



WESTERN REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Tribal Engagement Committee

December 2025

ENHANCING RESILIENCE TO
AVOID CASCADING DISASTER



WESTERN REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Today's Agenda



- **Welcome and Introductions**
- **Featured Presentation:**
 - **Utah Division of Indian Affairs** by James Toledo, Deputy Director, Utah Division of Indian Affairs
- **Next Steps and Actions**
- **Around the Phone Updates**





James Toledo

Deputy Director
Utah Division of Indian Affairs



- ***Deputy Director, Utah Division of Indian Affairs***
 - Oversees division programs aimed at improving communication, cooperation, and collaboration between the state and Tribal governments
- **Previously:**
 - Program Manager, Utah Division of Indian Affairs
- **Education:**
 - University of Utah

Utah Division of Indian Affairs

Western Regional Partnership

December 5, 2025

Presentation Agenda

History & Identity

Our origins, evolution, mission, and core values.

Statutory Role

Mandates, coordination duties, and key responsibilities.

Working with Tribes

Summits, regular meetings, and caucus engagement.

Strategy & State Relations

2025 Strategic Plan, Executive Orders, and Liaison training.

Our Origins (1953)

Commission on State Indian Affairs

- The division originated in 1953 as a direct result of the Utah State Legislature's passage of the **Indian Affairs Act**.
- This act marked Utah's initial foundational commitment to recognizing and supporting Native American communities.



Our Evolution



1953

Commission on State Indian Affairs
established.



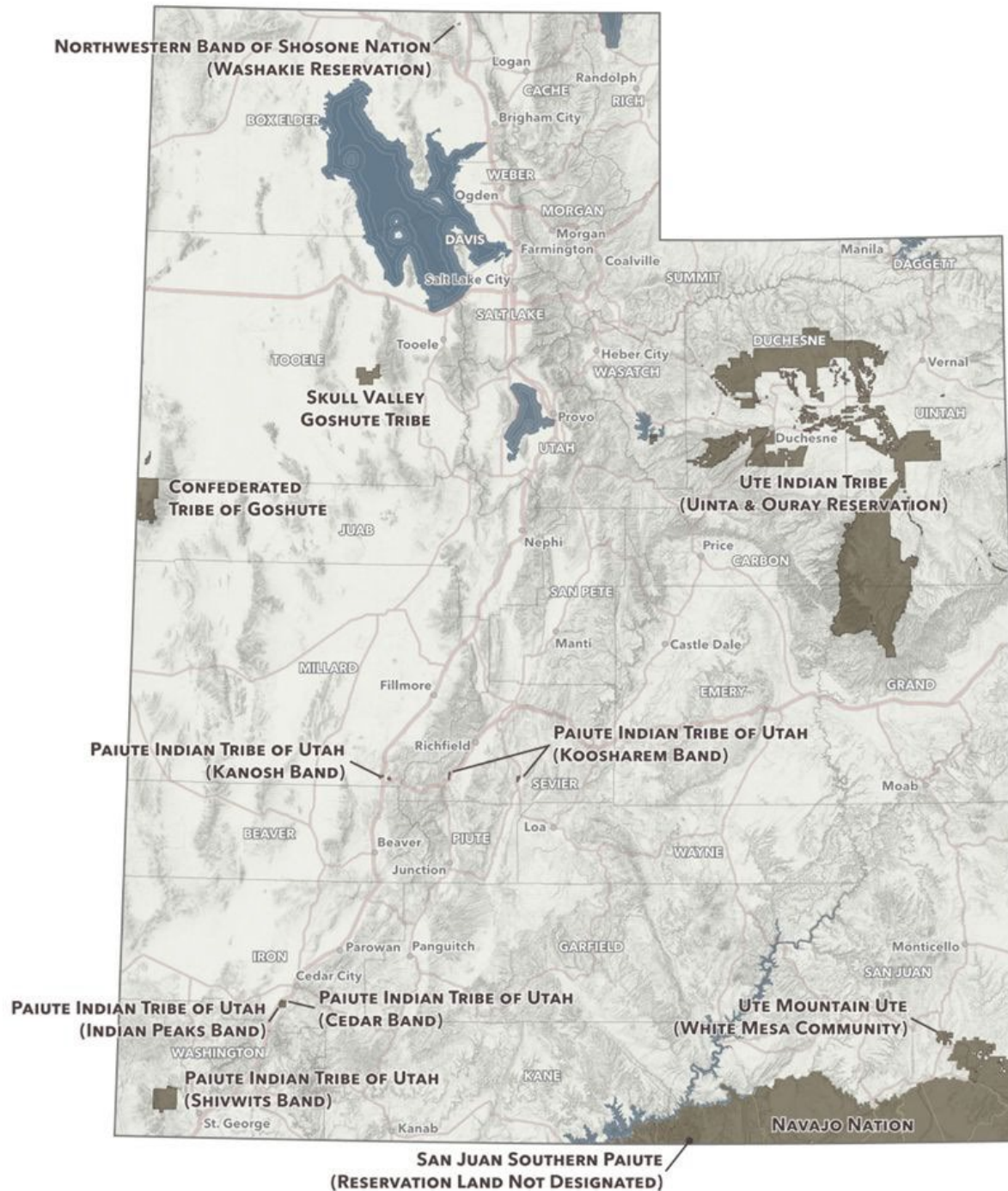
1956

First Director appointed, solidifying
purpose.



1999

Evolved into the current **Utah**
Division of Indian Affairs.



Our Mission

"Strengthen government-to-government relationships between the State of Utah and Tribal governments by serving as a trusted resource, a collaborative partner, and a support to American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities."

We achieve this by:

Building Relationships

Connecting Tribal communities and the executive branch, facilitating consultation, and serving as a referral agent.

Providing Expertise

Offering Native perspectives, developing cultural training, and assisting with government-to-government interaction.

Advancing Awareness

Educating about the history, culture, and contemporary issues facing AI/AN communities in Utah.

Mediating & Resolving

Facilitating mediation and providing legal understanding to cultivate positive relationships.

Our Vision

"We envision mutually beneficial government-to-government relationships through recognition of state and Tribal sovereignty, interagency collaboration, and the enhancement of community well-being."

Core Values



Respect

Listening, valuing cultures, and communicating with empathy.



Collaboration

Prioritizing partnership to intentionally address issues.



Community

Fostering a welcoming environment and a sense of belonging.



Education

Cultivating cultural understanding and supporting youth leadership.

Statutory Responsibilities (Utah Code 9-9-104)

Core Mandate

Coordinate relations between the State of Utah, Indian Tribal Governments, and other Indian groups.

Committee Support

Staff and support the committees or boards specified within our statute to ensure effective governance.



Coordination & Meetings

Required Meetings

Meet regularly with elected officials (or designees) of all Tribal Nations located in the state.

Joint Coordination

Coordinate and attend a joint meeting of tribal representatives at least **six times each year**.

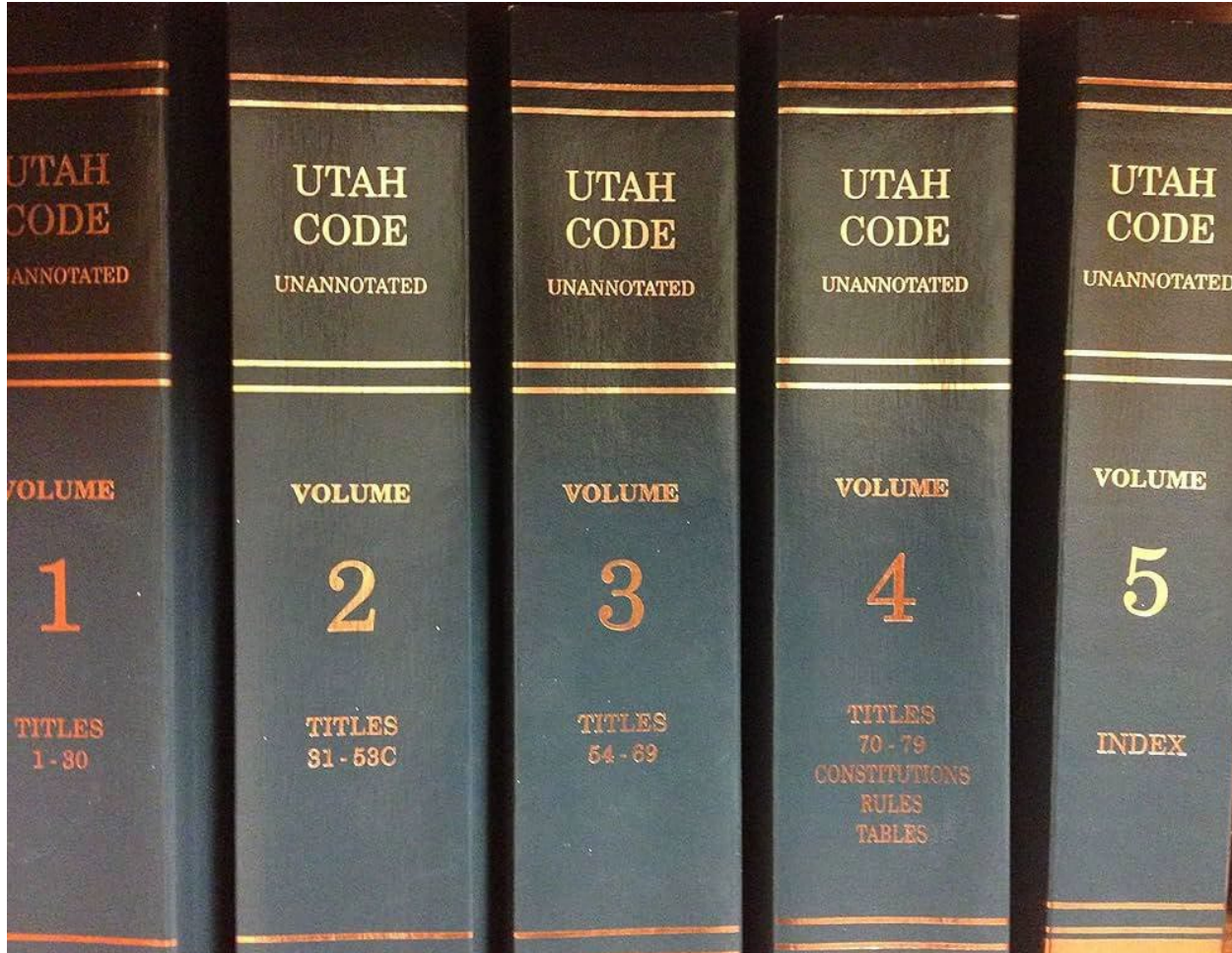
Agency Participation

Coordinate with other state agencies to ensure their broad participation in at least three annual meetings.

Program Development

Develop programs allowing Indian citizens to share in Utah's progress.

Financial & Administrative Powers



- **Contracting:** Authority to contract with public and private entities for services or facilities.
- **Fund Management:** Acquire and hold funds/property to administer programs.
- **Gifts & Grants:** Accept and dispose of gifts and grants for the benefit of Native Americans within the state.
- **Rulemaking:** Make necessary rules in accordance with the Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act.

Native American Summit

Government Focus: An annual gathering for state leaders to meet individually with Tribal leaders. These meetings strengthen relations and allow for updates on consultation efforts.

Public Focus: Connects directly with the community. Features breakout sessions, exhibitor strolls, and the **Indigenous Youth Leadership Summit**.



Native American Summit 2025



Ongoing Engagement Forums

Utah Tribal Leader (UTL) Meetings

Provides a regular forum for state agencies to share project updates, funding opportunities, and introduce their services to tribal governments.



Utah Tribal Caucus Day

Designed to strengthen relationships with **state legislators**. Increases civic engagement and helps Tribal leaders navigate the legislative process.



2025 Strategic Plan Overview

The Process

We gathered feedback through surveys and interviews from:

- Tribal Government Leaders
- State Agency Directors & Liaisons
- UDIA Employees & Partners

Goal: To identify how well UDIA fulfills its role and where we can improve services.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025

Strategic Challenges

Internal Challenges

- Need for clarity on staff roles & responsibilities.
- Improving internal communication processes.
- **Capacity issues:** Need more resources for events, marketing, and engagement.

External Challenges

- Need to clarify UDIA's role to partners.
- Navigating varied schedules and goals of stakeholders.
- Agencies requesting more clear communication and training support.

Strengths & Opportunities

Our Strengths

- Strong culture of teamwork and respect.
- Deep cultural knowledge of community connections.
- Execution of engaging, culturally minded events.

Opportunities

- Enhance marketing to increase visibility.
- Facilitate relationship-building for **State Agency Liaisons**.
- Explore a **Grants Program**.
- Partner with the Museum of Utah for cultural education.

2025 Strategic Plan: 4 Core Goals

Government Relations

Goal 1: Promote government-to-government connection and facilitate relationship building between state and tribal entities.

Community Engagement

Goal 2: Create meaningful opportunities for community connection and active engagement across the state.

Education

Goal 3: Provide accurate historical and quality cultural AI/AN education to state agencies and the public.

Internal Operations

Goal 4: Ensure internal operations run smoothly and efficiently to best serve stakeholders and support employees.

Strategic Goals Structure

Goals

Address long-term agency actions over **4-6 years**.

Objectives

Guide mid-term actions of **3-5 years** to support goals.

Strategies

Short-term efforts accomplished in **1-3 years**.

**Aligned with Dept of Cultural & Community Engagement goals: Understanding, Curiosity, and Preservation.*

Executive Order 2014/005

Signed by Governor Herbert on July 30, 2014, this order strengthened the division's statutory role.

Mandate: Requires regular and meaningful consultation between state agencies and federally recognized Indian Tribes.

Impact: Ensures Tribal interests are considered at the **policy development stage**.



State Liaison Meetings

Quarterly Meetings

We hold quarterly meetings with state agency tribal liaisons to share best practices about working with Tribes.

Peer-to-Peer Learning

Agencies learn from each other about structuring interactions, an important tool for effective governance.

Topics Covered

Foundations of tribal sovereignty, government 101, and the role of state government in trust responsibilities.

Individual & Customized Training



Beyond quarterly meetings, UDIA provides customized support:

- **Tribal Government 101:** Basics of structure and protocol.
- **Sovereignty:** Deep dives into the legal and cultural meaning of sovereignty.
- **Consultation:** How to meaningful engage with Tribal Nations on specific agency projects.

Questions



Utah Division of
Indian Affairs



Dustin Jansen
Director



James Toledo
Deputy Director



Rozanna Benally-Sagg
Administrative
Assistant



Tracie Yellowman Tso
Intern



WRP TEC Next Steps

WRP Tribal Engagement Committee Co-Chairs



Will Micklin

- CEO, Ewilaapaay Band of Kumeyaay Indians

LeRoy Shingoitewa

- Hopi Tribal Council Representative

Floyd W Velasquez Sr.

- Emergency Services Administrator, Morongo Band of Mission Indians



Roll up of Action Items



- **Please sign up for a WRP account – wrpinfo.org**
 - Invite/Encourage other Tribal members/liaisons to be part of TEC
- **Please provide input on Tribal Leadership Excel document**
- **Seeking additional TEC Co-Chair**
- **Interest in being part of a WRP Deep-Dive:**
 - Water Security/resilience
 - Wildland Fire (response/ prevention)
 - Aviation/ Airspace Needs
- **Please indicate if you:**
 - Are interested in being part of the Outreach Subcommittee
 - Have recommendations on future agenda topics
 - Have additional resources like a study/funding for the good of the team



WRP TEC Calls



Jan 30	▪ Update by the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (NATHPO) by Executive Director for Legislative Affairs and Strategic Partnerships, National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers; and Executive Director for Indigenous Diplomacy and Federal Relations, National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers ▪ Good Data, Stronger Tribes (Overcoming Native American data challenges in Southern California) by Robert Maxim, Fellow, Brookings Metro
Feb 27	▪ Picuris Pueblo Solar Project ▪ Nevada Native Seed Partnership by Mervin Wright Jr., Nevada Restoration Tribal Liaison, The Nature Conservancy
March 27	
April 24	

Discussion items/future items:

- Tribes' land management policies with federal agencies
- How tribes are dealing with removal of tribal historical information from federal buildings

Presentations TBD:

- Traci L Morris, Ph.D. American Indian Policy Institute - Center for Tribal Digital Sovereignty update



Around The Phone



Thank you!

