



September 28, 2023

Joseph Quintana, Chair
Native American Employment and Training Council
1453 W Temple St
Los Angeles, CA 90026

Dear Mr. Quintana:

Thank you for your July 19, 2023, letter transmitting four recommendations from the Native American Employment and Training Council (NAETC or Council) adopted at the Council's May 2023 meeting. I also thank all past and present Council members for their participation and leadership in coordinating and guiding NAETC's work. The U.S. Department of Labor (Department) will consider NAETC's recommendations in future decisions, including budgets, strategic plans, and other efforts undertaken to improve the livelihoods of Native Americans. The Department provides the following responses to the Council's recommendations.

Recommendation One: Modification to Council Members' Terms

NAETC recommends allowing for the extension of Council members' appointments while the administrative process for establishing new members is accomplished. The NAETC charter provides that members are appointed to serve two-year terms. The Department supports the expeditious process of establishing and seating new council members when terms end. ETA published a notice in the Federal Register on September 18, soliciting nominations for new members, in time to appoint new members before current members' terms end on March 10, 2024. ETA will continue to provide technical assistance on Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) reauthorization to the Senate, as appropriate, and is committed to maintaining NAETC and providing Council member nominees for the Secretary's consideration in a timely manner.

Recommendation Two: Modifications to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

NAETC recommends that the Secretary recommend to Congress specific edits to a reauthorized WIOA, specifically removing the term "competition" in reference to the distribution of Indian and Native American Programs grants, currently required under WIOA Section 166(c) (29 USC 3221(c)). NAETC also recommends that such changes include investment in grantee capabilities to support a long-term sustainable program. The Department has provided technical assistance to Congress on several reauthorization proposals in past years. While Congress continues to consider WIOA reauthorization legislative proposals, the Department is committed to ensuring any new legislation or other resources are administered equitably. ETA also continues to review several aspects of grant making to increase equity and access, including revising funding opportunity announcements. The Department has also proposed increases for the Indian and Native American Program in Fiscal Years 2022 – 2024 and actively participated in the

renegotiated Memorandum of Agreement to implement P.L. 102-477, a statute that allows tribes to consolidate Federal awards in order to make maximum use of their grant funds. Both strategies serve to invest in grantee capabilities and ensure longer term sustainability of grant programs.

Recommendation Three: Tribal “Yes WIOA Can” Campaign

NAETC recommends that the Secretary develop and issue a Tribal “Yes WIOA Can” campaign to clarify existing flexibilities for Native American community grants. The Department agrees with this recommendation. ETA staff have sought feedback through grantee meetings and the Department’s Regional Convenings, for grantees to provide input on ways ETA can provide more flexibility in using grants to deliver services. In response to feedback already received, ETA has provided technical assistance to grantees explaining flexibilities, such as an April 12th webinar describing funding opportunities available to INA grantees and the flexibilities associated with those opportunities. Division of Indian and Native American Programs (DINAP) Federal Project Officers (FPOs) also hold monthly conference calls with grantees describing flexibilities as well as providing a forum for grantees to share successful strategies with each other. For example, DINAP FPOs have worked to demystify limitations on spending per participant. The Department and ETA intend to continue providing strong technical assistance to INA grantees on the flexibilities available within existing statutes and regulations in regular consultation with NAETC.

Recommendation Four: Tribal Good Jobs Summit

NAETC recommends that the Department host a Tribal Good Jobs Summit, a commitment made by former Secretary Martin J. Walsh. The Department agrees with this recommendation and is actively planning a Tribal Good Jobs convening for calendar year 2023. Such a convening will include a forum for Tribal leaders and organizations to discuss and share examples of Good Job Principles and how the Department can assist grantees, businesses, and stakeholders in promoting good jobs in Indian country. We will continue to communicate the status of this effort with NAETC.

Thank you for your commitment to these important issues. The Department values your feedback and input. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at (202) 693-2722.

Sincerely,



BRENT PARTON
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary