

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025



Utah Division of
Indian Affairs



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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It is with great pride and a deep sense of responsibility that we in the Utah Division of Indian Affairs present our 2025-2029 Strategic Plan — a roadmap that reflects our shared vision, core values, and unwavering commitment to progress. This plan is the product of thoughtful dialogue, rigorous analysis, and the contributions of our dedicated team, partners, and community stakeholders. Rooted in the Indigenous principles that have long been the guide to the peoples of the state, we have incorporated the need for balance, relationship, and moving forward in a good way, so that this plan can honor the wisdom of our Ancestors while preparing us to meet the needs of future generations.

In a time marked by rapid change and evolving challenges, strategic clarity is more vital than ever. Our plan outlines clear priorities, bold goals, and measurable actions designed to help us navigate complexity, adapt with agility, and lead with purpose. It reflects not just where we are today, but where we aspire to be tomorrow. At its heart, this plan affirms that true progress is not made alone. It requires partnership — grounded in mutual respect, the recognition of Tribal sovereignty, and understanding — between Tribal nations and state governments. Our work must reflect not only collaboration, but community stewardship, where decisions are made in a spirit of unity, and with recognition of each Tribal nation's inherent right to self-determination.

We recognize that strategy is not static — it's a living guide that must respond to emerging opportunities and realities. With this plan, we commit to being forward-thinking, accountable, and inclusive in every step we take. The journey ahead will not be without challenge, but we will walk it with purpose and with clear direction. Our strategic goals are designed to promote holistic well-being — not just for our programs and communities, but for the land, the water, the culture, and the relationships that sustain us all.

I invite you to engage with this vision and join us as we bring it to life. Together, we can achieve lasting impact and build a future we can all be proud of.

In solidarity and service,

Dustin Jansen

Director, Utah Division of Indian Affairs

DIVISION OVERVIEW

The Utah Division of Indian Affairs originated in 1953 as the Commission on State Indian Affairs, a direct result of the Utah State Legislature's passage of the Indian Affairs Act. This foundational act marked the state's initial commitment to recognizing and supporting Native American communities. In 1956, the Commission appointed its first director, further solidifying its presence and purpose. By 1999, the Commission evolved into its current form, the Utah Division of Indian Affairs, deepening its dedication to preserving Native American heritage and promoting their progress within the state.

Today, the division is composed of a dedicated team working to foster strong intergovernmental relationships and enhance the lives of Native American citizens. Its authority and responsibilities are clearly defined by Utah Code Annotated, Title 9, Chapter 9, Parts 1, 2, & 3 of the Indian Affairs Act. The division serves as the primary Indian Affairs authority for Utah, playing a crucial role in fostering positive relationships among Utah Indian Tribes, federal and state agencies, and local communities.

On July 30, 2014, former Utah Governor Herbert signed Executive Order 2014/005, which further strengthened the division's statutory role by mandating regular and meaningful consultation between state agencies and federally recognized Indian Tribes. The Executive Order ensures that Tribal interests are considered at the policy

development stage, reinforcing the government-to-government relationship between the State of Utah and Tribal Nations.

The division is committed to supporting the diverse aspirations of Native American communities. It diligently monitors Utah and federal Indian legislation, safeguarding the interests of both Utah's Indian Tribes and the state. This commitment is evident in the comprehensive programs and services designed to ensure Native citizens have opportunities to share in Utah's progress. From sensitive matters such as determining the disposition of human remains found on state or school trust lands, to proactive collaboration with the Governor's office, the division's core mission is empowerment, unity, and shaping a brighter, more inclusive future for all.



UDIA OPERATING LENS

IMAGERY REPRESENTATION

The Utah Division of Indian Affairs operates through values and teachings rooted in Indigenous perspectives, with a mission to support Tribal governments and strengthen relationships between the state of Utah and the eight federally recognized Tribes.

ROOTS: The roots symbolize the foundational support that the Utah Division of Indian Affairs and the State of Utah provide to the eight federally recognized Tribes, grounding the relationship in mutual respect and continued collaboration.

PLANT: The stem signifies the growth of a strong and healthy relationship between the State of Utah and the eight Tribal Nations, nurtured through shared commitment and partnership.

LEAVES: Each leaf represents one of the eight federally recognized Tribes in Utah, highlighting their individuality while remaining connected through unity and purpose.

SUN: This element represents an opening towards a bright future with colors representative of the medicine wheel which is associated with healing, hope, and harmony with nature and community.

COLORS: Inspired by the rich and diverse landscape of the Southwest, the colors reflect the natural beauty and cultural significance of the region we call home.



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: Promoting mutual trust and respect by connecting Tribal communities and the executive branch, facilitating Tribal consultation, and serving as a resource and referral agent between Tribal Nations, state agencies, and communities.

Providing Expertise: Offering Native perspectives and insights, developing cultural training, and assisting Tribal governments in navigating in government-to-government interaction.

Advancing Awareness: Informing and educating about the history, culture, and contemporary issues facing AI/AN communities in Utah.

Mediating and Resolving: Facilitating mediation, providing legal understanding, and resolving challenges to foster and cultivate positive government-to-government relationships.



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.



VALUES

RESPECT

We seek to show respect by listening, valuing our cultures, communicating with empathy, meeting on common ground, and moving forward together.

COLLABORATION

We prioritize cultural understanding and partnership, working to bring stakeholders and Tribal Nations together to intentionally address issues and align efforts.

COMMUNITY

We believe in the importance of community: fostering a welcoming environment, amplifying the impactful work of others, and ensuring a sense of belonging for Utah's Indigenous community.

EDUCATION

We provide opportunities to cultivate cultural understanding for those working with Tribal communities, equipping them to engage and communicate respectfully and effectively. We support Tribal governments with leadership education for their leaders and youth.



MAJOR FINDINGS / ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

PROCESS

As part of UDIA's strategic planning process, feedback was gathered from a broad group of partners and stakeholders through surveys, interviews, and meeting discussions. This group included Tribal government leaders, state agency directors and liaisons, Department of Cultural and Community Engagement partners, and UDIA employees. The purpose of these surveys and conversations was to solicit feedback regarding:

- How well UDIA is fulfilling its role within the state and with Tribal governments;
- How UDIA employees see their role in division responsibilities;
- Opportunities for the division to improve services to state agencies,
- Opportunities for the division to better assist Tribal partners in achieving their goals; and,
- Strengths and weaknesses of UDIA's operations and efforts.





The UDIA team and stakeholders identified many opportunities to explore to better accomplish its mission including:

- Enhance communications and marketing efforts to increase visibility, engagement, and resource sharing;
- Facilitate relationship-building opportunities and regular training for state agency liaisons;
- Strengthen relationships, offer cultural training, and increase awareness of Tribal government processes for the legislative branch;
- Explore leadership training, youth programs, and ongoing cultural education support in partnership with the Museum of Utah; and
- Implement a grants program.

CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

INTERNAL

Feedback about internal challenges and concerns centered on a need for increased clarity on staff roles and responsibilities and improving internal communication. Continuing to focus on internal operations, such as planning and creating standard processes and procedures, was highlighted as a way to work more effectively, meet deadlines, and improve coordination.

Capacity issues are a clear challenge. Additional resources, clearer processes, or supplemental team members could help with events, marketing and communication execution, program delivery, and increased community and stakeholder engagement.

EXTERNAL

Discussions and comments about external challenges for UDIA identified a need to clarify the role of the division and increase awareness of UDIA's mission and responsibilities. Other challenges include navigating the many and varied schedules, procedures, communication styles, and goals of different stakeholders.

State agency liaisons, in particular, stated that it would be helpful to have more clear communication about their role in working with Tribal governments. They requested increased communication, training, updated contacts, and engagement opportunities as support to their Tribal engagement.





STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

INTERNAL

UDIA's team has many internal strengths and opportunities to build on. Feedback included a strong culture of teamwork and respect; team members that are dedicated, proactive, and willing to help; and an atmosphere of trust where team members can work through issues and share ideas. The team's skill set, background, cultural knowledge, connections, and understanding of Native community needs are a core strength. Professional development and mentorship opportunities should be encouraged for the team to continue building on their strengths.

EXTERNAL

External strengths for the division include the execution of engaging events that meet community and government needs, share meaningful information and resources, build sharing relationships, and celebrate Native culture. Stakeholders appreciate the team's willingness to customize events to better serve participants and respond to their concerns. Many stakeholders mentioned that UDIA is a good resource for state agencies and Tribal governments and that the division helps to support their work by making introductions, providing cultural training, and connecting them with applicable resources.

GOALS

The following goals, objectives, and strategies will drive the work of UDIA over the next five years. This strategic plan will be reviewed yearly to reflect accomplishments and any changes in strategic and administrative direction. In working to accomplish the mission of UDIA:

- Goals address long-term agency actions over four-to-six years;
- Objectives guide mid-term agency actions of three-to-five years and support accomplishing the goals;
- Strategies are short-term efforts to be accomplished in one-to-three years and support the accomplishment of the objectives;
- The annual work plan details how, when, and by whom each strategy will be accomplished.

The goals also tie back to the overarching goals of the Department of Cultural and Community Engagement, which are:

- Create opportunities for community understanding and civic engagement throughout Utah.
- Ignite curiosity, creativity, and passion for learning and service.
- Preserve, protect, and activate Utah's historical and cultural treasures.



GOAL 1 | GOVERNMENT

Promote government-to-government connection and facilitate relationship building.

OBJECTIVE 1

Utah Tribal leaders understand the role of UDIA, legislators, and state agencies; know who to contact about specific issues, understand State of Utah processes; and build respectful working relationships with state partners.

STRATEGY 1: Provide training to incoming legislators on Tribal government and effective engagement with Tribal Nations

Performance measure: Percentage of incoming legislators offered and engaged in training.

STRATEGY 2: Provide opportunities for Tribal leaders to meet with state leaders. Strengthen relationship with the Native American Legislative Liaison Committee (NALLC).

Performance measure:

- Facilitate a meeting where Tribal leaders can meet with state leaders at least once a year.
- Conduct bi-monthly Utah Tribal Leaders meetings to provide updated resources
- Fifty percent of elected state officials with Tribal jurisdiction within their district participate in a meeting with Tribal leaders.

STRATEGY 3: Provide professional training and leadership development opportunities that support Tribes in their engagement in the Utah legislative process.

Performance measure:

- Update and distribute a contact sheet of state leadership annually.
- Complete annual training for Tribal leaders.
- Provide an annual report to Native American Legislative Liaison Committee.

STRATEGY 4: Update Tribal leadership and AI/AN communities regarding new state laws and statutes.

Performance Measure: Provide an update that outlines relevant legislation that passed or failed in the general session.



OBJECTIVE 2

State agencies, including the legislative and executive branches, understand the role and the processes of UDIA; know who to contact about specific issues; understand Tribal cultures and processes; and build a respectful working relationship with Tribal partners.

STRATEGY 1: Support Tribal engagement opportunities to enhance the liaison program by providing tools, collective best practices, cultural education, and opportunity for peer-to-peer learning to improve communication and collaboration with state agencies.

Performance measure:

- Percentage of agencies submitting required annual consultations reports.
- Percentage of Tribal Liaisons who participate in quarterly meetings.
- Develop and distribute a best practice guide for state liaisons.

STRATEGY 2: Facilitate training and opportunities for executive branch officials to dialogue with Tribal governments regarding Indian affairs.

Performance measure: Develop a high-level guide on working with Tribal governments for Cabinet members.

STRATEGY 3: Explore the idea of creating an annual “state of Tribal nations” type event for Tribal leaders and elected officials.

Performance measure: Draft a proposal of event options and objectives.

STRATEGY 4: Support the Governor’s Office and the Office of the Attorney General in advising on law and policy as it pertains to the federally recognized Tribes within the state.

Performance measure:

- Regular updates on Tribal concerns within the state.
- Facilitate regular meetings between Tribal governments and the state.

OBJECTIVE 3

Tribal governments in Utah have meaningful opportunities to discuss issues, share information, build relationships, consult on policy changes, and engage in the State of Utah legislative process.

STRATEGY 1: Foster a collaborative environment by hosting the Tribal Leader Caucus Day, Tribal Leader Summit, Utah Tribal Leader meetings, and regular individual meetings between Tribal and state leaders.

Performance measure:

- Annual survey to measure UTL stakeholder satisfaction.
- UDIA will visit each Tribal Nation at least once a year.

- Number of Tribal leaders attending annual events.

STRATEGY 2: Enhance regular progress reports to the Lt. Governor and UTL.

Performance measure:

- Provide monthly progress reports to the Lt. Governor that include action item status, updated timelines, outline next steps
- Maintain and update tracking tool

GOAL 2 | COMMUNITY

Create opportunities for community connection and engagement.

OBJECTIVE 1

Host meaningful events and support Native communities in Utah with their gatherings and community resource events.

STRATEGY 1: Designate specific coordinators for each event hosted or supported by UDIA. Implement a project management system to track logistics and timing.

Performance measure: Percentage of events that have considered potential accessibility needs.

STRATEGY 2: Engage with the Native community to ensure events are meaningful.

Utilize data to curate impactful events statewide, including Utah Native American Summit, Utah Indigenous Day, and Utah American Indian Day on the Hill.

Performance measure: Implementing surveys before and after events to gauge community interests, needs, and to enhance future events.

OBJECTIVE 2

Develop communication and outreach platforms to support Native Communities in Utah to access resources, opportunities, visibility, and information.

STRATEGY 1: Establish a central resource repository on the UDIA website for Native community members to access.

Performance measure: Collect and publish resources on the website encompassing health, housing, economic development, education, cultural preservation, etc.

STRATEGY 2: Develop a more robust and impactful sponsorship program while researching effective grant models. Explore opportunities for future collaboration with external funding sources.

Performance measure: Research other grant models and collaboration opportunities with

new funding sources.

STRATEGY 3: Support community building events and activities through sponsorship, attendance, volunteering, tabling, letters of support, etc.

Performance measure:

- Track the number of requests, approved sponsorships and amounts. Evaluate the success of each sponsorship.
- Provide an annual report highlighting the impact of UDIA's community sponsorship program.

OBJECTIVE 3

Create processes to further social media, website, marketing, and communications strategies to educate, promote, and invite.

STRATEGY 1: Increase online engagement and collaboration opportunities with a stronger social media presence on multiple platforms and distribute information on a consistent platform (newsletter, podcast, etc.).

Performance measure: Develop and follow a consistent schedule for posting and newsletters.

STRATEGY 2: Update informational and promotional materials for in-person events to refer to the UDIA website as a central source of

information.

Performance measure: Reformat current handout.

STRATEGY 3: Use analytics to monitor engagement on the UDIA website, newsletter, and social media platforms.

Performance measure: Track open and click-through rates and use results to inform content creation.



GOAL 3 | CULTURE

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

OBJECTIVE 1

Support, facilitate, and bring awareness to preserve Indigenous culture, traditions, and practices.

STRATEGY 1: UDIA advises state agency Tribal liaisons to find mutually beneficial solutions to issues impacting Native communities.

Performance Measure:

- Quarterly professional development, with one-two educational sessions, and update meetings with liaisons.
- Number of sponsorships for Native community events and initiatives.

STRATEGY 2: Coordinate with the Native American Remains Review Committee (NARRC) and Tribal governments to facilitate the repatriation for Ancestors. Work with state and federal entities to determine land for the burial of claimed and unclaimed Ancestors.

Performance measure: Convene four NARRC meetings each year



OBJECTIVE 2

Ensure accurate portrayal of Utah's Indigenous culture and history for Museum of Utah visitors.

STRATEGY 1: Designate and engage with cultural resource managers from each Tribal government to obtain stories, text, and images for use by museum staff.

Performance measure: All eight panels representing Utah's federally recognized Tribes are ready when the museum opens summer 2026.

STRATEGY 2: Develop supplemental programs that will complement museum exhibits.

Performance measure: Percentage of Tribes consulted annually regarding progress on the Museum of Utah to collect and share stories, text,

and images.

STRATEGY 3: Produce programs, events, and activities that enhance the museum experience. This could include storytelling, marketplace, song, dance, etc.

Performance Measure:

- Number of individuals identified within Tribal communities that are able to provide educational performances.
- Number of artists identified that are able to provide authentic art representative of the American Indian communities within the state.



GOAL 4 | INTERNAL OPERATIONS

Internal operations run smoothly and efficiently to best serve stakeholders and support employees.

OBJECTIVE 1

Cultivate a culture of continuous improvement, excellent customer service, effective communication, and efficient processes.

STRATEGY 1: Build more structure into internal communication processes to provide updated information and coordinate efforts.

Possible performance measure:

- Create and use a template agenda for weekly team meetings.
- Set and establish regular internal deadlines; meet external deadlines.

STRATEGY 2: Establish and implement the process for division-specific business, budget, finance, and travel procedures.

Performance measure:

- Meet monthly to discuss and identify what internal processes are needed. By Dec. 2025, present draft procedures for the division director to review and adopt.
- Review procedures quarterly to determine if it is meeting the needs of the division. Revise as needed.
- Complete tasks related to finance in a timely manner, ie. completing reimbursements, submitting group gatherings, and conducting credit card reconciliations.

STRATEGY 3: Create and maintain a communication platform or calendar of Indigenous gatherings and events and look for ways to support community commemorations.

Performance measure: Review quarterly with team members and make changes as needed.

STRATEGY 4: Create a calendar of regularly occurring tasks, list of reports and due dates, and consider attaching to staff meeting agenda for a quick review each meeting.

Performance measure: Create a schedule of activities and review quarterly.

STRATEGY 5: Create easily accessible lists of contacts for Tribes and state agencies. Post on the website and share with stakeholders. Create a system to review regularly and update.

Performance measure: Review and update quarterly.

STRATEGY 6: Perform a thorough review of the website to identify what needs to be updated. Keep the website updated by checking it quarterly.

Performance measure: Review and update quarterly.

OBJECTIVE 2

Statutory, departmental, and other responsibilities are reviewed, accomplished, and measured in a timely and efficient manner to meet deadlines.

STRATEGY 1: Develop internal strategies and timelines to ensure statutory and departmental responsibilities are accomplished on time.

Performance measure:

- Review strategies and timelines quarterly. Make changes as needed to workloads and responsibilities.

- Review the strategic plan quarterly and at an annual retreat.

STRATEGY 2: Work with CCE to review code and update UDIA statute for the 2027 Legislative Session.

Performance measure: Identify needed updates and create a timeline for updated legislation.

OBJECTIVE 3

Promote a positive work environment where employees have opportunities to learn and grow.

STRATEGY 1: Create employee professional development opportunities. Support employees seeking training to improve job performance.

Performance measure: Team members attend one to two trainings annually (external or internal — guest speakers) and attend one to three conferences per year.

STRATEGY 2: Actively engage with colleagues and encourage idea-sharing and mutual support.

Performance measure:

- Rotate cultural training highlights at each team meeting.
- Establishing annual retreat at rotating locations.



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