

## Indigenous Leadership Academy Fall 2022 Cohort

Phoenix, Ariz. — The [American Indian Policy Institute](#) (AIPI) is excited to announce the Fall 2022 cohort of the [Indigenous Leadership Academy](#) (ILA)! With a focus on emerging leaders, there has never been a leadership program like this before in the country. Twenty-seven of 52 applicants have been accepted into the cohort, representing 15 tribes represented from 8 states and Washington D.C. All participants demonstrated a strong passion for working with and for Indigenous communities. Some topics that the participants are passionate about are: Behavioral health, broadband, civic engagement, education, healthcare, MMIWP, and youth just to name a few.

We are excited to have such a diverse group of participants. The AIPI is delighted to see what wonderful things this cohort will accomplish. Please read about each cohort member below.



### **Hannah Allen**

Hannah Allen is a Navajo and Cherokee woman currently working as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Hannah serves as a Senior Behavioral Health Counselor within the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community and has done so since 2017. Hannah graduated from the University of Iowa with dual bachelor's degrees in Social Work and Spanish. She then went on to receive her Masters of Social work from Arizona State University in 2015. Hannah has a broad range of experience in the behavioral health field, including counseling for addiction, general mental health, trauma, and family systems with adults and children. In general, her passion lies with working to normalize mental healthcare in Native American communities, addressing intergenerational trauma, and helping people receive resources and support to improve their overall wellness. Hannah believes that traditional cultural practices have an important role in healing

intergenerational trauma as well. Educating Native people about the importance of our mental well-being is so vital to breaking unhealthy cycles and restoring our communities. Other personal hobbies include exercise, baking, and spending time with family.



### **Simone Auger**

Simone Auger lives in Washington D.C. where she works as a Legislative Assistant at the U.S. House of Representatives. As a Congressional staffer, Simone manages a diverse portfolio of issue areas consisting of Tribal issues, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Education. She advocates for the legislative priorities of the office, supports advancement of legislation in her issue areas and serves as an advisor on tribal issues. Prior to her current role, Simone served as the 2020 Hatfield Fellow. The Hatfield Fellowship program provides the opportunity for Native Americans to work for a member of the Oregon Congressional Delegation in Washington D.C. Simone's background includes over a decade of experience in the utility program sector serving as DEI and tribal projects lead. She holds a Master of Interior Architecture from the University of Oregon and a Professional Certificate in Tribal Relations from

Portland State University. She was appointed to her tribe's Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) Commission and Tribal Housing Board. She also serves on the Board of Directors for CCI, a professional perioperative nurse credentialing organization. Simone is an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and is descendent of Chief Tumult of the Cascade Band of Chinook Indians.



**Maria Bartlett**

Maria Bartlett, a member of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and Chicana, currently serves her tribal nation as the Youth Leadership Coordinator. Designing and facilitating a culturally responsive leadership development curriculum for Yaqui youth, she creates leadership experiences to strengthen the future of her tribe. In her role, she also guides the work of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Youth Council, a group of young people who collaborate to lead positive, sustainable changes for their communities. Maria’s experience as an educator includes working with students and communities in Hawai’i, Oklahoma, and Arizona. In all three states, she taught a diverse set of students; in Hawai’i, her students were from Pacific Island communities. In Oklahoma, she taught students from the 39 Oklahoma tribal nations, and in Arizona, she worked with students from global communities. As an educator, she created classroom communities that fostered a sense of belonging and holistic wellness for each student, goals that

continue to guide her current work. Maria is a certified secondary English educator with a Master’s Degree in Education from Johns Hopkins University and a Bachelor’s Degree in Nonprofit Leadership from Arizona State University.



**Deborah Ann Begay**

Deborah Ann Begay won her election to the Moon Valley Justice Precinct in November 2020 and was sworn into office on January 8th, 2021, as the first-ever Native American Justice of the Peace in Maricopa County. Judge Begay graduated from the University of California at Berkeley and Arizona State University's Sandra Day O'Connor School of Law, focusing on Federal Indian law. Before taking office, Judge Begay worked for the Arizona Department of Education, Policy & Government Relations as a Tribal Policy Specialist. She regularly speaks out on justice issues, including tribal sovereignty, LGBTQ+ inclusive practices in the workplace, and building diverse community partnerships. Judge Begay is proud of her heritage: she was born in Lupton, AZ on the Navajo Nation. She is Naakai Dine’é, born for Kinyaa’áanii. Her maternal grandfather is Dził T’ahnii, and her paternal grandfather is Tódích’i’i’ni. She is a U.S. Navy veteran and lives in North Phoenix with her family.



**Elise Blasingame**

Elise Blasingame (Osage) is a senior policy and research professional with over a decade of experience in public service. Elise’s professional interests include policy advocacy, community infrastructure, strategic planning, and building the capacity of tribal, civic, and non-profit organizations to make a real impact for the communities they serve. She is an alum of New Leaders Council Atlanta (2016), LEAD Atlanta (2019) and the Zell Miller Leadership Institute (2020) and served as the District 3- At Large Appointee to the City of Atlanta Commission on Women (2017-2020). Throughout her career, Elise has been a coalition leader and community organizer, leading winning campaigns to achieve policy change at the local, state, and federal levels. This includes securing millions of dollars in government appropriations and private foundation support for public service programs. Elise received her Master's in

Social Work from the University at Buffalo (SUNY) and holds a B.S. in Industrial and Labor Relations from Cornell University. Currently, Elise is completing her doctoral studies at the University of Georgia School of Public and International Affairs, focusing on American Indigenous Politics and the politics of tribal sovereignty.





**Jennifer Boehm**

Jennifer Boehm is an enrolled member of the Ak-Chin Indian Community and a student at Arizona State University. She has recently finished her studies to earn a B.S. in Nonprofit Leadership & Management with a minor in American Indian Studies, a B.S. in Public Service & Public Policy, as well as a Certificate in Public Administration. She is a Full-Time Fire Captain/EMT for the Ak-Chin Fire Department, where she has worked for the last 14 years. Jennifer has served on various boards/committees within her tribal community and volunteers as a coach for youth sports at the Ak-Chin Indian Community and the City of Maricopa. Jennifer is passionate about indigenous issues, preserving her culture, and enhancing life for the youth in her community. Her future goals are to finish a successful career in the Fire Service and then began work in community government with the intent to create better

opportunities for the membership while helping to maintain the success and sovereignty of her people. In her free time, Jennifer enjoys playing softball, taking care of her many animals, and spending time with her husband and their four amazing boys.



**Meya Castillo**

“Ya’at’tteeh! I am Cormelia Castillo, but I go by Meya (pronounced MEE-YAH). I am an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation, and I bring with me over 20 years of work experience in the area of management and administration to the cohort program. I am currently working on my Master’s Degree in Healthcare Administration through Grand Canyon University. I am a proud mother to six wonderful kids and two dogs. I celebrated 21 years of marriage to a wonderful man and look forward to many more. Some of my primary areas of expertise are human resources, business management, grants management, compliance, contract management, training, revenue cycle management, and so much more. My most current professional experience has been working with a tribal nation, and I am very excited to branch out into other areas where advocacy, education, partnership, and community outreach are the goals. I believe in serving the community, being transparent in what I do, listening with

compassion, and never judging a book by its cover. I think it is time to put all of my professional experience to work in a large realm of community need, community growth, and advocacy.”



**Dellard Curley**

“My name is Dellard Curley (Dine), and I’m from Ts’ah Bii Kin, Arizona (Formally known as Inscription House). I am a Yeii Dine’e Tachiinii, Born for Tlilizani. I am a United States Marine Corps Veteran. I currently work at the APS Four Corners Power Plant, supporting the Information Technology Team. In my off-duty time, I love to take walks around my home community and enjoy family time. Also, in my off time, I continue my work in supporting local community efforts. I am an elected official and school board member for my local community, where I continue to support our younger generation in obtaining the quality education they deserve. I am also a community leader who advocates for getting the necessary resources needed for my community.

I have a passion for helping my people and want to continue to expand my knowledge in leadership. With being in these leadership capacities, I also continue my efforts in supporting our young generations by being involved with various boards and nonprofits. I have a vision and hope that our people can strive to be self-sufficient and progress through the future.”



### **Christina Diego**

Christina (Niimiipuu, Dinè, enrolled member of Colville), MSW, MPA, is the Policy Program Director with the Seattle Indian Health Board, where she advocates for the health and wellness of American Indian and Alaska Native people on a local to national level. Christina identifies as an urban Native and seeks to improve the resources dedicated to Native people regardless of where they reside. Christina's previous work includes Research Coordinator at the Indigenous Wellness Research Institute, Policy Associate at the National Civic League, and Education Technician with Chemawa Indian School. Her work today uplifts the voices of community members, supports traditional ways of knowing, and utilizes research to advocate for the needs of Indian Country. Christina also advocates for community-based initiatives that support Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and resilient communities. Her work supports

initiatives for responding to systemic racism in health care, COVID-19, maternal and infant health, gender-based violence, and essential public services.



### **Jessica Frazier**

Jessica Frazier is proud to present the Kialegee Tribal Town and Bogue Chitto community of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. She is the 23-year-old daughter of Agnes Givens and the late Micheal Frazier, granddaughter of Mary and Jesse Givens, and the late Bobbie Frazier and Leroy Frazier Sr. Jessica is from Wetumka, Oklahoma. Jessica is a 2021 alum of Northeastern State University, where she graduated with a Bachelors in Social Work. She currently attends Washington University in St. Louis as an advanced-standing Master of Social Work student. Jessica is a Buder Scholar for the Brown School of Social Work's Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies. Her coursework is concentrated on AI/AN communities with a focus in trauma-informed care. She is actively involved with the American Indian Student Association, Student Coordinating Council, and WashU Athletic Department. She is passionate

about mental health and overall well-being and hopes to become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker to practice therapy. When she is not doing coursework, Jessica enjoys beading, exercising, playing softball, and being with friends and family.



### **Julian Garza**

Born and raised in Fresno to a first-generation Mexican American father, George Garza, and a mother of both Native American (Pascua Yaqui Tribal member) & Mexican American descent, Rachael Moreno Garza. Served a total of five years in the United States Air Force and one month at Lowry AFB, Colorado, Cannon AFB, New Mexico, and Osan Air Base, South Korea. Worked in Salt River until 2005 in various positions in Youth Services and Education. Earned BSW from ASU in 2005 and earned first management position as K-12 and Higher Education coordinator for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. Relocated back to Fresno in 2008 and took a position as a site manager of a Tribal TANF program with Owens Valley Career Development Center. Earned MSW in Title IV-E program at Fresno State in 2015. Worked as Director of Tribal Social Services for Gila River Indian Community. Spent three years employed as a medical social worker with Hospice of the Valley, serving

patients and their families in Mesa, Scottsdale, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community, and Fountain Hills. Currently Administrator of Residential Programs for Youth in the Gila River Indian Community. Favorite titles held are father to Isabella Moon Garza and spouse to Rainey Lee Garza.





**Susannah Howard**

Susannah Howard is a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. She grew up in the Connecticut River Valley in central Vermont. She holds a BA of Geosciences from Smith College, a certificate of Native American and Indigenous Studies from the Five College Consortium, and an MS of Environmental Science from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF). At SUNY ESF, Susannah was an Alfred P. Sloan Indigenous Graduate Partnership Fellow under Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer, a fellow Potawatomi scientist. Her thesis research identified and developed adaptation strategies to the risks posed by climate change on the culturally significant plants of the Potawatomi Nation over the next 80 years. She will continue this work of restoring Potawatomi lands and culture as she pursues a career in biocultural restoration and land conservation. Outside of academia, Susannah is an avid gardener and an independent researcher, currently

mapping and elevating land justice initiatives in Indian Country and revitalizing the exhibits of her local history museum. She also serves as a director on the Board of the Native-led Kwek Society and as a trustee to the Thetford Historical Society.



**Candida Hunter**

Candida Hunter is Hualapai and Mexican and serves as Senior Director of Tribal Affairs for First Things First (FTF). In this position, she is responsible for ensuring the facilitation of effective government-to-government relations between FTF, a state agency, and Arizona Indian Tribes and Nations; building and strengthening organizational relations with tribal partners; fostering tribal relations through collaborative partnerships; and facilitating the provision of culturally responsive early childhood services in tribal communities. She is a mother, human services professional, and former policymaker who strongly believes the success of future generations begins in the early years of life.



**Johanna James**

Johanna James is a citizen of Chickasaw Nation and the CEO of Kilimpi Associations. She consults with local, state, tribal, and federal governments, providing collaboration and technical assistance. She utilizes feedback from community stakeholders to develop and influence policies and procedures that affect Indigenous communities. Johanna’s passion includes Indigenizing prevention and treatment models as well as developing training and curricula so that they are meaningful and appropriate for Indigenous people. She also assists in strategic planning efforts to build sustainable frameworks for community programs. She is experienced in diversity, equity, and inclusion planning. Johanna is a member of the United Nations-USA Association, National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, National Indian Education Association, and SW ATTC advisory board. In 2021, Johanna served as United States Ambassador to the United Nations for the 65th Commission on the

Status of Women. Johanna earned her undergraduate degree in Business Administration from the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma prior to earning her master’s degree in Native American Leadership from Southeastern Oklahoma State University. Johanna is currently a doctoral candidate at Southern Nazarene University, researching historical trauma, American Indian education, and culturally responsive teaching.



**EJ John**

E.J. is AIPI's Policy & Research Analyst and is a member of the Navajo Nation from Vanderwagen, New Mexico. He received his J.D. from the University of New Mexico School of Law in 2016 with a concentration in Indian Law. Prior to that, E.J. received his Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of New Mexico in 2013. His interest in law and policy came from his time interning in the D.C. office of Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.) in 2011 as an undergrad. Before coming to the AIPI, E.J. had worked on tribal government reform and development with the Office of Navajo Government Development in Window Rock, AZ.



**Danielle June**

“Yá’át’ééh, Shi ei Danielle June yinishye'. *Ma'ii Deeshgiizhinii* nishłį́, *Tódich'íinii* bashishchiin, *Hooghantání* dashicheii, *T'ízí Łání* dashinalí, Ahéhee'. Greetings! My name is Danielle June. I am of the Coyote Pass clan, born for the Bitter Water clan. My maternal grandfathers' clan is One Walks Around, and my paternal grandfathers' clan is Many Goats. I am currently a graduate student at Northern Arizona University, where I am majoring in my second master's degree in Organizational Leadership with an emphasis in Project Management. My undergraduate work is in education, where I began my career in the classroom, then transitioned to administration, and got my first master's degree in Educational Leadership. Together, I have blended my knowledge and skillset to serve the community in a more culturally responsive

way that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion. Therefore, my leadership style reflects working with and understanding bias, developing equitable solutions, strategizing plans that activate voice and create belonging in the workplace, and empowering individuals to seek their highest executive functions to cultivate overall growth.”

**Monroe Keedo**



Monroe Keedo is a Research and Development Engineer at the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA). NTUA is a not-for-profit tribal enterprise established in 1959 which provides utility services to the Navajo Nation. Monroe is responsible for business development and the technical telecommunications sales engineering aspects of the utility. He works closely with hospitals, schools, businesses, and government entities to design, present and demonstrate technical connectivity solutions. In addition, he works directly with end-user customers and industry partners, providing input to technical RFP and SOW generation. Technical presentations and customer interactions are a significant part of what he does. Monroe has over 20 years of experience in telecommunications business development. He strives to build long-term standing business relationships between the Telecommunications Communications Division of NTUA and prospective telecommunications

customers on and off the Navajo Reservation. Monroe holds an MBA from the University of New Mexico and an MSEE from New Mexico State University.





### **Lycia Maddocks**

Lycia Maddocks, a citizen of the Ft. Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe, is a political and communications strategist that leads campaigns and movements to raise visibility and advance the political power of Native American people. She focuses on building ecosystems of change by encouraging the expansion of sovereignty for tribal nations, and their communities, through policy advocacy and integrated voter engagement. She also helps tribal nations build economic power by increasing the influence of American Indian and Alaska Native enterprises through the strategic analysis of local, state, and federal power dynamics. She holds degrees in Indigenous Peoples Law, Communications, and Film and Video Production.



### **Dr. Beverly Jean Smith**

Dr. Beverly Jean Smith is Diné from Grandfalls, AZ, with American Indian higher education experience since 2007. Her commitment is working with students from all different paths of life, contributing to their sovereignty and self-determination for the positive change within the communities they represent as future leaders. She has a master's degree in Education Counseling with a Student Affairs emphasis (2011) and a doctoral degree in Education and Organizational Leadership under the Higher Education track with a graduate minor in American Indian and Indigenous Studies. Dr. Smith comes with both student affairs and academic affairs experience, applying a tribal and culturally relevant wholistic framework and indigenous pedagogy,

respectively. With backgrounds as Assistant Director for the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations (Native American House) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Associate Professor, and Director of Assessment at Bacone College, she strived toward diversity, inclusion, equity and access impacting the K - 20 American Indian college pipeline. Her current project is researching further on her dissertation (2017) on American Indian tribal identity in the 21st century.



### **Elisha Sneddy**

Elisha is from the Navajo Nation in New Mexico. She is Towering House Clan, born for Water Flows Together Clan. Her maternal grandfather is Folded Arms Clan, and her paternal grandfather is Start of the Red Streak People Clan. She is a recent 2022 Master of Public Health graduate from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health with a concentration in Social & Behavioral Sciences, as well as a 2021 Bloomberg Fellow focusing on Addiction & Overdose. She attended the University of New Mexico as an undergrad, earning her BA in Psychology & Native American Studies. Currently, she is working as a Public Health Coordinator at the National Indian Health Board in Washington, DC, where she will be focusing on several behavioral health programs, as well as assisting with maternal and child health programs in Indian Country. Overall, Elisha is passionate about achieving social justice and health equity for Indigenous peoples and communities.



**Lancer Stephens**

Lancer Stephens is an enrolled member of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes of Oklahoma through his father and also half Muscogee (Creek) through his mother. He holds a doctorate from the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (OUHSC) with a special emphasis in Health Administration, Public Policy, and Ethics. His previous work experience includes the Association of American Indian Physicians (AAIP), the Indian Health Service (IHS), the Cherokee Nation Health System, and the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES). Dr. Stephens is the Associate Dean for Sovereignty, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (SEDI) and Associate Professor at the OUHSC Hudson College of Public Health, where he teaches classes on American Indian health and ethical research practices with diverse populations and social and behavioral factors of public health. Lancer’s personal interests revolve around children’s health, population mental health, increasing

motivation for healthy behaviors, and health literacy. He has been a Principle Investigator, co-investigator, or collaborator for over 20 federally-funded grants during his tenure at OUHSC with over 25 publications. Lancer is a fan of organizations that focus on increasing education, resources, and disease prevention practices for Native populations locally and nationally and has served on multiple levels within these organizations whenever possible.



**Helen Thomas**

Helen Thomas is a Hunkpapa Lakota citizen of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. She currently serves as the Professional Learning Coordinator for the Office of Indian Education at the Arizona Department of Education. In this role, she prepares culturally responsive teaching materials and designs and implements professional learning to best support Indigenous students and families across Arizona. A former elementary classroom teacher and Native American student achievement specialist for the Tempe Elementary School District, she has experience supporting students from kindergarten through eighth grade. As an independent consultant, she has worked with Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators to develop their capacity to implement culturally sustaining curricular and instructional practices using a pedagogy rooted in Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Helen is a graduate of Dartmouth College, where she studied

economics, public policy, education, and Native American studies. She holds a Masters of Education in elementary education and teaching from the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University (ASU). She is currently pursuing a Masters of Arts in Indigenous Education from the Center for Indian Education located within the School of Social Transformation at ASU. Helen is passionate about increasing access to educational approaches that sustain and revitalize Indigenous Knowledge Systems.



**Muriel Tsosie**

Yá’áátééh, Muriel is Tábaqhá, born for Tódích’íi’nii, her maternal Grandfather is Tódík’ózhí, her paternal Grandfather is Naakai Dine’é; therefore she is Diné Asdąąn. Muriel has a Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training from the University of New Mexico. Muriel resides on the Navajo Nation with her family, two children, Jordan & Jimmy III, and her husband, Jimmy, Army Veteran. Muriel works as an Employee Wellness Specialist at Nihí Dine’é Wellness Center with Tséhootsooí Medical Center. Her work focuses on the six dimensions of wellness, in which she assists employees and community members reach and sustain their fitness and wellness goals to increase their quality of life. Muriel’s passion is in athletic training (AT); as a co-founder of Native ATs, Muriel and her colleagues are allied healthcare professionals advocating for the health and safety of Native American student-athletes on Native American reservations. Muriel works part-time with the Window Rock School District as an AT, she is also a member of the Arizona Athletic Trainer’s



Secondary Schools Committee, and she was a Top 6 Rising Star Finalist for Henry Schein's Medical Athletics & Schools Rising Star Award in 2021.



**Tammy Tsosie**

Tammy Tsosie has a Master's Degree in Community Mental Health through Southern New Hampshire University. She holds a License Professional Counselor credential through the State of Alaska and obtained National Board of Certified Counselors membership in 2021. She returned to Arizona after having lived in Alaska for over 20 years. While in Alaska, she has maintained job positions in the people helping field from being a substance abuse counselor, and care coordinator to a directing clinician. She likes to golf, walk, and bike for exercise. Her hobbies include sewing, beading, photography, and crochet. She is passionate about providing counseling services for those in need and aims to specialize in trauma recovery services.



**Brittany Woods-Orrison**

Brittany is Koyukon Dené from Rampart, Alaska, a village along the Yukon River. She grew up spending summers in the village learning how to live off the land with no running water and spending the winter in the city of Fairbanks going to school. For high school, she decided to attend a state-run boarding school in Sitka, Alaska, with students from every region. After having a successful student-athlete career in high school, she continued this journey with the women's wrestling team at Menlo College, where she earned a psychology degree. Brittany ended up in a culinary career in the Bay Area of California post-graduation during the pandemic. Brittany saved money from this job to go on a year-long endeavor to road trip across the country to reconnect with relatives, uplift Indigenous stories, and learn about the land and waters people come from. During this road trip Brittany secured a career in telecommunications as a broadband advocate with two Alaskan non-profits.

Brittany has since returned to Alaska to champion digital equity, join back into community, return to the culture, and reconnect with living off the land again.



**Sahmie Sunshine Wytewa**

Sahmie Sunshine Wytewa is a community-raised and inspired member of the Hopi tribe, Piikyasngyam, from the village of Misongnovi. Sahmie credits her family, Hopi culture, and values in her desire to start every day with positive intentions and contribute to the work of building sustainable capacity across sectors to strengthen and support Native-Indigenous families and communities. She contributes to this in ways that nurture, restore, guide, and inspire others to connect to their intrinsic values and personal talents to communicate, collaborate and co-construct unique solutions to everyday situations and experiences. Most recently, Sahmie has served as the Tribal Liaison and Policy Coordinator for the Arizona Department of Education and as the Deputy

Executive Director for the Hopi Tribe. Both positions lent experience in coordinating resources and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic at the state education agency and tribal government for the Hopi tribe. The wealth of her experience is in k-12 education, where she maintains Arizona teacher-administrator certification. Sahmie has served as a teacher and school administrator in the Bureau of Indian Education, public and tribally controlled grant schools.



### **Sarayl Yellowhorse Shunkamolah**

Sarayl Yellowhorse Shunkamolah (Diné – Dibétizhini/Honágháahnii) worked as a Program and Operations Officer and is currently a Grants Development Officer with First Nations Development Institute, a national Native non-profit working to strengthen Native American communities and economies. Prior to joining First Nations, Sarayl worked with the Community Outreach and Patient Empowerment (COPE) Program in Gallup, NM, where she provided administrative oversight for operations and led special projects. With a passion for working with nonprofits, Sarayl has worked with AISES as a higher education coordinator, with the University of Montana as a scholarship coordinator, as the assistant director of annual giving for the University of Montana Foundation, and as a database administrator with the Alzheimer's Association. Sarayl has assisted with a Hospital Project Feasibility Study with

the San Carlos Apache Tribe and conducted research, and provided reports for the county manager of Gila County of Arizona. Sarayl received her AA degree in Computer Information Systems from Haskell Indian Nations University, a BA degree in Southwest Studies from Fort Lewis College, and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of New Mexico. Sarayl enjoys cultural activities, spending time with her husband and her two cats, and taking care of her parents.