



NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION Native Youth Community Project

PUBLIC INFORMATION BRIEF • YEAR 5 • JANUARY 2023

This information brief presents selected findings from the RMC Research Corporation Evaluation Report, based on data collected October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022.

The Nevada State Department of Education's *Native Youth Community Project* (NYCP) sought to prepare Grades 7–12 American Indian (AI) students for college and careers using a three-fold plan that included: (a) the support of a College and Career Coach (CCC) and Community-based Instructor (CBI); (b) activities designed to improve student academic performance, including tutoring and summer programs, conferences designed to engage students, and guided visits to colleges; and (c) community collaborative events. The fifth and final year of the grant was conducted under a No-Cost Extension (NCE), which was approved by the Office of Indian Education and allowed a limited number of services and activities to continue.

Three tribal groups in two different geographic locations received support in these efforts. Members of the Yerington Paiute and Walker River Paiute Tribes attend school in the Yerington, NV, area. Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone tribal members attend school in the McDermitt, NV, area. A total of 110 Grades 7–12 AI students attended schools in these two areas during the 2021-22 academic year.

This information brief includes key points from the evaluation of the fifth year of project implementation. The major components of the fifth year focused on a variety of activities designed to support the project's long-term goals. These included (a) a variety of **professional development sessions** on culturally sensitive and indigenous pedagogy and lesson support, building success at home, and contributing factors; (b) a **virtual dual-enrollment Political Science course** for Grade 12 students in McDermitt; (c) a **Native Youth College Camp** held at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas; (d) continuation and expansion of the **Amplified Nevada Native Youth (ANNY) website** and **Native Youth Resource Hub**; (e) the **United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY) National Conference**; (f) **backpacks and school supplies** for McDermitt students; (g) a **college tour and UNITY Healing Circle** held at the University of Nevada, Reno; and (h) two **Gathering of Native Americans (GONA) events**, one held at each participating site.

RMC used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to collect information for the evaluation. Quantitative methods were utilized to analyze participation in activities and supports. Qualitative methods were used to collect information on the content of activities and supports. In addition, quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze data obtained from surveys distributed to students, parents/caregivers, community members, and others who participated in selected project activities.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Brief descriptions of Year 5 activities are as follows:

Professional Development Events

- The day-long ***Culturally Sensitive and Indigenous Pedagogy and Lesson Support Professional Development*** was held on April 26 in McDermitt. It was provided by a team of trainers from Jooba

Consulting. Twenty-three people participated in the training, including teachers, paraprofessionals, tribal staff, and others. Among the topics were *How to Evaluate Indigenous Educational Resources for Authenticity and Accuracy*, *Shut Down in Native American Students*, and *How to Recognize Early Detachment*.

- The day-long ***Culturally Sensitive and Indigenous Pedagogy and Lesson Support Professional Development – Part Two*** was held on August 31 in McDermitt. It served as a follow-up to the professional development that occurred in April. Twenty-seven people participated in the training, including teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and others. Session topics included *Paiute Recognition and Sovereignty*, *The Need for Culturally Relevant Instruction*, *Native American Trauma*, and *Self-Care*.
- The three-day-long ***Culturally Sensitive and Indigenous Pedagogy and Lesson Support Professional Development*** was held September 7–9 at Schurz Elementary School in Schurz. Approximately 10 people participated in the training, including teachers and paraprofessionals. The first two days of the professional development consisted of classroom demonstrations and presentations on the Finger Poppin’ method for mastering math facts. The final day of the professional development featured presentations and discussions on additional topics, including drawing, project-based learning and implementation, and assessment.
- The ***Building Success at Home Professional Development*** was held on the evening of April 27 in McDermitt. It was provided by a team of trainers from Jooba Consulting. Twenty-four people participated in the training, including students, parents/caregivers, grandparents, community members, and tribal and school staff. In addition, approximately eight lower-grade students accompanied their parents/caregivers to the event. The overarching goal of the session was to promote a closer relationship between the community and the school.
- The two-day-long ***Contributing Factors Professional Development*** was held September 28–29 in McDermitt. It was provided by Dr. Pearl Yellowman. Eighteen school staff and 16 tribal staff participated in separate sessions offered over the two-day period. The professional development was intended to allow participants to gain a deeper understanding of individual and community characteristics by exploring elements of historical and contemporary traumas.

Activities and Supports Designed to Increase Student Academic Performance

- To increase student access to advanced courses, NYCP funds paid tuition costs for five Grade 12 students in the McDermitt area for a ***dual-enrollment Political Science course***. The course was offered virtually through Great Basin College. All five students successfully completed the course.
- The three-day-long ***Native Youth College Camp*** was held from June 23 through June 25, 2022, at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). The NYCP partnered with UNLV and the Palms Resort and Casino to provide Native students from Nevada with information and experiences related to college and career readiness. Along with her colleagues, the Associate Director for Early Outreach in UNLV’s Office of Admissions served as the primary designer and planner of the college camp. Forty-five Grades 6–12 students and 13 chaperones from Clark County and the towns of Wells, Winnemucca, McDermitt, Yerington, Schurz, and Owyhee participated in the camp.
- ***Amplified Nevada Native Youth (ANNY)*** began in Year 3 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent shift to virtual delivery of some of the key features of the NYCP. This website, which focuses on strengthening college and career pathways for all American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) students statewide, seeks to provide a roadmap to support virtual learning platforms. It serves as a resource hub for students, families, and educators.

ANNY resources include a variety of presentations from current and recently graduated Native American students and higher education professionals. In addition, the site hosts virtual college and university tours in partnership with higher education institutions across the country. During Year 5, additional work was completed to ensure the continued accessibility of ANNY resources beyond the grant.



Students tour the campus of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas during the Native Youth College Camp. Photo by Linda Fredericks.

- The annual **United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY) conference** was held on July 8–12 in Minneapolis. Ten NYCP students and four chaperones joined 1,000 other Native youth and tribal leaders from across the nation and Canada for cultural sharing, education, awards, music, and celebration. The annual leadership event featured motivational speakers, cultural presentations, and workshops on leadership, college and career development, community engagement, and health and wellness.
- At the beginning of the 2022-23 school year, NYCP provided **backpacks full of school supplies**, including items such as notebooks, writing implements, and calculators, to 55 McDermitt students.
- The two-day **College Tour and UNITY Healing Circle** was held on September 30 and October 1 at the University of Nevada, Reno. Twenty-five students from across Nevada participated, including 15 from McDermitt and 3 from Yerington. The event utilized a “train-the-trainer” model to prepare students as peer leaders who return to their communities to share what they learned.
- There were two three-day long **Gathering of Native Americans (GONA)** events held during the NCE.



Students from McDermitt listen attentively to a facilitator from the Native Wellness Institute during a GONA event. Photo by Darla Camas.

In Yerington, the GONA was held August 25–27. In McDermitt, the GONA was held September 18–20. Both were facilitated by a team from the Native Wellness Institute. According to the GONA flyer, the event was “a time for community members of all ages and stages to come together and check in with each other, grieve and heal together, and learn new tools to live better in balance as family and community.” Approximately 20 people participated in the Yerington GONA, including educators, parents, grandparents, caregivers, community members, and students. In McDermitt, the first day of the GONA was dedicated to a community event for parents, grandparents, caregivers, community members, tribal elders, and students. There were 62 attendees at this

event. Day two featured three separate sessions for approximately 80 students in Grades 4–6, 7–8, and 9–12. The final day of the GONA offered a workplace wellness training for approximately 20 tribal program staff.

SELECTED FINDINGS

Following is a representative sample of key findings from the Year 5 evaluation.

Culturally Sensitive and Indigenous Pedagogy and Lesson Support. There were 17 respondents to the survey, representing a response rate of 74%. Overall, participant perceptions of the professional development were very favorable, with all agreeing, at least *somewhat*, to all 20 survey items relating to the quality and content of the five sessions. All agreed that the information presented was relevant and interesting, that their knowledge of the session content increased as a result of their attending the session, and that they plan to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during the session in their professional practice. Below are several typical quotes from respondents about the training:

This was the best professional development we've had in the last 2 years. I appreciate the relevancy to my position and our student demographics.

I enjoyed this lesson and learned a lot about how to involve more of our Indigenous students. Thank you very much for the notebooks and professional development!

Thank you for the opportunity to learn about the culture and history of Native Americans from the perspective of a Native American.

Native Youth College Camp. The 36 respondents had obtained parent permission to participate in the survey and represented a response rate of 80%. Overall, participant perceptions of the college camp were very favorable, with at least 83% agreeing, at least *somewhat*, to all 18 survey items relating to the impact and quality of the camp. All agreed that the camp helped them to increase their ability to control their future and to better understand the options for student dining at UNLV. Additionally, at least 50% of the respondents selected *strongly agree* on 14 of the 18 survey items relating to the impact and quality of the camp. Ninety-two percent would recommend this college camp to a friend.

Gathering of Native Americans (GONA)—McDermitt. At the conclusion of the Community Wellness Gathering on day one of the GONA, participants were asked to complete a survey. There were 21 respondents, representing a response rate of 33%. Overall, participant perceptions of the GONA were favorable, with at least 90% agreeing, at least *somewhat*, to 11 of the 12 survey items relating to the quality and content of the GONA. Eighty percent or more *strongly agreed* that the quality of the GONA was excellent, the presenters were knowledgeable, and that their time at the GONA was well spent.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The major components of the fifth year, conducted under an NCE with decreased funding, focused on a variety of activities designed to support the project's long-term goals. Surveys were administered to participants in seven events, and an analysis of survey data indicated that all events were well received. Members of all respondent groups, including students, parents/caregivers, teachers, school administrators, and tribal leaders, consistently indicated that events sponsored under the grant featured quality facilitation, increased knowledge of valuable topics, and provided practical knowledge and skills that would be utilized in participants' lives. All project components for Year 5 were implemented and completed according to the approved project plan.

For additional information on Nevada's NYCP, including the full evaluation report, please visit the NYCP website at Native Youth Community Project (NYCP) Grant (nv.gov).