explained that the city has historically shown greater



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interest in hosting the celebration but welcomed the possibility of County involvement if Supervisor Mitchell wishes to participate. Alexandra noted that the Board of Supervisors typically presents a proclamation during NAHM.

Commissioner Chrissie Castro recalled that the County has previously supported NAHM by allowing commissioners to use Grand Park to host a Pow Wow. She observed that community engagement tends to be stronger with City-led events, which often have a more formal structure. Alexandra also shared that in 2025 Supervisor Lindsey Horvath hosted a reception on the 8th floor of the Hall of Administration.

Committee & Ad Hoc Committee Reports

11.1 Executive Committee

No report was provided.

11.2 Self Governance Board

Self Governance Board (SGB) Chairperson Dawn Jackson announced that the newly revised SGB bylaws now require the Board to convene at least four times per year. She noted that the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program remains unaffected by the current federal administration, and this is expected to be a lighter program year. Towards the end of 2026 the SGB will begin discussions on the next Community Action Plan and Community Needs Assessment. Alexandra will distribute the calendar for upcoming SGB meetings.

11.3 50th Anniversary Planning Ad Hoc Committee

Chairperson Mark Villaseñor reported that he, Commissioner Shawn Imitates Dog, and Alexandra have been exploring the idea of an commemorative event at the Huntington Library. They are also considering hosting a panel on the Commission's past, present, and future, tentatively planned for the fall. He emphasized that the event should remain open to the public and community, reflecting the Commission's commitment to accessibility.

Alexandra highlighted the significance of this milestone. He also reflected on the broader historical context, acknowledging that the anniversary coincides with the nation's complex 250-year history and recalling how, in 1976, organizations such as the LA Native Legal Clinic demonstrated the specificity and strength of Native-led institutions. She suggested that incorporating visual elements into the celebration could help showcase the Commission's contributions to urban Native communities.

Chairperson Villaseñor also proposed that the County consider hosting a presentation in the Board chambers in June, if feasible, as part of the anniversary recognition. He encouraged exploring potential sponsorships, and Commissioner Ortega Jr. suggested issuing a proclamation.



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Commissioner John Only A Chief asked whether former commissioners would be invited to participate in the celebration, and Chairperson Villaseñor confirmed that outreach could be conducted. Commissioner Castro proposed selling tickets as a fundraiser, and Vice Chairperson Bryce Lewis-Smith suggested that proceeds could support NAHM activities. Alexandra reminded the group that NAHM remains primarily under the City's jurisdiction. Commissioner Only A Chief expressed concern about charging the community for an event intended to honor the community itself, and Chairperson Villaseñor clarified that any contribution could be framed as a suggested donation rather than a requirement. Commissioner Castro added that it would be helpful to understand the Commission's constraints and identify approaches that support the community while remaining compliant with County and City policy.

Commissioner General Comments on Non-Agenda Items

Commissioner John Only A Chief shared that he sent an email earlier today regarding his work on documenting the early history of American Indian Changing Spirits. He explained that he is preparing an initial edition to ensure the community has access to accurate information, noting that many conflicting or incorrect claims are circulating. He has photographs and documentation, and emphasized the importance of presenting the truth when historical questions arise.

Commissioner Only A Chief reiterated that this effort reflects his long-standing intention over the past 20 years to preserve and clarify the program's origins, particularly given the significance of the treatment services provided to men in the community. He envisions the final product as a concise, fold-out pamphlet that allows individuals to contact him directly with further questions. Once commissioners have more information on the narrative, they are welcome to distribute it.

Secretary Caroline Bhalla announced that USC will host a Pow Wow on April 26, organized to support the Native community. She shared that a Native graduate student group has recently been formed—marking the first time such a group has existed at USC—and that the event will include participation by alumni and staff. She will continue to provide updates as planning progresses.

Secretary Bhalla also shared that she is nearing completion of her doctorate. Through her research, she learned that many Native student associations exist outside USC, prompting her to consider establishing a similar organization on campus. She noted that USC does not currently have a land acknowledgment, highlighting an area where further institutional support and recognition are needed.

Commissioner Rudy Ortega Jr. announced his appointment as a commissioner for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), a role with significant responsibilities. As a result, he will be resigning from his position on the LANAIC after 26 years of service, though his departure will not be immediate. He shared that his tribe is experiencing exciting developments, including the hiring of additional personnel, and he will also be stepping down from his role with the Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority (MRCA) to balance these commitments.



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Commissioner Ortega Jr. affirmed that he intends to remain involved with the Commission's 50th anniversary celebration in whatever capacity is appropriate and noted that his tribe will support the event as well. He reflected on the legacy he shares with his father, former Commissioner Rudy Ortega Sr., emphasizing their shared belief in the importance of Native voices in government.

Commissioner Mona Morales Recalde shared that her tribe, the Gabrieleno Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, hosted a Native American music festival on March 15th to showcase musicians' work and that they are also hosting a spring Native market on April 11th. She invites all commissioners to attend and spread the word on the event.

Commissioner Chrissie Castro announced that on the upcoming Thursday, the Chapter House and California Native Vote Project will host an event at the Jeffrey Deitch Gallery in Los Angeles. She provided historical context, noting the 1973 occupation of the Pine Ridge Reservation by members of the American Indian Movement. The event will feature several artists, including Tongva artists and that a hoop dancer will close the program. Commissioner Castro shared that approximately 150 people have registered to attend.

Announcements/Future Agenda Items

Commissioner Dr. Andrea Garcia suggested establishing a standing agenda item for Mayoral appointees at future meetings to ensure their contributions are intentional and consistently incorporated.

Commission Adjournment

Chairperson Villaseñor announced that the next LANAIC meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. in the Hall of Administration, Room 372, located at 500 W. Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 P.M.

FY25-26 Work Plan

Project: 2025 Native American Heritage Month		
Goal/Objective		
Provide recommendations to LA County and LA City on the 2025 Native American Heritage Month theme, NAHM honorees, and programming.		
Actions	Deadline	Status
2025 NAHM Planning Ad Hoc Committee Meetings	July 2025-November 2025	Completed
Planning Meetings with LA City Councilmember Padilla's Office	July 2025-November 2025	Completed
Select the 2025 NAHM Honorees	August 19, 2025	Completed
Notify Councilmember Padilla and the LA County Board of Supervisors of the selected 2025 NAHM Honorees	August 20, 2025	Completed
Provide LANAIC Chair's Letter to LA City Department of Cultural Affairs for the 2025 NAHM Cultural Guide & Calendar	September 17, 2025	Completed
LA City Hall 2025 NAHM Bridge Gallery	November 2025	Completed
LA City Council in Chambers NAHM Ceremony & Forecourt Reception	November 7, 2025	Completed

Project: Prepare and Submit FY26-27 Budget Request Letters to LA City and LA County		
Purpose: Ensure American Indian and Alaska Native community needs are reflected in the LA County FY26-27 budget and the LA City FY26-27 budget.		
Actions	Deadline	Status
Draft FY26-27 LANAIC Budget Request Letter to Board of Supervisors	September 30, 2025	Completed – February 10, 2026
Draft FY26-27 LANAIC Budget Request Letter to LA City Mayor Karen Bass	September 30, 2025	Incomplete
Discuss draft FY26-27 LANAIC Budget Request Letter to the Board of Supervisors	October 21, 2025	Completed – February 17, 2026
Discuss draft FY26-27 LANAIC Budget Request Letter to LA City Mayor Karen Bass	October 21, 2025	Incomplete
Adopt FY26-27 LANAIC Budget Request Letter to Board of Supervisors	November 18, 2025	Completed – March 17, 2026
Adopt FY26-27 LANAIC Budget Request Letter to LA City Mayor Karen Bass	November 18, 2025	Incomplete
Submit FY26-27 LANAIC Budget Request Letter to Board of Supervisors	November 19, 2025	Completed – March 18, 2026
Submit FY26-27 LANAIC Budget Request Letter to LA City Mayor Karen Bass	November 19, 2025	Incomplete

Project: LANAIC 50th Anniversary		
Goal/Objective		
Prepare for the 50 th Anniversary of the Commission.		
Actions	Deadline	Status
Determine how to commemorate the 50 th Anniversary of the LANAIC	TBD	50 th Anniversary Planning Ad Hoc Established – February 17, 2026

Project: Review and Update LANAIC and LANAIC SGB Bylaws		
Purpose: Ensure that LANAIC and LANAIC SGB Bylaws are in alignment with County policy and State law, and clearly and accurately represent the Commission’s role, function, and processes.		
Actions	Deadline	Status
County Counsel Review of Revised LANAIC and LANAIC SGB Bylaws	TBD	Incomplete
Commission Adoption of Revised Bylaws	TBD	Incomplete
LANAIC SGB Adoption of Revised Bylaws	TBD	Incomplete
Submission of Adopted LANAIC Bylaws to the State of California Department of Community Services & Development.	TBD	Incomplete

Project: American Indian and Alaska Native Homelessness Advocacy		
Purpose: Increase LA County and LA City resources to address American Indian and Alaska Native homelessness in LA County.		
Actions	Deadline	Status
Adopt AIAN Community Recommendations 1- Pager	October 21, 2025	Discussed at October 21, 2025 LANAIC meeting
Email Board of Supervisors & Mayor 1- pager and <i>Beyond NAHM</i> email	October 31, 2025	Completed – Emails to Mayor Bass, Supervisor Mitchell and Supervisor Hahn Incomplete – Emails Supervisor Solis, Supervisor Horvath and Supervisor Barger
Adopt letters to elected officials regarding AIAN homelessness recommendations	November 18, 2025	Completed – Adopted November 18, 2025 and submitted December 8, 2025
Approve of co-branding of the AIAN Homelessness Dashboard with CEO ARDI	November 18, 2025	Completed – Approved at November 18, 2025 meeting