

**Meeting Minutes – Indiana Native American Indian Affairs Commission (INAIAC)
Employment Subcommittee**

Thursday, July 30, 2015
11:00am EDT

The Employment Subcommittee meeting was called to order at 11:00am.

Commissioners Present: John P. Warren, Cameron Clark and Nathan Underwood

Staff Present: Kerry Steiner

Agenda Item: Honda Corporation:

Diversity and Community Relations representative Nicole Bell joined the call and presented an opportunity to collaborate with Honda regarding employment opportunities. Kerry Steiner asked Ms. Bell what her role would be with the Commission and she explained that partnership opportunities might include employment and training and that her connections have extended to the Hispanic/Latino and Social Status of Black Males Commissions as well.

John P. Warren mentioned that INAIAC is also partnering with various Stand Down events across Indiana whereby different organizations are providing services to homeless veterans and it may be an opportunity for Honda to help this population and create network opportunities. He added that INAIAC is hosting a Native American Heritage Month event in November.

Ms. Bell stated she resides in Indianapolis and would like to set up a meeting so we can discuss these opportunities further. John P. Warren asked how Honda recruits and Ms. Bell responded that she is in the process of pulling all the components together since, prior to her newly-created position, this information resided in the hands of several different people. She added that she attended the Indiana Black Expo recently and had an employment opportunity booth there. Positions with Honda could include administrative as well as plant associates, the individuals who build cars.

Honda is also involved with “Dress for Success,” an organization that helps employ minority women. She is also gathering baseline data and working with colleges and universities and is open to suggestions on places she can reach out to. Kerry Steiner offered to send her spreadsheets outlining the Native American student population in Indiana as well as INAIAC’s Indiana Native American Business Directory. John P. Warren added that the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi own an engineering company and the Seven Generations Architecture and Engineering companies, both of which are 8(a) status businesses. He added that once the goals and strategies have been determined we would like to have Ms. Bell attend one of our Commission meetings and do a small presentation.

Agenda Item: Employment Bonus for Indiana College Graduates

Kerry Steiner informed the Subcommittee that the Education Subcommittee had discussed creating a bonus for Native American students who graduate from Indiana colleges or universities and remain employed in Indiana for one year; this could be a way of retaining Native people in Indiana rather than having them relocate after graduation.

John P. Warren offered that doing so would mean creating a whole process and follow-up that could become cumbersome and it would likely involve legal assistance. Kerry Steiner added that after one year an individual could provide a copy of their college degree and verification of their employment.

Cameron Clark added that the license plate money has to be regenerated and that it gets divided among all the subcommittee programs. Ms. Bell added that Honda also provides scholarships for their training programs and mentioned they award two through the United Negro College Fund. It was suggested that INAIAC look at other large corporations such as Eli Lilly and those in larger cities such as Ft. Wayne, then hold a joint meeting with the Education Subcommittee to discuss initiatives. Kerry Steiner added that she has been provided a point of contact at Cummins and will be reaching out to them in the future.

John P. Warren suggested that INAIAC's role, if we fund something, might be along the lines of training; maybe we help with soft skills training for individuals to get employed at Indiana businesses or for people entering or re-entering the workforce.

Kerry Steiner asked if INAIAC wanted to possibly support the American Indian Center of Indiana, Inc., a WIA 166 federal workforce grant recipient and possibly supplement their services. John P. Warren said we might also want to create programs to help fill these gaps and that these supplemental programs would have a cap on them. He mentioned a program created by the Recreational Vehicle industry in northern Indiana where businesses were having trouble finding employees so they set up a program with Ivy Tech that simulates what a potential employee might be building; it's a 40-hour training program and the certificate they get at the end reflects the skills they would need to work in the RV industry.

Cameron Clark mentioned that the Commission for Higher Education may have incentive programs similar to the one Kerry Steiner suggested.

John P. Warren asked Ms. Bell if Honda provides training that simulates the actual job a plant associate might be doing and she stated she would look into this and get back with us. John P. Warren also mentioned looking into what other corporations are doing to prepare people for employment.

A member of the public said her husband created an advanced manufacturing techniques program through Ivy Tech to train employees or students for working at Honda or Cummins.

Agenda Item: Opportunities through USDA

Kerry Steiner informed the Subcommittee members that she and Nathan Underwood participated in a conference call with Kelley Barkell from the U.S. Department of Agriculture regarding federal government employment opportunities for Native Americans. Nathan Underwood added that the USDA has programs out there and that the official Native American Program Coordinator for Indiana's USDA is Rochelle Owens, who has attended the INAIAC quarterly meetings. Ms. Owens informed Nathan Underwood that she will get additional information and provide it to him regarding these opportunities.

The Subcommittee members reiterated that a joint meeting between the Education and Employment Subcommittees would be beneficial because of the overlap in program outcomes.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40am.