

**“Reclaiming our Culture:
Past, Present
and Future”**



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

(This needs to be updated) The Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI) connects Marylanders to economic, volunteer, and human service opportunities through government, business, and nonprofit partners and conducts community affairs and engagement within the executive branch of Maryland government. GOCI houses within its agency the following:

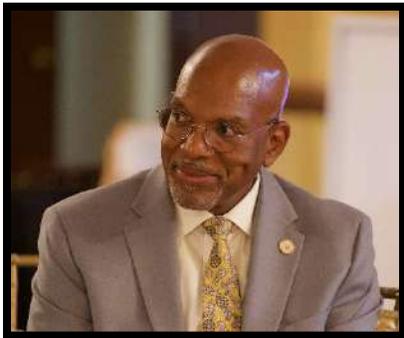
- [Ethnic Commissions](#)
- [Faith-Based Outreach](#)
- [Immigrant Affairs](#)
- [LGBTQIA+ Commission](#)
- [MD250 Commission](#)

I would like to commend the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs and the volunteerism of the Commissioners that serve as Governor appointees and your respected communities. Congratulations to Madam Chair Sherry Ayers for her leadership in the activities and conduction of business.

I would like to congratulate E. Keith Colston, Administrative Director, on his supervision of the MCIA as well serving in the capacity as Director of Ethnic Commissions for GOCI.

Thank you.

Lawrence Walker
Executive Director
Governor's Office of Community Initiatives



A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSION CHAIR

Tiara Thomas
Piscataway Conoy Tribe

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It is my honor to share this message on behalf of the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs as we reflect on our work in 2024. This year marked the first full year of collaborative work by the current Commission, including eight new Commissioners, and my first year serving as Chair. Throughout this first full year working together, our efforts were guided by the Commission's 2024 theme: Reclaiming Our Culture—Past, Present, and Future.

This theme grounded our work and reflected our understanding that Indigenous culture is living, resilient, and enduring. Reclaiming our culture means honoring the knowledge and traditions of our ancestors, affirming the strength and contributions of Indigenous communities today, and shaping a future in which our cultures, identities, and voices continue to thrive.

In alignment with Governor Moore's vision for the State of Maryland, and his commitment to leaving no one behind, the Commission focused its work on the Governor's Ten State-wide Priorities. Through this framework, we worked to ensure that American Indian and Indigenous perspectives were meaningfully included in statewide efforts related to equity, education, health, economic opportunity, environmental stewardship, and community well-being. Centering tribal community voices within these priorities reinforces the principle that progress must be inclusive and that American Indian and Indigenous communities must be part of Maryland's present and future.

Throughout this year, the Commission focused on strengthening relationships, building trust, and deepening collaboration with state agencies, non-profits, Tribal Communities, and other community partners. The dedication, insight, and leadership of my fellow Commissioners brought renewed energy and purpose to our work and strengthened our collective ability to serve American Indian and Indigenous communities across the state.

I extend my sincere gratitude to my fellow Commissioners for their service and commitment, and to Governor Moore, the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives, and our State Agency partners for their continued support. Most importantly, I thank the American Indian and Indigenous communities we serve, whose guidance, trust, and resilience remain at the heart of everything we do.

As we look ahead, the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs remains steadfast in its commitment to reclaiming, preserving, and advancing American Indian and Indigenous culture, grounded in our past, engaged in the present, and focused on the future. Guided by the principle of leaving no one behind, we move forward with humility, determination, and respect.

Wanishi,

Tiara Thomas

Chair, Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs



Commissioners Appointed by Governor Wes Moore

<p>Tiara Walls-Thomas, Chair</p>		<p>Piscataway Conoy Tribe</p>	<p>Charles County</p>
<p>Tom Bradshaw, Vice Chair</p>		<p>Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians</p>	<p>Dorchester County</p>
<p>Anne Marie Auld</p>		<p>Navajo Nation</p>	<p>Howard County</p>
<p>Lawrence Dunmore, III</p>		<p>Occaneechi Band Saponi Nation</p>	<p>Baltimore County</p>
<p>Norris Howard, Jr.</p>		<p>Pocomoke Indian Nation</p>	<p>Somerset County</p>
<p>Peter Landeros</p>		<p>Pascua Yaqui Tribe</p>	<p>Howard County</p>
<p>Ken Maynor</p>		<p>Lumbee Tribe</p>	<p>Anne Arundel County</p>
<p>Tierra Robinson</p>		<p>Piscataway Conoy Tribe - Choptico Band</p>	<p>Prince George's County</p>
<p>Clerance Tyler</p>		<p>Accohannock Tribe</p>	<p>Somerset County</p>

Administrative Summary



I am pleased to submit the Administrative Summary and highlights for 2025. I would like to thank the Commissioners, staff, and wonderful partners for making this year a success. The Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA) began 2024 with our annual strategic planning session. The Commission remained dedicated to our partnering entities and state agencies. MCIA lead tribal consultations resulting in new hiring positions that will serve tribal communities and our most vulnerable members, our youth. Below are selected major highlights and events:

- **Strategic Planning Session (SPS)** – Annual
- **Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA) Public Meetings** – Bi-monthly and special called
- **Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and Department of Human Services (DHS)** – Ongoing Initiative
- **Legislative Night** – Annual
- **Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)** – Ongoing appointment
- **Governors Interstate Indian Council (GIIC)** – Ongoing membership
- **MD Indigenous Historical Markers Initiative** – Ongoing initiative
- **Tribal Consultation** – Ongoing initiative
- **Maryland 250 Commission** – Ongoing Appointment
- **Annual American Indian Heritage Month Celebration** – Annual
- **Annual American Indian Heritage Day** - Annual

On behalf of MCIA, we offer the 2024 Annual Report reflecting the calendar through information and photographs provided.

- Strategic Planning Session (SPS)** – Commissioners held an in-person meeting on January 27 for their annual Strategic Planning Session. Public attendance to witness the conduction of business that took place at 100 Community Place, Crownsville. The agenda set to accommodate administration priorities, all communication updates and review of the Open Meeting Act (OMA) of the State. After review of the previous year, a one-year theme to be selected. Six suggestions put forth. Commissioners would need to a special-called meeting to make a final determination to be chosen. On February 2, commissioners agreed to, “Reclaiming our Culture: Past, Present and Future”.
- Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA) Public Meetings** – On February 3, MCIA held its first of regularly, scheduled public meetings (virtually). They are held bi-monthly that allow selected presentations, approval of minutes, administrative reports, committee reports, motions/voting, and community announcements. The meetings provide the conduction of business to be witnessed by the public. A list of meetings can be viewed in this report. Per MCIA bylaws, the Chair, majority of commissioners or the Executive Director of GOCI can call a special meeting. Below are the dates recorded:

MCIA Public Meeting Strategic Planning Session	Saturday	January 27	10:00 am – 3:00 pm
MCIA Special Called Meeting	Friday	February 2	7:00 pm – 7:30 pm
MCIA Public Meeting	Monday	February 5	7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
MCIA Special Called Meeting	Monday	March 25	7:00 pm – 8:00 pm
MCIA Public Meeting	Monday	April 1	7:00 pm – 8:00 pm
MCIA Public Meeting	Monday	June 3	7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
MCIA Public Meeting	Monday	August 5	7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
MCIA Public Meeting	Monday	October 7	7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
MCIA Public Meeting	Monday	December 2	7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
MCIA Special Called Meeting	Tuesday	December 12	7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

- Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and Department of Human Services (DHS)** - The ongoing initiative and partnership developed between MCIA and the Department of Human Resources, specifically Social Services Administration (SSA) – Foster Care and Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) cumulated in the form funding over a four-year time-period. Concerning 2024, on January 9, MCIA held a scheduled meeting with representatives of the SSA to provide updates on the numbers of Indian/Native American/Indigenous children in foster care. On May 16th,

Heather Zenone contacted MCIA to offer an example of the kind of multi-agency ICWA partnership to apply for a Maryland's State Tribal partnership grant. A process building up to an agreement to adapt for Maryland's State-Tribal ICWA Partnership grant. No one agency has the authority to act unilaterally. An agreement was developed to strategize, coordinate, and collaborate on our individual efforts. The agreement demonstrates how each agency used its ICWA related authorities to move forward a strategic combination of efforts to improve ICWA implementation. According to the agreement, HHS was to develop an ICWA self-monitoring tool for states. However, HHS was updating their regulation requiring states to report child welfare data, so HHS decided to add ICWA data elements to the regulation instead of putting energy into the state self-monitoring tool. The agreement also demonstrates the individual agencies' commitments to staff-level and principle-level meetings and other process-level parts of the partnership. Working together was critical to Maryland's leadership in developing an intergovernmental model for improving the implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and bolstering family preservation and reunification efforts for tribal and Indigenous children. Through this grant, to our 'Indigenous children and families first' focus on Maryland. On September 5th, MCIA was informed via email that the Maryland Indigenous Families Partnership which was instrumental in our receiving notice the award of the 4-year \$2m federal grant awarded through the ACF/HHS State-Tribal ICWA Partnership grant. Next steps have begun working with Red Cedar consulting group to assist with tribal consultation with tribal communities to garnish best practices for future workshops and initiatives for those tribal youth in foster care and beyond.

- **Legislative Night** – The Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI) provides an opportunity for the Ethnic Commissions/commissioners to engage with members of the General Assembly. This year, March 12 was the date selected to be held in Annapolis. MCIA took the opportunity to engage with commissioners from each of the ethnic commissions housed under GOCI.



- Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)** – February 5, MET held their first meeting of 2024 at 100 Community Place, Crownsville. The Board of Trustees along with staff gave a report of 2023 activities and new laws on the federal level for 2024. MCI representation through Administrative Director Colston serves as a Board Trustee. Last year, the Maryland legislature passed the Maryland the Beautiful Act (Senate Bill 470), with Governor Moore signed into law in May of 2023. This law codified ambitious land conservation goals of protecting 30% of Maryland’s land area by 2030. This would have a positive impact on preservation lands and areas concerning those with ties to tribal areas. The state Department of Planning, which consolidates land preservation data from multiple data sources and provides acreage totals through its Maryland Protected Lands Dashboard website. The total land area of Maryland is approximately 6,189,629 acres. 2 Of the above totals, approximately 1,844,894 acres have been protected in Maryland as of December 1, 2023. About 99.8% of the 2030 goal has been met with 7 years remaining. Thus, Maryland is well on its way to exceeding the 30x30 goal! Achieving the 40x40 goal is going to be much more challenging and will depend on future funding/capacity for land conservation programs, willing landowners, and continued cooperation from all state, local, and federal government, as well as NGO partners. 40% of Maryland’s land area equals approximately 2,475,852 acres. Thus, another 630,958 acres needs to be protected by 2040, or approximately 37,000 acres per year over the next 17 years. An example of the indirect/direct connection that of MET and Indigenous communities is the Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance (SMCA). SMCA focuses on landscape-scale conservation, including supporting indigenous-led projects and honoring the history of the Piscataway Indian Nation and Piscataway Conoy Tribe. MET meetings are open to the public. MCI and MET continue to encourage awareness and engagement.



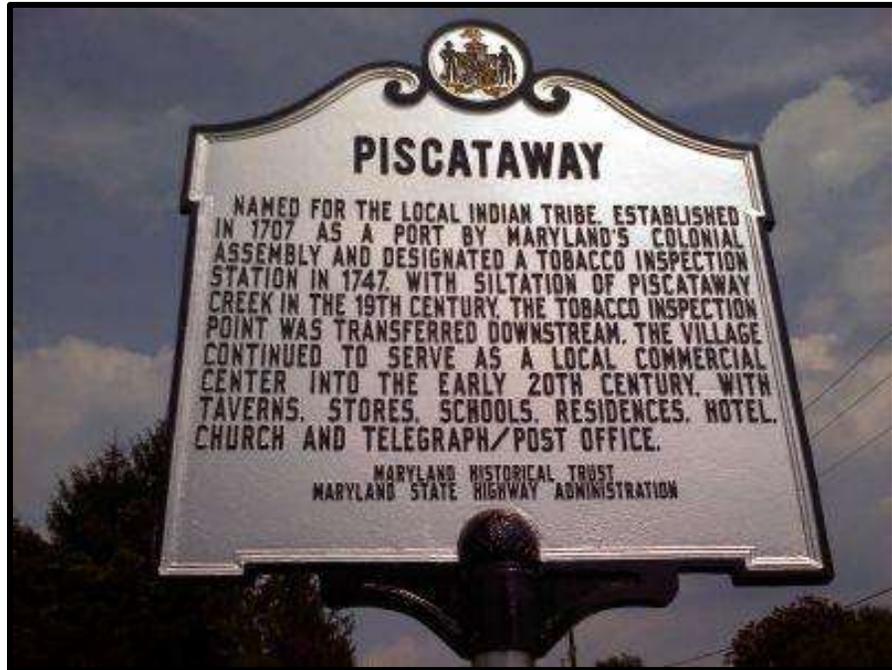
Board of Trustees (BOT)	Monday	February 5	4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Board of Trustees (BOT)	Monday	May 6	4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
MET	Monday	June 3	4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
MET	Monday	September 9	4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
MET	Wednesday	November 4	4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

- Governors Interstate Indian Council (GIIC)** – On April 29, MCIA participated in the first scheduled meeting for 2024. Strategic priorities and administrative updates included the following, yet not limited to: Tribal relations, policy updates, tribal sovereignty, ICWA Protections and Indian Child Welfare, Expanding tribal access to higher education and vocational training. Directors from across the country are selected and supported by the Governor of their state to serve on the council. GIIC will continue to welcome representatives from tribal government, state agencies, and others interested in improving the relationships between tribes, state governments, and local governments. A list of the meetings can be viewed in this report.

GIIC Meeting	Monday	April 29	3:00 pm – 4:30 pm
GIIC Meeting	Wednesday	October 8 th	3:30 pm – 4:30 pm
GIIC Meeting	Sunday	October 27	10:00 am – 4:00 pm

- MD Indigenous Historical Markers Initiative** – MCIA working in partnership with Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) creating advisory committees. The agreement was that it would be best to review groups of around ten markers by region and to include a tribal member or members from that region on the review committee. A spreadsheet with information about the thirty-eight markers was proposed to review. The spreadsheet includes the marker titles, county where the markers are located, and the text on the markers. With this information, MCIA in partnership with tribal leaders provide guidance as to how the markers could be divided by region. Meetings with tribal leaders like Francis Gray, Chief Clarence Tyler, Madam Chair Tiara Thomas, and others developed the following outcomes: tribal monitors on archaeological sites, improving tribal consultation with MDOT, repatriation of human remains, and historic markers amended and established. A program to replace certain markers determined inaccurate and/or insensitive to Indigenous people. Since the 1930s, almost eight hundred cast metal signs have been installed along state roads. Historical markers may retain derogatory language towards Native People, misrepresent their cultures, or contain inaccurate histories. Through a series of meetings, MDOT, MCIA, and tribal leaders are working together to prioritize and replace up to sixteen historical markers per year focusing on Maryland Indigenous people, places, and events. This initiative will shape and influence the way the traveling public remembers our past and sees the state’s living Native communities. As of December 11, an example of the ongoing work and accomplishments is the confirmation that the first four historical markers to address will be the following:

1. Mattawoman Run (Creek)(REPLACEMENT)
2. Zekiah Fort (NEW)
3. Piscataway (REPLACEMENT)
4. Chandler’s Hope (REPLACEMENT)



- **Tribal Consultation:** The MCIA serves as a place of resources and information. Tribal consultation is the foundation that drives planning, reason, outcomes, and success. Administrative Director E. Keith Colston met with each of the authorized tribal leaders, state agencies/representatives, faith-based organizations, non-profit organizations, universities, and federal agencies. A total of seventy-three documented tribal consultations that involved legislative, administrative and/or commission priorities. The establishment of tribal consultation where historically never existed, is a success within itself.





- **Maryland 250 Commission and Tribal Representation** - 2024 utilized tribal consultation to provide nominations to MCIA and beyond, allowing for Indigenous voices to be heard and represented. MCIA assisted with the nominations and placements on the following yet not limited to: MD250 Commission. NOTE: Excerpt from MD250 Commission – Mission specific to Indigenous communities.

The mission of the Maryland 250 Commission is to develop, encourage, and execute an inclusive statewide observance of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the nation recognizing all Marylanders' struggle for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, before, during, and after the Revolution, based on three themes – history, civics, and service. The goals are to: • Invite broad-based public input on the meaning, significance, and opportunities of this anniversary that will inform development of commemoration activities, programs, and events. • **Acknowledge that the confiscation of Indigenous land and displacement of Indigenous people is central to the United States' origin story and recognize the persistence and contributions of these communities today.** (List of goals presented in the MD250 Commission Annual Report 2024).



Maryland 250 Meeting	Thursday	April 16	1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Maryland 250 Meeting	Thursday	August 28	1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Maryland 250 Meeting	Tuesday	November 12	1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

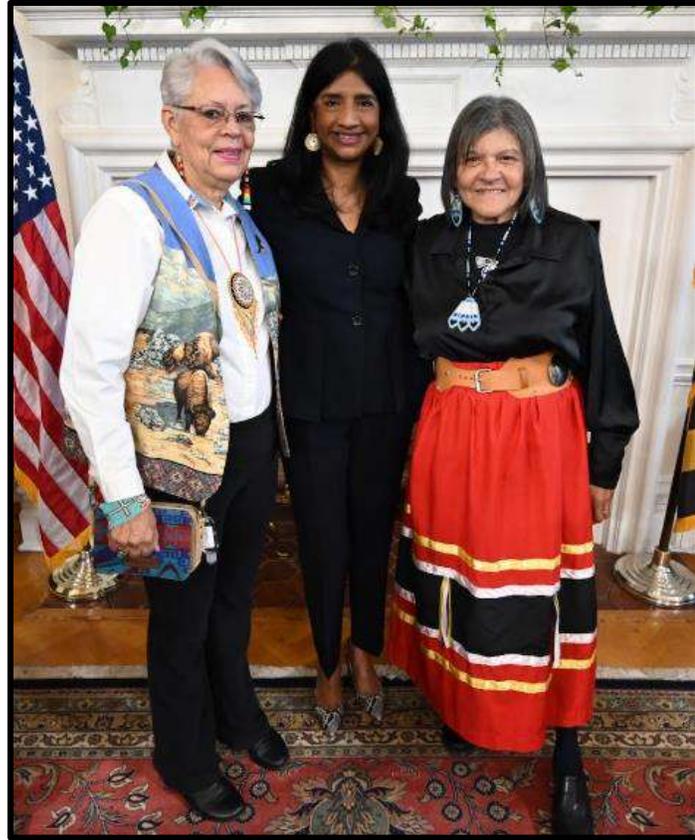
- 11th Annual American Indian Heritage Month Commemorative Celebration** – The event took place in the Governor’s reception room, on November 4th, Maryland State House, 100 State Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401. In coordination with Moore/Miller administration and assisted by the Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI) and the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA), Governor Moore expressed his continued support to all Native Americans and Indigenous Peoples in the State. The event officially marked the beginning of the 2024 American Indian Heritage Month celebration in Maryland, in conjunction with the recognition of National Native American Heritage Month. During the 2014 Maryland General Assembly session, HB 40 was approved requiring the Governor to annually proclaim November as American Indian Heritage Month in Maryland (law enacted Oct. 1). The event recognized the history, contributions, and achievements of its Indigenous and American Indian populations in the State. The celebration emphasized this year’s theme, “Reclaiming our Culture Past, Present and Future” as well as honoring tribal leaders. The event was attended by invited guests that included Commissioners, Tribal Leaders, Agency Secretaries, staff, and partnership entities.















The State of Maryland



Proclamation

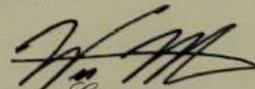
From the Governor of the State of Maryland

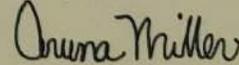
AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH NOVEMBER 2024

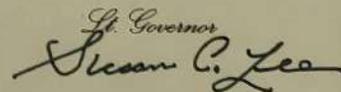
- WHEREAS,** *The history of the American Indian in the state of Maryland is immense, from the mountains to the stunning shores of the Chesapeake Bay and beyond; and*
- WHEREAS,** *Many of our islands, towns, forests, trails, rivers, streams, and historical landmarks bear connections to our Indigenous tribes, clans, bands, groups of Indians; and*
- WHEREAS,** *The humbled members of the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs join in celebration with the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives, in the ongoing commitment to edify the public with infallible facts and spirit of the American Indian People; and*
- WHEREAS,** *During the historical meeting between authorized tribal leaders of the state of Maryland and Governor Moore supporting initiatives to advance progress for generational achievements for tribal communities; and*
- WHEREAS,** *The State of Maryland celebrates the culture and diversity of all Indigenous peoples including members of Maryland State Recognized Tribes, Piscataway Conoy Tribe, Piscataway Indian Nation, and the Accohannock Tribe.*

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WES MOORE, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND, do hereby proclaim NOVEMBER 2024 as AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH in Maryland, and do commend this observation to all of our citizens.

Given *Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the State of Maryland,*
this 1st day of November
Two Thousand and twenty-four


Governor


Lt. Governor


Secretary of State

Secretary of State



- **American Indian Heritage Day** – On Friday, November 28 marked another year for Indigenous Peoples around the state to acknowledge those tribes that are historical to its borders. The Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA), under the Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI) supports the history and contemporary affairs of Indigenous/American Indians throughout the state. Those being the Piscataway Indian Nation, Piscataway Conoy Tribe, Accohannock, Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians, Pocomoke Indian Nation, Assateague Peoples and Lumbee who migrated from North Carolina between the 1940’s and 1960’s. In 2012, the Piscataway Indian Nation and the Piscataway Conoy Tribe were granted “Maryland Indian Status” which is state recognition. In 2018, the Accohannock Indian Tribe were granted Maryland Indian Status. American Indian Heritage Day is important for it recognizes and honors the historical and cultural significance of the American Indian community here in Maryland by designating each Friday after Thanksgiving in the month of since 2008. MCIA’s goal is that all Marylanders will take a moment on this day to acknowledge and celebrate with tribal communities.

Authorized Tribal Contact List

MARYLAND INDIAN STATUS

Piscataway Conoy Tribe (MARYLAND INDIAN STATUS –Enrolled members of the Piscataway-Conoy Tribe (PCT))
Tribal Council
Tribal Chair Francis Gray
P.O. Box 638
Bryans Road, Maryland
LaPlata, Maryland 20616
piscatawayconoycouncil@gmail.com

Piscataway Conoy Tribe (MARYLAND INDIAN STATUS –Enrolled members of the Piscataway-Conoy Tribe (PCT))
Choptico Band of Indians
Appointed Speaker Rico Newman
P. O. Box 1734
Hyattsville, MD 20788
rico.newman@gmail.com
202-582-2340 Cell
Political Liaison Barry Wilson
P.O. Box 126
White Plains, MD 20695
barrywilson51@gmail.com
301-932-4383 Home
301-848-5199 Cell

Piscataway Conoy Tribe (MARYLAND INDIAN STATUS –Enrolled members of the Piscataway-Conoy Tribe (PCT))
Cedarville Band of Piscataway Indians
Tribal Chair Natalie Standingontherock Proctor
Wild Turkey Clan/Cedarville Band
P.O. Box 189
Bowling Green, VA 22427
240-640-7213 cell
piscatawayindians@gmail.com

Piscataway Indian Nation (MARYLAND INDIAN STATUS – Enrolled members of the Piscataway Indian Nation (PIN))
Chief Mark Tayac
P.O. Box 312
Port Tobacco, Maryland 20677
301-752-1820
www.piscatawaynation.org

Accohannock Indian Tribe (MARYLAND INDIAN STATUS)
Chief Clarence Tyler
410-422-2178
accohannockchief53@gmail.com

American Indian Organizations

Maryland Indian Tourism Association (MITA)
Rico Newman – Choptico Band of Piscataway (Maryland Indian Status) Enrolled member of the Piscataway Conoy Tribe
3953 Pine Cone Circle
Waldorf, Maryland 20602
301-744-9553

Cedarville Band of Piscataway Indian, Inc.

Tribal Chairwoman Natalie Standingontherock Proctor (Maryland Indian Status) Enrolled member of the
Piscataway Conoy Tribe
No physical address as of 12/20/23
240-640-7213
piscatawayindians@gmail.com
[240-640-7213](tel:240-640-7213)
www.piscatawayindians.org
piscatawayindians@gmail.com

Baltimore American Indian Center –
113 South Broadway
Baltimore, Maryland 21231
410-675-3535
BAIC.org

Native American Lifelines Baltimore
Executive Director Kerry Lessard
1 E. Franklin Street, Suite 200
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
410-837-2258 x.103
help@nativelifelines.org

Indigenous Tribal communities and supporting non-profit organizations.

Assateague Peoples Tribe
Chief Michael "Quite Bear" Morabito
P.O. Box 63
Frankford, Delaware 19945
Mancat732@aol.com

Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians, Inc.
Chief Donna Abbott
212 East Appleby Ave.
Cambridge, Maryland 21613
410-228-0216
www.turtletracks.org
nausewaiwash@gmail.com

Pocomoke Indian Nation, Inc.
Paramount Chief Norris Howard, Sr.
3355 Allen Road
Eden, Maryland 21822
410-742-6795
www.pocomokeindiannation.org
quindocqua@aol.com

Youghiogheny River Band of Shawnee Indians
(Contact information not available)



The Meaning of the Logo

The symbols of the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs logo are representations of historical findings, cultural ideology, and unity. Three ancient drawings found in Maryland, represent the first Indigenous Peoples of the State. The four colors represent the four directions (North, South, East and West) traditional to American Indians and the “circle” that connects us all.

Mission Statement

The Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs works to serve as a statewide clearinghouse for information; to identify unmet social and economic needs in the native community; to support government education programs for American Indian youth; to provide support in the process of obtaining Recognition of State and Federal Indian Status; and to promote the awareness and understanding of historical and contemporary American Indian contributions in Maryland.