

Advancing Interagency Collaboration to Enhance Equity in Federal Programs and Policies with Native Communities with and Without Disabilities

Transcript

August 14, 2024

>> KRIS PALMER: Hello, everyone. You're joining the webinar Advancing Opportunities with Native Communities: A Federal Interagency Convening. I'm Kris Palmer, and I'm a Senior Associate at Social Policy Research Associates in beautiful Oakland, California. I'm a Technical Assistance Provider for the National Center on Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities. Or the LEAD Center as I'll refer to it for the rest of the meeting.

It's a policy development center that's sponsored by the Office of Disability Employment Policy, ODEP, of the U.S. Department of Labor. ODEP is playing a key role in helping to convene many federal partners to advance opportunities with Native Communities. Looks like we have -- gosh, how many? We have 49 participants already. So welcome. I'm going to invite you to find the chat button. On my screen it's kind of at the bottom of my screen, and I can move my mouse and see there's a chat button. You can introduce yourself if you'd like to so people know who's here.

Let me also describe myself. I am a Caucasian middle aged -- maybe a little older than middle aged -- woman. I'm just going to admit that. I have kind of peach colored skin. I have a chin-level bob and a blue speckled shirt on. Let's see. I'm going to cover a few housekeeping issues. Thank you for the slide.

So if you wish to personalize your captions, you can click the show captions option in the Zoom control to view captions. Alternatively, you may open a captioning web page in a new browser tab and click the link posted in our chat box now. It's coming soon. You're going to see it. Do we see it? There it is. Thank you, Liz. So you can see a link to the captions. So you can adjust the background color and text color and font using the dropdown menus at the top of the browser.

And position the window to sit on top of the embedded captioning. Okay. Next slide. Importantly. If you have any questions about all of that -- went through that quickly. About the captions or tech support at all, finding your -- so please put that in the chat. You can also direct

chat to anyone you want by clicking on there and finding that person or the host if you want to chat to the host and not everybody. Okay. Next slide, please.

Okay. Back in October, there was a convening of federal agencies, 70 people and -- you're going to hear more about who came. But there was a convening in October. This webinar is going to present to you a summary of the findings, recommendations that came directly from probably -- many of you who are in this webinar were at this convening and maybe others. And you're going to hear what people said in summary. Next slide.

We -- the LEAD Center has put together a report of that summary. You're going to see a link in a minute in the chat. You also probably -- if you were invited to this meeting, you probably got a copy of it in your email invite, as well. So you could look through that while we're going through this, if you'd like. But you'll see hopefully we've captured in our summary today the high points of this longer document. Next slide.

Okay. Now I have the privilege of introducing one of our co-conveners of this webinar but also of collaboration process. That is Julian Guerrero, the Director of the U.S. Office of Indian Education in Washington, D.C. Previously he was the executive director of Indian education for the State of Oklahoma. And he's responsible for the distribution of \$195 million across 1,500 Indian Education Grants across the country. I'll turn it over to Julian. Next slide.

>> JULIAN GUERRERO: Thank you so much, Kris. It's good to see you again today. I'm excited to join you as a co-convener for today's webinar. Colleagues and relatives, this afternoon I join you today as a male sitting in my office in Washington, D.C. wearing a tan suit. I just so happen to be at the Office of Indian Education at the U.S. Department of Ed.

I would be remiss not to introduce myself in my native tongue, and I'll repeat in English as well. Bear with me, please. (Speaking Native language)

Good day and hello, everyone. My name is Julian Guerrero. I come from Lawton, Oklahoma, and I live and work in Washington, D.C. My families are the Kerche, Cozad, and Koffe families. I'm providing a sense of looking back at the -- looking back at our why of today's convening. And today's webinar is a part of a continued conversation, if you will.

Keeping in mind the momentum of holding onto last year's convening as you see on the screen in front of you, there's an infographic showing the logical flow of our context and the purpose of today's webinar. And before I dive into the language you see on the slide in front of you, I just would be surely remiss not to first extend my thanks on behalf of all to all the federal agencies who attended, supported the last year's convening October 4th.

You know, to give some context for today from left to right, we met back in October. We addressed the needs to identify gaps, strategies, and opportunities to increase equity and inclusion in Native American communities. We do so for the reason that we want to improve coordination among federal investments and Native American communities.

And the result of this convening, we have a summary report that is attached and shared for today's webinar. And since the convening last October, we've continued to meet every other Wednesday as a group to look for strategic ways to collaborate or to support and empower Native communities.

Now, let me be clear. Today is all about collective direction forward. And we want to do this in concert with your input in today's webinar. And before we jump into our keynote speaker here, I just think back to last October. A lot of things have transpired since then within our respective agencies, even within our own program portfolios.

But I want to briefly think back and reground ourselves in some of my past remarks from the convening last year. In those remarks, I challenged us to kind of soft reflect around three things. The first is why are we here and what do we want to do? The second is how we plan to address gaps that we've identified. And the third was how we can be both ambitious and practical in the way we do our business.

And just so I'm not up here opining on my own professional and personal thoughts, I'm excited truly that the convening report is our guide. It's our roadmap. It's a synthesis on how we can tailor our conversations moving forward. And to think practically about the ambitious way we're going to do business as a federal family. That the federal family can and will do everything in its power to craft a unified strategy that charts a way forward on how we support Tribal sovereignty, especially where it matters most. To support Native youth all throughout the country. That we can yield the power of policy, the power of grant making to address gaps in such a way that truly reaches all youth no matter their ability, identity, and reality.

So I'm heartened today with an opportunity to provide an introductory welcome for Taryn Williams who serves as Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy. In this position, she advises the Secretary of Labor on how the department's policies and programs impact the employment of people with disabilities and leads the Office of Disability Employment Policy, ODEP, which works with employers at all levels of government to promote evidence-based policy that improves employment opportunities and outcomes for people with disabilities.

Assistant Secretary Williams, it's good to see you again. And the mic is yours.

>> TARYN WILLIAMS: Thank you so much. Julian, I appreciate that opening and the work that you've done to support us in this convening going back to when we last met in person and, of course, for today. Good afternoon, everyone. As you heard, I'm Taryn McKenzie Williams. I am a Black woman, natural hair, wearing a pink blazer. My pronouns are she/her. As you heard, I have the privilege of serving as Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy. And I lead our Office of Disability Employment Policy or ODEP for short.

ODEP is within the Department of Labor. We were established in 2001 with the purpose of working across policies, programs, and agencies to promote disability employment. It's our mission to both develop and influence policies and practices to enhance both the quantity and quality of employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

And we are committed to ensuring that the Department of Labor's policies and programs meet the needs of all people with disabilities. Including people from Native communities. Next slide, please.

So I want to talk a little bit about why we're here today. The last time we came together at the October convening, our discussions focused on economic development, workforce development, and education. There were four overarching themes that emerged throughout that day's discussions. And I'm going to spend a little time highlighting them here. I know others will go into more detail as today's session goes on.

The first of those overarching themes was to improve federal funding processes and design programs with Native communities rather than for them. Another was to build cultural competency on the history of Tribal Nations for stronger relationships and trust. The third, to expand engagement with Native American people with disabilities. And finally, fourth, to better align investments and strengthen communication among and within federal agencies to increase both collaboration and sustainability.

For a comprehensive overview of the outcomes and the discussions from that convening, I encourage you to review the detailed summary prepared by the LEAD Center. And if you haven't yet received the summary, you can find a link in the chat to access it. When we met in October, many of you expressed a common gap of insufficient access to funding opportunities and community investments.

Federal agencies must ensure that those who qualify for funding opportunities get what they need without barriers and that they have equal access in the application process. We have to be thoughtful about the types of requirements that we place on our grantees, because their administration could outweigh the benefit and prevent certain communities from applying for funding.

It's essential for the federal government to engage with Tribal leaders in culturally competent ways that represent the diverse historical and cultural backgrounds of federally recognized tribes. And by understanding the unique needs and priorities of Native communities, acknowledging their sovereignty, we can improve relations and build a foundation for effective collaboration and support.

We also note that enhancing communication and transparency with Native communities is critical. All employees and contractors should be educated on each Tribal Nation's history and cultural practices when engaging with the communities.

I want to express appreciation to all involved in putting together this event and the report. I urge us to continue collaborating across agencies and with Native communities to ensure a thriving and inclusive future for all. And now I have the pleasure of turning over the floor to Sallie Yoshida from the LEAD Center. Thank you.

>> SALLIE YOSHIDA: Thank you, Assistant Secretary Williams. Hi, everyone. My name is Sallie Yoshida. I'm Japanese American. I have long, straight hair. And I'm wearing a cream-colored sweater. My Zoom background is cherry blossoms from a Japan trip that I took in 2017.

So I work with Kris at Social Policy Research Associates. I was also involved in the convening in October and the development of the summary report. What I'm going to do is share a few details about the attendees and the presenters at the October convening.

Before I get there, I want to point out that throughout this briefing we have included various Tribal seals and flags from the October convening that have Tribal affiliations. On this slide, you will see three Tribal seals/flags. Here you see Tlingit and Haida, Mohegan, and Kanaka Maoli. Next slide, please.

So at the October convening, there were 80 representatives from the White House and 11 Federal departments whose seals are pictured here along with the White House seal. We also had several federally funded technical assistance and policy development centers. The attendees included a diverse group of officials from 30 Federal agencies, including

Departments of Labor, Education, Health and Human Services, Interior, Commerce, Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and the U.S. Treasury.

Together these participants represented a range of financial, technical assistance, and training programs, divisions and initiatives serving Native American communities. Next slide, please.

So on this slide, you will see five pictures of presenters. We had a number of presenters, including Mr. Jim Warne who moderated the convening. Presenters included Assistant Secretary Alejandra Castillo, Director Julian Guerrero, Assistant Secretary Dr. Amy Lloyd, Assistant Secretary Taryn Williams. Next slide, please. We also had Chief Lynn Malerba, Assistant Secretary Anthony Rodman, VR Program Specialist August Martin, Deputy Director Robin Utz, and Executive Director Naomi Miguel. And their photos are also depicted on this slide.

So the convening was held at the Department of Labor headquarters with participants who attended in person or virtually on the Webex platform. To engage participants in robust conversations, on site and virtual facilitators supported small group discussions along with note takers who captured the voices from the participants.

And it's this collective voice that is captured in the Summary and what we are sharing and discussing today. So with that, I will pass the next slide onto Kris.

>> KRIS PALMER: Thank you, Sallie. As Sallie indicated, we are highlighting symbols and flags from federal participants at the convening that have a Tribal affiliation. Here we have seals from Comanche, Osage, and Cherokee. Next slide. So now I'm going to start in with the recommendations, the actual recommendations that many of you participated in making at the October event.

We have -- this is divided into three topic areas: Education, economic development, and workforce development. And I'm going to start with the recommendations from education. So they are to involve Tribal colleges and universities in federal programs' conception and design. Not just after it's been designed. And invest in Tribal colleges, universities, primary and secondary education systems. Mitigate barriers to accessing Federal Government programs, including funding for education.

And then, increase the Perkins V rate of flow-through to Tribes. The flow rate is 1.4% to the state's allocation to the tribes. And there was a recommendation to increase that flow through to at least 2% or 3%. And that would require legislative change. Next slide, please.

So the second part of the education recommendations are address gaps in the transition from secondary to postsecondary education. We know that youth all over have -- all youth have difficulty in the way our systems are designed, and those transitions can be fraught with barriers. So there's recommendation to address some of those gaps for Native youth. And make available joint grants between Department of Ed and Department of Labor and bring workforce training and education together so they speak to each other more than they do now. And ensure education and training are portable. So if you get a degree or college credit here, then it counts towards the next place you go. Next slide, please.

Now we're going to turn to the economic development recommendations. So first, recognize the lack of infrastructure in some areas and support -- give support to Tribal governments presently and historically. Broaden labor markets on reservations while protecting sovereignty. And allow the use of federal grant funding for building maintenance costs on reservations. That's often something that is not allowable as an expense, and we know that there is a lot of need for upgrading and fixing and making the facilities better on reservations. Next slide.

So increase investments in Native American-owned small businesses. That's self-explanatory. Understand that a singular approach to economic development is not possible given the diversity of Tribal governments and local contexts. That they are distinct. Next slide.

And now we're moving to workforce development. So utilize the American Job Centers that are out there and registered apprenticeships and AmeriCorps and the wonderful things Department of Labor offers to develop work skills and facilitate real-world work experiences and improve employment outcomes for Native communities. Tap into growing economic sectors to fill labor market gaps and ensure federal programs and staff liaisons are known and accessible to Native communities.

Okay. I'm going to turn it over to my colleague Sallie.

>> SALLIE YOSHIDA: Thank you, Kris. So as Assistant Secretary Williams described earlier, throughout the convening, there were four overarching themes that ran through the three issue areas of education, economic, and workforce development. And so I'll be expanding a little bit on those. On this slide, you'll see the Tribal seals and flags for Tohono O'odham and Zuni. Next slide, please.

All right. So one of the themes that emerged was the need to improve the quality and effectiveness of federal agencies' program investment and funding practices. For example, participants stressed the importance to consult and engage with Native communities to inform program design and identify investments that are most impactful. And part of this is to understand how Native communities define success and which outcome measures are meaningful.

Participants also shared that federal programs could also reduce the burden of compliance by simplifying program applications and data collection requirements. Given the limitations and resources for research, data collection, and grant writing for some entities that serve Native Americans, it was also suggested that federal applications in grant management should align with local capacity. And part of this is acknowledging the connectivity and communication issues in rural areas, and that some grants may be designed for large-scale projects that may not be appropriate for potential Tribal applicants. Next slide, please.

The second theme was the importance of building cultural competency through ongoing training and gaining a fuller understanding of Native American history in order to build stronger relationships, which is particularly important given the historical traumas and atrocities Native Americans endured. It was stressed that building personal relationships that are consistent is key to building trust over time.

A third theme is the need to expand engagement with Native American people with disabilities. Part of this is to understand what the term disability means to Native Americans to better understand potential stigma or cultural beliefs that may influence participation in services or programs. Suggestions include listening and being respectful of Tribal needs and to include people with disabilities in conversations, program planning, and implementation.

Finally, the fourth overarching theme is the importance of federal interagency collaboration, which is critical to creating attainable resource-driven goals to ensure practices and advance decision making processes. The October 2023 convening itself was described as a promising practice as it provided an opportunity for federal agencies to come together, some for the first time to identify collaboration opportunities, policy gaps, and intersections to enhance equitable access to economic development, education, and workforce development programs in Native communities.

On the next slide here, now we'll explore next steps in the collaboration process. Here on this slide you will see two Tribal seals and flags, Navajo/Diné and Oglala Lakota. I'll pass this on next to Mr. Guerrero.

>> JULIAN GUERRERO: Thank you so much, Sallie, for all of that rich information. Could I go ahead and get the next slide? So as you see on this slide in front of you, where to go next in our collaboration. We have to grapple with a lot of information. Think about what we just heard from the previous slides. And kind of gear ourselves towards a mentality of what do we prioritize for federal collaboration.

And in this, we seek to do many things. But before I jump into the bullet points here, I want to express my thanks for the LEAD Center for providing this Summary Report from the October convening. As well as I also wanted to provide a special recognition to Jimmy Warne. I see you joining us today, sir, in the lobby. And Jimmy helped provide our facilitation in the last convening last October. It's very much appreciated, brother.

So to the bullet points here, we're working together to collaborate and leverage resources. So we seek to streamline federal investments and enhance communication amongst federal agencies to boost collaboration for long-term success. As well as thinking about what are the implications of simplified funding opportunities to increase accessibility and outreach to more Native American communities. Outreach is going to be essential in moving forward.

We're excited to be forward thinking in this. Identifying those opportunities and investing in the next steps. In consultation and collaboration with Tribal leaders to meet their needs, their people's needs, and continue to get input on this design. Could I get the next slide?

As we think about other resources to keep in mind, on the screen in front of you is a chronological outline of just a very few important White House executive orders regarding the advancement of the Federal Fiduciary Trust responsibility to Tribal Nations. And we are keeping in line with all of the executive orders and thinking about how to consider where we will increase our collaboration across the federal departments and agencies.

On screen in front of you, and again in chronological order: Executive Order 14112 in 2023, it was about reforming the federal funding and support for Tribal Nations to better embrace trust, responsibility, and promote the next era of Tribal self-determination. As well as Executive Order 14091, further advancing racial equity and support for underserved communities throughout the federal government.

In addition to Executive Order 14049. The White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity Excellence, Economic Opportunity for Native Americans and strengthening Tribal colleges and universities, which we'll hear from Naomi Miguel shortly. And last but not least, Executive Order 13175 as reaffirmed in 2022 and 2021, consultation and coordination with Indian Tribes related to uniform consultation standards and Tribal consultation plans.

This is very exciting work in front of us here. Could I get the next slide, please? And we want to hear from you. So we're going to poll the audience to find out what aligns well with your agency's priorities. As well as what will support Native American communities the most. And what will greatly impact the communities? And what has the most potential for coordinated action in the short-term?

So again, thinking about agency priorities, thinking about the size and scale of impact, and then thinking about the potential for coordinated action in the short-term. So that being said, I will turn it over to Kris at the LEAD Center for the next slide.

>> KRIS PALMER: Thank you, Julian. Really appreciate that context. You really framed it so well to now turn to our collaborative part of this session today. So for all of you that may be eating a later lunch or just coming in, I would really -- I ask you to come now to come inside this meeting, come closer to the meeting, and be ready to express your own preferences and take this poll with us.

So I'm going to show you four polls. You're going to have a chance to vote on the areas that you think that the collaboration should focus on. We know that there's so many recommendations in the Summary as you'll see when you read it or if you've read it. How can we do everything at once? So there really is a desire here to form a collective sense of what should we prioritize first? We want to do all of these -- many of these things if not all of them. And where do we start?

So in these four polls, I'm going to ask you to narrow it down to one. If you can't, no worries. Put a couple checks. But try to help us focus here in selecting just a few. Now, there's going to be a poll that comes up. Some of you will be able to read that. And for others, I'm going to also give you the poll questions or the poll options. And if you'd like, you could in the chat -- if you can't use the poll, you can put your answer in the chat.

And if you'd like to be anonymous -- as anonymous as possible, you can direct that vote to the host. And you can ask for help in the chat, too, if you want, if that wasn't clear. So we're going to go ahead and start our poll. Shannon from NDI has helped us put these together. She

will put that up there. Okay. I can't read the whole question, but -- anyway, you can see these. You can also read your slide to help you decide where you can vote.

Some people are already voting. I love it. Number one: Invest in Tribal education systems, mitigate barriers to accessing Federal Government programs, including funding for education. Two: Support Tribes to work at the state level to leverage more Perkins funds. That's to up the pass-through rate. Three: To benefit Native youth, address transition gaps from K-12 to college. Four: Give more joint Department of Ed and Labor grants to Native communities.

Those are your four. Now I'm going to be quiet for a few seconds and let you finish. I still see some numbers moving. Okay. I'm going to go ahead and end the poll. If anyone wants to protest, put it in the chat, and I'll wait. Okay. Sharing results. So invest in Tribal education systems and mitigate barriers to Federal Government programs and including funding for education seems to be at the top of the list here for focus.

Okay. Let's move to the second poll. Thank you, Shannon. Here we are in our second poll that has to do with economic development partnerships. I'm going to repeat the questions that Julian Guerrero gave us to help you, again, focus. We're looking at what aligns well with your agency's priorities, what will have the greatest impact for Native American communities to have the most benefit, and what has the best chance for coordinated action in the short-term.

Recommendations are one: Increase investments in Native American-owned small businesses. Two: Broaden the labor market to give people more options for earning a living on reservations while protecting Tribal sovereignty. Three: Change regulations to allow federal grant funding for building and facility costs, which now is limited. Four: Make available joint grants between Department of Ed and Department of Labor.

I'm also going to invite if you'd like to make any comments in the chat, anything you'd like to add or frustrations you have with the choices you have. Voice anything you like in the chat. We'll take that into consideration. And again, if you'd like to vote outside the poll, please go ahead and do that with a message to our host.

Okay. So this has slowed down. So we have -- gosh. There's a lot -- I think you guys like all these recommendations. So they're all about very even. But it looks like the second one, broaden the labor market to give people more options for earning a living is kind of -- while protecting Tribal sovereignties. To really broaden the labor market. So that looks like our main choice here.

Thank you, Melanie, for putting that in the chat. I recommend other people to comment anything you'd like in the chat. So I think we'll go to poll three. All right. Poll three. First option: Utilize federal workforce programs to support job seekers' skills, work experiences, and employment opportunities for Native communities. Two: Tap into growing sectors to fill labor market gaps. And three: Ensure that education and workforce related programs like registered apprenticeships and other things that were mentioned previously and their staff liaisons are known and accessible to Native people. Oh, you're still going. Please continue. Okay. I'm going to end -- still going.

Okay. Looks like 41 people have now weighed in. All right. Let's end this poll. Also very close between utilizing federal workforce programs and ensuring education and workforce related programs and their staff liaisons are known and accessible. Thanks for that input. And let's move to poll number four. Our final poll.

Okay. Again, look at what aligns with your agencies, what has the most impact for Native communities, and what has the potential for coordinated action. We're thinking about what are the things we can coordinate on. These are the overarching themes that Sallie had presented to you.

So number one, the question is: -- sorry, the summary of the recommendation is conceptualize and design federal investments and corresponding measures of success with Native communities rather than for Native communities. I see that shot up to 73% off the bat. That's a popular one. Number two is build federal cultural competency on the history of Tribal Nations. Three: Expand engagement with Native American people with disabilities. And four: Align investments, strengthen communications among and within federal agencies. Which I think we're doing right now. Okay. We've got 34 people weighing in. We had 41 on the last one. I'm going to wait for those other people.

All right. We're up to 40. Let's look at our results here. Okay. This is a clear front runner to work with Native American communities rather than for them and conceptualize the programs and measures of success with those communities. So that's a clear recommendation. Okay. I'm going to stop the polling right now and move to one of our final pieces of the day. I did that right, Shannon. Did I share the results?

>> SHANNON EDAM: Yes. The results were shared. Now, they've stopped.

>> KRIS PALMER: Okay. So I closed it on your window. If it's still up on your window, push close. Now I'm going to turn this over for some reflection. And this would be with Naomi

Miguel who is the Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Native Americans and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities. Naomi Miguel leads the White House effort, which seeks to support activities that will strengthen a nation by expanding education opportunities and improving education outcomes for all American Indian and Alaska Native students. So let me turn it over to you, Naomi.

>> NAOMI MIGUEL: Thank you, Kris.

>> KRIS PALMER: Please come on camera if you can.

>> NAOMI MIGUEL: Yep. Thank you, Kris. First, I would like to thank the Assistant Secretary Williams and Director Guerrero for reminding us of the goals of this convening and really starting us out keeping that top of mind at the beginning of this convening. Sorry. I just realized I didn't introduce myself. (Speaking Native Language)

Good afternoon. My name is Naomi Miguel. I'm from the village of ChuChu. I am currently wearing a blue blazer. With a basket and an eagle on it with a red necklace and a blue top. As just a descriptor for those of you who are viewing.

As you've heard in the briefing, we have three main areas from our convening. The transition from secondary to postsecondary and workforce. We saw in the poll that the majority of us voted that we should invest in Tribal education and also look at those barriers. The second main area for our convening was for economic development partnership. In the poll, we all thought we needed to broaden the labor market to earn a living while protecting Tribal sovereignty. The third main area was inclusive workforce development policies and practices. And in the poll, we saw that the majority of us agreed that we should ensure the education and workforce related programs and their staff are accessible to Native people.

The workforce development note. I also wanted to thank our presentation team who helped us with this briefing. They thoughtfully placed Tribal flags throughout the presentation, and those flags were representative of the speakers we had at the convening. I was happy to see in the chat some of you were happy to see your Tribal flag in the presentation. And I think that is just one small way that we can begin to create an inclusive environment in all of our agencies.

It all begins with us. It's always nice when we can see each other and also see our tribes throughout our work. Also wanted to just talk about our overarching themes that we kind of went over in the last poll. Improving federal funding process with and for Native

communities. We can do this through Tribal consultation. The White House MOU from 2022 suggests that we should have Tribal input at the beginning stages of any regulatory or grant process.

And so making sure that we can get that Tribal community input before the policies are made should always be a top priority and goal in all of our agencies. We try to do that here at the Department of Education. The second theme that we saw was build cultural competency on the history of Tribal Nations. And this is work that we've seen occurring through other agencies specifically through OMB and the Department of Interior and their creation of creating a Tribal history training for the federal workforce.

Another overarching theme is engaging -- expanding engagements with Native Americans with disabilities. That is work that we really covered at the convening. I'm always reminded about our discussion when we were talking about Native Americans with disabilities and how on the community level it's not seen as a disability but more or less as a way the community comes together to provide accessibility.

And I think that's something that we can all work together on creating more awareness of our programs and grants or even if you know of a tribe that's doing great things on that front too. Want to make sure that we can highlight all of that, too, as well from the White House Initiative.

Another overarching theme is strengthening collaboration among and within federal agencies to increase efficiencies and sustainability. And that kind of brings us to the last question of what do we prioritize and what can we do as federal collaborations. We can start by having streamlined investments, enhanced communications, boost our collaboration, and really commit to having that as a long-term success.

We currently are working with the White House Initiative and Department of Labor's ODEP team. And in that group, we welcome you all to join and work on prioritizing these federal collaborations and further working on these overarching themes in our work. We do have time usually during those meetings where we invite programs to come and give us updates on the work that they're doing. Or if they have ideas on ways we can work together.

That's just one way we can start creating these collaboration efforts. And I think I can say from the White House Initiative's perspective, we want to continue to work with you all to ensure that we're creating these engagements where we're helping promote the federal funding piece and that we are also further creating an inclusive workforce.

I always say to our non-federal employee colleagues that I really enjoy working here on the federal side of things on this administration because I can come into meetings and speak my language and still have that respect as much as I would be introducing myself in English. I think I saw, too, in the chat there was a reminder that today's Navajo Codetalkers Historic Day. So that's one way all of us can bring in that inclusive workforce into our work. Both through seeing ourselves but also through speaking our languages.

So we really appreciate all of you taking the time to see through the work that we did in October. And we really look forward to working with all of you as we move forward and really work towards the goals in creating these inclusive spaces for Native peoples but also our students and workforce.

(Silence).

>> SALLIE YOSHIDA: Thank you, Director Miguel. So I just want to close us out of our briefing today. Just wanted to make sure you check out the LEAD Center's website where you can find the recording from today's event and the transcript. Give us about five business days, plus you'll find a robust library of resources at the LEAD Center website.

You can also sign up for our newsletter, which will give you information about future and past events and promising practices from the field. And on the next slide, you can connect with us in various different social media platforms from Facebook, X, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

And then the final slide, I just -- you know, on behalf of everyone that's involved in this briefing -- want to thank you wholeheartedly for joining us today and providing your thoughts on promising next steps. I know for LEAD Center and on behalf of Kris and myself, it's been truly a pleasure to be part of this important work. And we look forward to continuing this work with all of you in the near future.

So thank you, all. And have a wonderful rest of your day.