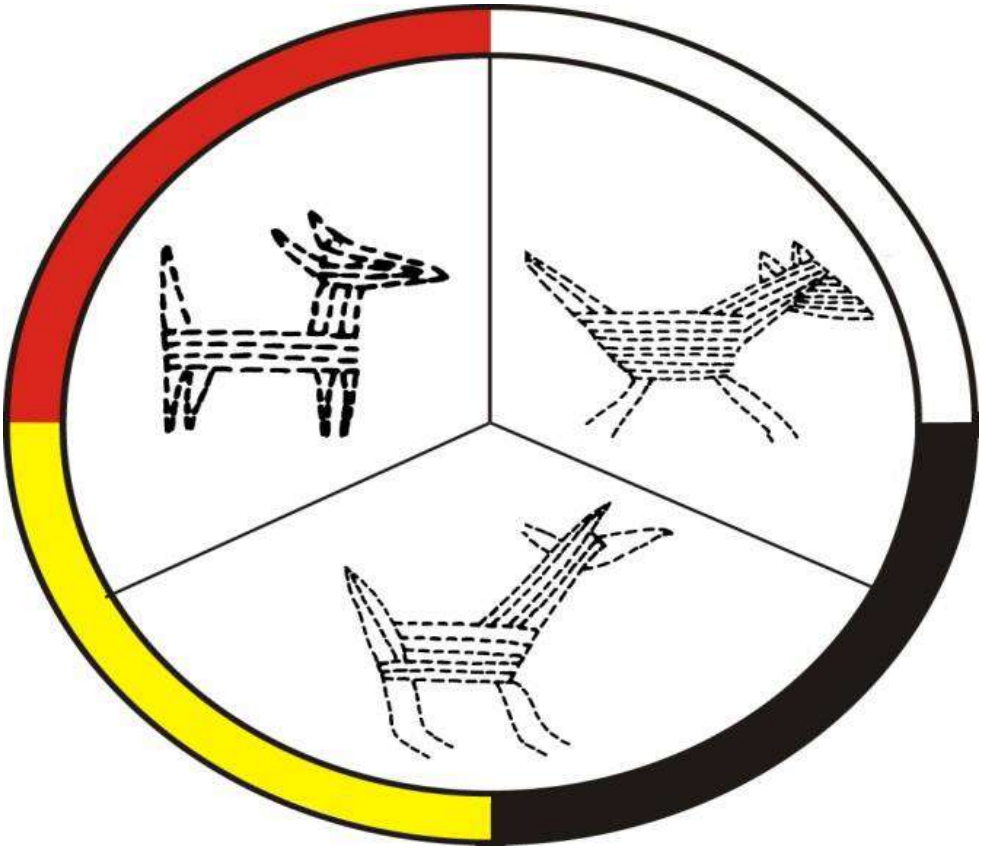
“Increasing Visibility of Our Culture Past, Present and Future”



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

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As we reflect on the work of the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs in 2025, I do so with deep gratitude, reflection, and pride. This year marked the conclusion of my term as Chair, and I am honored to have served alongside dedicated Commissioners, community leaders, and partners committed to advancing the voices and visibility of American Indian and Indigenous peoples across Maryland. Our work in 2025 was guided by the Commission's theme: Increasing Visibility of Our Culture; Past, Present, and Future; Through Education.

Education remained central to our efforts this year, as we continued working to ensure that American Indian and Indigenous histories, cultures, and contemporary experiences are accurately represented and understood. Increasing visibility through education means not only correcting the historical record, but also affirming that American Indian and Indigenous peoples are present, contributing, and leading in Maryland today.

A key focus of the Commission in 2025 was work related to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in Maryland. In collaboration with the Maryland Department of Human Services, this grant-funded initiative advanced the protection of American Indian and Indigenous children, families, and Tribal Nations. By supporting understanding, implementation, and compliance with ICWA, the Commission helped strengthen Tribal sovereignty and promote the well-being of American Indian children throughout the state.

During the 2025 legislative session, the Commission also supported House Bill 794 – Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs: Indian Heritage and Culture Grant Program and Fund. While the bill did not pass, its introduction and consideration represented meaningful progress and an important step forward in advocacy and education. Legislative change is often incremental, and the Commission remains committed to engaging in thoughtful dialogue and collaboration to advance policies that support American Indian and Indigenous communities.

2025 was also a year of historic significance for the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, which achieved federal recognition. The Commission extends heartfelt congratulations to the Lumbee people on this long-awaited milestone. Maryland is home to the largest population of Lumbee citizens living outside their traditional homelands, and this recognition holds deep meaning for many Lumbee citizens and American Indian communities in our state.

Looking ahead, 2026 will be a landmark year. The Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs will celebrate 50 years as a stand-alone Commission, coinciding with the semiquincentennial , (250th year) commemoration of the United States. These milestones invite reflection on both our collective history and the responsibility we carry forward to ensure that American Indian and Indigenous peoples are fully included in how history is remembered, taught, and shaped for future generations.

I am deeply grateful to my fellow Commissioners for their service, leadership, and collaboration, and to our state and community partners for their continued support. I especially want to thank Governor Wes Moore and the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI) for their guidance, partnership, and commitment to advancing American Indian and Indigenous communities in Maryland. I sincerely thank the American Indian and Indigenous communities of Maryland, whose leadership, resilience, and partnership this year have inspired our initiatives and reinforced the importance of education, advocacy, and cultural preservation.

As I conclude my service as Chair, I do so with confidence in the Commission's future and appreciation for the opportunity to have served. The work of increasing visibility, advancing equity, and honoring American Indian and Indigenous cultures past, present, and future will continue, strengthened by those who carry it forward.

Wanishi,

Tiara Thomas

Chair, Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA)

Commissioners Appointed by Governor Wes Moore

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

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
- **Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and Department of Human Services (DHS)** – Ongoing Initiative
- **Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)** – Ongoing appointment
- **Governors Interstate Indian Council (GIIC) –** Ongoing membership
- **MD Indigenous Historical Markers Initiative –** Ongoing initiative
- **United Tribal Authorized Chiefs and Chairs (UTACC) Traditional Council –** Tribal Consultation and Supporting Partner
- **Maryland 250 Commission** – Ongoing Appointment
- **Annual American Indian Heritage Month Celebration –** Annual
- **Annual American Indian Heritage Day -** Annual

The Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs is not limited to major events, yet includes the legislative mandates, bylaws updates, committee recommendations, support and assistance tribal constituents and Marylanders in general where possible. We continue to be a source of information to resources and opportunities.

On behalf of MCIA, we offer the 2025 Annual Report reflecting the calendar through information and photographs provided.

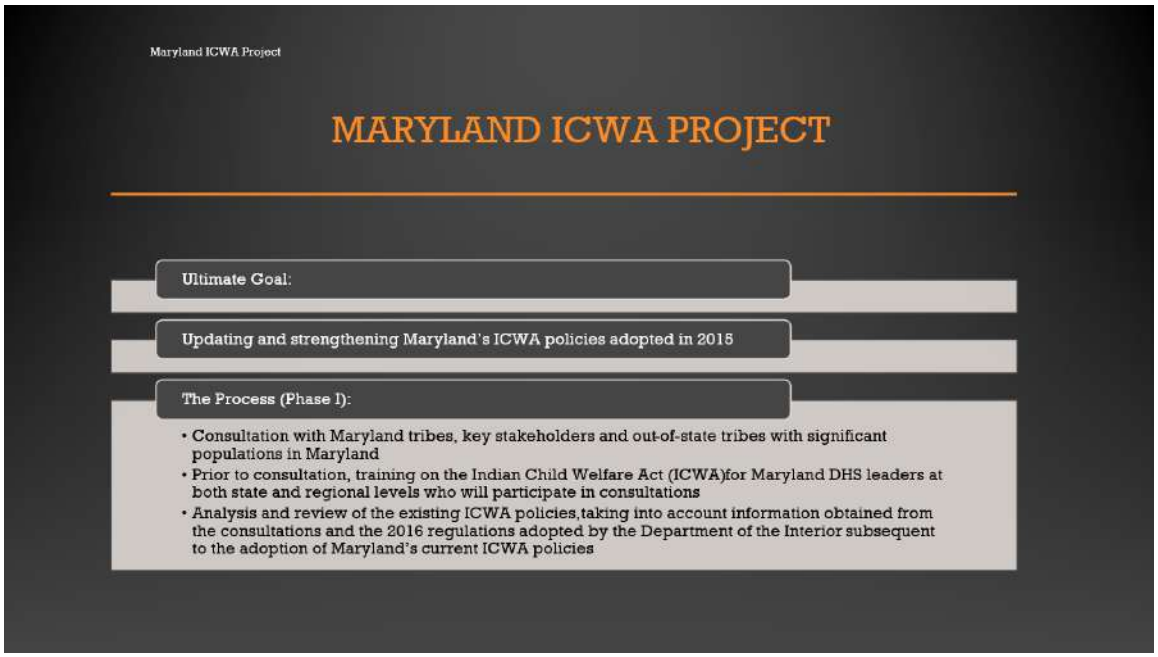
- **Strategic Planning Session (SPS)** – January 25, 2025, commissioners met in-person at 100 Community Place, Crownsville to reflect on the previous year and discuss actions to be taken for the new year. Madam Chair Thomas provided welcoming remarks and request for invocation. Administrative Director Colston shared Governor Moore's top priorities, communications updates, and review of the Open Meetings Act. A review of SPS 2024 to account for ongoing initiatives and course of actions for 2025. A synopsis of commissioner responsibilities and committee membership. A theme is chosen each year and for 2025, "Increasing Visibility of Our Culture Past, Present and Future." Themes are reflected and shared during meetings, speaking engagements and cultural events.

- **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	**Monday**	**February 3rd**	**7:00 pm – 9:00 pm**
MCIA Public Meeting	**Monday**	**April 7th**	**7:00 pm – 9:00 pm**
MCIA Special Called Meeting	**Tuesday**	**May 17th**	**7:00 pm – 8:00 pm**
MCIA Public Meeting	**Monday**	**June 2nd**	**7:00 pm – 9:00 pm**
MCIA Public Meeting	**Monday**	**August 4th**	**7:00 pm – 9:00 pm**
MCIA Public Meeting	**Monday**	**October 6th**	**7:00 pm – 9:00 pm**
MCIA Public Meeting	**Monday**	**December 1st**	**7:00 pm – 9:00 pm**
MCIA Special Called Meeting	**Tuesday**	**December 9th**	**7:00 pm – 9:00 pm**

- **Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and Department of Human Services (DHS) -** On January 28th, first meeting held of the year concerning foster care in Maryland and ongoing initiatives to improve the lives of Indigenous, state, and federal recognized youth in Maryland. The Maryland Indigenous Family Partnership Grant provided a more in-depth strategies, tribal consultation and staffing to assist. The ongoing initiatives with Social Services Administration representatives

that identify tribal youth to maintain correct data collection and policy. MCIA partnered with Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) and Red Cedar Solutions to conduct tribal consultation as well as workshops pertaining to the implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in the State. One event was held in person and virtually on Tuesday, July 8th in Crownsville, MD. The event introduced ICWA and updating of policy. During the event, tribal perspectives and public comment received.



- **Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)** – February 3rd, MCIA continued representation on MET Board of Trustees. As one of the oldest and most successful land trusts in the country, Maryland Environmental Trust works with landowners, local communities, and land trusts to protect Maryland's most treasured landscapes and natural resources as a legacy for future generations. We accomplish this work by providing direct assistance, information, and innovative tools to ensure the ongoing stewardship and public concern for the natural, historic, and scenic resources of the state.

Board of Trustees (BOT)	Monday	February 3rd	4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Board of Trustees (BOT)	Monday	May 5th	4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
MET	Monday	June 2nd	4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
MET	Monday	September 8th	4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
MET	Wednesday	November 3rd	4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

- **Governors Interstate Indian Council (GIIC) –** On March 3rd, MCIA participated in the first scheduled meeting for 2025. Directors from across the country are selected and supported by the Governor of their state to serve on the council. The Governors' Interstate Indian Council welcomes representatives from tribal government, state agencies, and others interested in improving the relationships between tribes, state governments, and local governments. Over the years, the GIIC organization has worked through state governments to address issues and concerns of Native nations. State Indian Affairs Directors and Commissioners, tribal representatives, and state delegates from across the nation meet on an annual basis to address the most current issues facing American Indians. A list of the meetings can be viewed in this report. Scheduled meeting dates below.

GIIC Meeting	Monday	March 3rd	11:30 am – 12:30 pm
GIIC Meeting	Monday	April 22nd	3:00 pm – 4:30 pm
GIIC Meeting	Wednesday	September 20th	3:30 pm – 4:30 pm
GIIC Meeting	Wednesday	October 8th	3:30 pm – 4:30 pm
GIIC Meeting	Sunday	October 27th	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

- **MD Indigenous Historical Markers Initiative –** On February 28th, MCIA held the first meeting with Maryland Department of Transportation. This on-going initiative began with Dr. Julie Schablitsky starting the Cultural Resources Division under The Secretary's Office (TSO) at MDOT. The MDOT-TSO Cultural Resources Division took the lead on the Historical Markers Program in partnership with Maryland Historical Trust (MHT). It was determined that current MD historical markers did not represent Indigenous people equally and, in some cases, markers were incorrect, offensive, or non-existent. During 2025, tribal consultation took place with various tribal communities and leaders. The outcomes lead to newly created markers reflecting a more accurate and positive view of Maryland's Indigenous history and current tribal communities. One example is the "Historical Marker Unveiling to Honor Legacy of Pocomoke Tribal Homelands" on November 12th, at the Worcester County Visitor Center, Pocomoke City. The event featured remarks from tribal and government representatives.

- **United Tribal Authorized Chiefs and Chairs (UTACC) Traditional Council –** What began on April 1, 2023, continued into 2025. UTACC maintains a vital component of tribal consultation and representation throughout the state. An American Indian/Indigenous tribal based council established to represent the authorized leadership and to provide greater cooperation, coordination, and unity for said tribes and Indian organizations of the State of Maryland. UTACC is a unique council that respects the autonomy of each leader and community while simultaneously support common and agreed upon issues and goals. Members of UTACC have attended various functions since its creation. Members participated and highlighted in the 2025 American Indian Heritage Month Proclamation.

- **Maryland 250 Commission** – 2025 would mark one year from the official observance of America's 250th anniversary. The Commission created a working group to inform, participate, and provide community feedback. During each MCIA public meeting, information was shared concerning grants, engagements, news, and programs. Commissioners were encouraged to share and have tribal communities to apply for funding where possible. Tribal representation has played a vital role in voicing the history of tribal identity in Maryland. Interviews with tribal representatives from the Piscataway Conoy Tribe, public meeting commentary from Piscataway Indian Nation leadership and direct tribal consultation with communities are all examples of the work that has taken place. MCIA representations directly and indirectly were not limited only to the dates below, yet also working groups under MD250 Commission as well as other forms of interaction (conference calls, emails) Legislation that established the Maryland 250 Commission provided opportunity for the Administrative Director of the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs, or the Administrative Director's designee would have a seat. The photograph below captures the representation and levels of involvement that allows this collaboration of success.

Maryland 250 Meeting	Monday	January 27th	3:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Maryland 250 Meeting	Thursday	April 24th	10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Maryland 250 Meeting	Thursday	June 26th	3:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Maryland 250 Meeting	Wednesday	July 9th	3:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Maryland 250 Meeting	Thursday	July 30th	3:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Maryland 250 Meeting	Thursday	August 28th	10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Maryland 250 Meeting	Monday	September 29th	3:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Maryland 250 Meeting	Monday	October 27th	3:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Maryland 250 Meeting	Tuesday	November 18th	10:00 am – 11:00 am

- **12th Annual American Indian Heritage Month Commemorative Celebration** – Governor Moore "Proclamation Reading – American Indian Heritage Month" took place on November 3rd, inside the Governor's Reception Room at the Maryland State House. The occasion is a key initiative for commemoration, awareness, reward, and

remembrance. The event included yet not limited to ethnic commissioners, state agencies, partners, community members, tribal leaders, and staff. Administrative Director Colston provided a land acknowledgement and introduction of Lt. Governor Aruna Miller. Lt. Governor Miller expressed her appreciation for invitation and engagement with all in attendance. She introduced Governor Wes Moore to give remarks and reading of the proclamation. Governor Moore began with "Happy American Indian Heritage Month" and thanking MCIA/GOCI leadership. He honored the awardees with words of encouragement and motivation saying: "To each of our Adults of the Year, I want to say this; thank you for carrying the torch and setting the example. You have been our guides, our partners, and our greatest source of strength. To each of the Youths of the Year, I want to say this; The future is of your making… There is not a room you do not belong in–and every room you find yourself in is better because of your presence." Governor Moore presented the proclamation to Madam Chair Tiaria Thomas as she then proceeded to give remarks. Time provided to photograph presentation of the proclamation to Madam Chair Thomas on behalf of MCIA, Youths of the Year, Adults of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, Commissioners, Tribal leaders/representatives, and audience interactions. We are pleased to share with you a variety of photographs capturing another historical day for MCIA and Maryland.

The State of Maryland
Proclamation

The State of Maryland

Proclamation

From the Governor of the State of Maryland

AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH
NOVEMBER 2025

WHEREAS, *The history of the Indigenous Peoples/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, forest, trails, rivers, streams, and historical landmarks bear connections to our indigenous tribes, clans, bands, groups of Indigenous Peoples; and*

WHEREAS, *The humbled members of the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs under the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives are partnering entities in the ongoing commitment to edify and assist the public with infallible facts and spirit of the American Indian people; and*

WHEREAS, *The State of Maryland will continue to work in partnership with tribal communities through the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs and the United Tribal Authorized Chiefs and Chairs traditional council; 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; and*

WHEREAS, *The State of Maryland is pleased to recognize November as American Indian Heritage Month, and all Marylanders are encouraged to acknowledge and join in this grand celebration.*

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WES MOORE, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND, do hereby proclaim NOVEMBER 2025 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-five

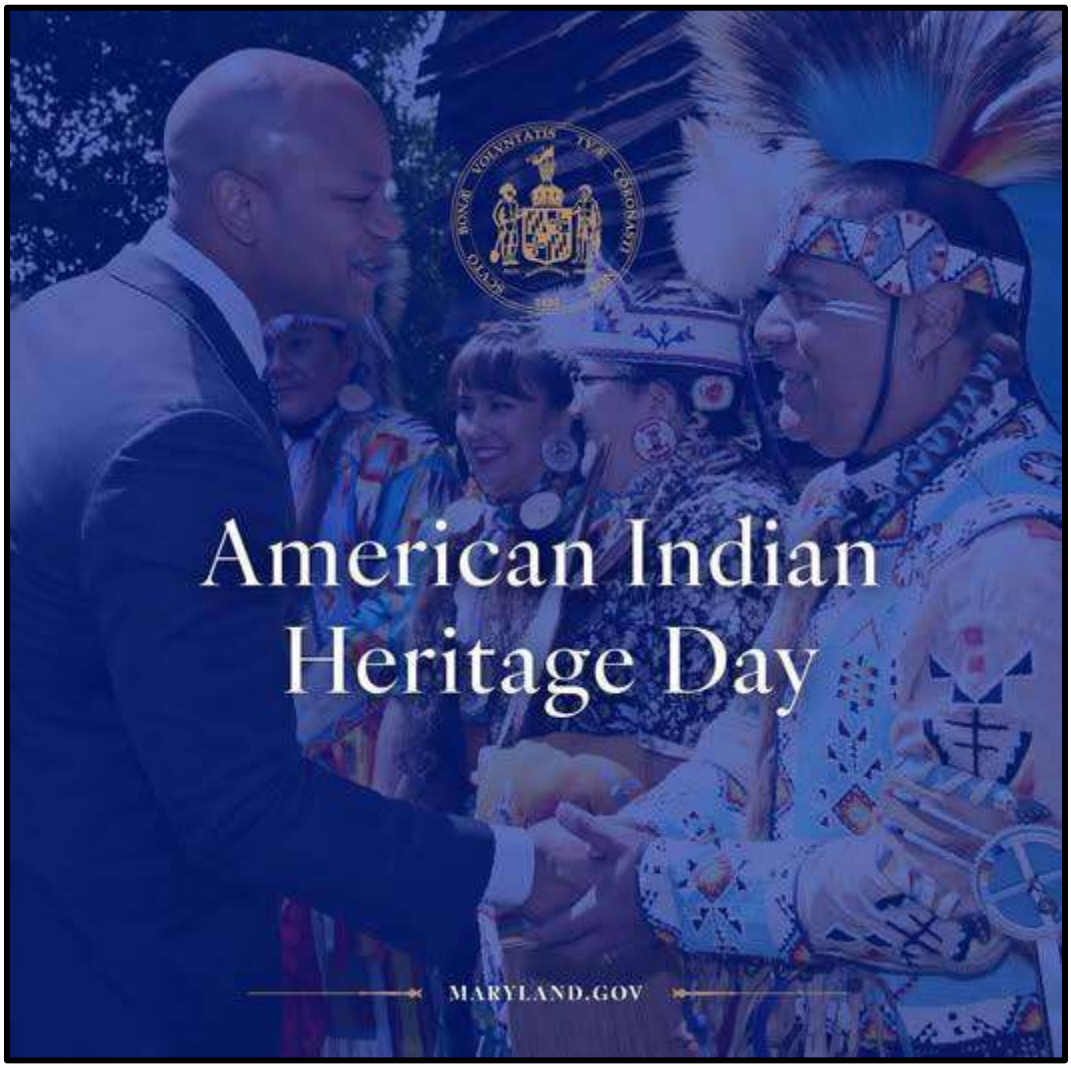
Governor

Aruna Miller
Lt. Governor

Susan C. Lee
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. We are extremely grateful to Governor Wes Moore as he proclaimed American Indian Heritage in Maryland by proclaimed the day throughout the state and across social media. MCIA reminded those who viewed the online video commentary that actions like HB 83 which designated Native American Heritage Day as a legal State holiday and State recognition of the Piscataway and Accohannock, have been important steps in progress for Indigenous Peoples of the State. MCIA would like to thank Governor Moore for his support and acknowledgement.

"American Indian Heritage Day is a reminder of Maryland's full history and the work ahead. We will keep showing up, honoring our commitments, and strengthening trust with Indigenous communities across the state."



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
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.