

Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation awarded \$460,567 in AmeriCorps funding

September 15, 2023



Funding will support 10 AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers to empower individual self-determination by providing employment and lifelong learning opportunities

The Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation received a grant of \$460,567 from AmeriCorps, the federal agency for national service and volunteerism. This AmeriCorps Seniors Grant will expand upon Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation's efforts towards an evolved and enhanced approach to workforce development.

Through an interdepartmental partnership between the Tribal Employment Rights Office and Community and Family Wellness, the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation has conceptualized a workforce development approach to specific issues impacting Indigenous populations.

"Indigenous populations have suffered a long history of genocide, forced removal, intergenerational trauma, and generational poverty, which have created a long-standing crisis in Native communities that has impacted both physical and mental health; as well as creating a dramatic inequity in access to resources, in addition to

impacting negotiating skills for those attempting to obtain education and employment opportunities,” said Suntayea Steinruck, Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation’s Workforce Development Specialist, “...culture and wellness have always been a vital and important part of the indigenous experience and the sustainment of healthy lifeways.

Offering a connection and shared understanding of the issues being faced, tribal citizens and other natives are at a young age, we will be able to curate a programmatic supportive wrap-around approach that incorporates culture, language & wellness into a resource pathway that compliments traditional resources such as technical skill building and educational opportunities, offering an appropriate recourse and response to the specific issues that cause inequity in the workforce.”

With this new funding, ten AmeriCorps members will serve as the Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation Elder Workforce Development Team in Smith River, CA, and the greater surrounding area. AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers will be responsible for the development and oversight of this new workforce program for youth tentatively titled the Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation WORKS for Seven Generations Workforce Development program. The core value of this philosophy is that every decision should result in sustainable relationships seven generations in the future.

AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers aged 55 and older serve their communities through multiple service programs. The Foster Grandparent Program, RSVP, Senior Companion Program and Senior Demonstration Program allow Volunteers to take the commitment and apply it to our nation’s most pressing issues.

These grants allow organizations to recruit, train and supervise AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers who are providing services to support education, disaster services, health, environmental stewardship, economic opportunity and service to veterans and military families.

HOW VOLUNTEERS CAN APPLY:

Learn more at [AmeriCorps.gov/Seniors](https://americorps.gov/Seniors) for more information about AmeriCorps Seniors. If you’re interested in applying to be a volunteer, or receiving information, call or email Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation Workforce Development Specialist Suntayea Steinruck at 707-487-9255 ext.1225, or sunteayea.steinruck@tolowa.com.