

Economic Services Administration (ESA) Celebrates National American Indian Heritage Month

by Georgia Payne

On November 4th, the Division of Child Support, Tribal Relations Team and the Community Services Division, State-Tribal Relations Unit, hosted its 16th annual celebration of National American Indian Heritage Month (NAIHM).

NAIHM was officially designated in November 1990. Proclamations are issued each year by the sitting [President](#) and our state [Governor](#) designating November as a month to celebrate and commemorate the heritage of our American Indian and Alaska Natives. NAIHM is a time to honor the significant contributions, achievements, and sacrifices of the original inhabitants of the United States. It is also a time to learn and celebrate the rich cultural and historical legacy of Native people.

The ESA celebration was held at the Capital View 1 building in Olympia, with over 100 people in attendance. Attendees enjoyed:

- A luncheon of Indian Tacos with frybread prepared by members of the Chehalis Tribe, and members of the SPIPA TANF program, with crockpots of Chili volunteered by ESA staff. Pumpkin pie and assorted cookies were provided for dessert.
- Traditional drumming and singing performed by Canoe Journey families from the Chehalis, Quinault, and Squaxin Island tribes of Washington, and a staff member from the Navajo Nation.
- American Indian Arts and Crafts display by Vickie Era-Pankretz an artist, teacher and historian. Her work has been featured at the [Alutiiq Museum](#) in Kodiak Alaska, and in publications. She has generously shared her time and talents for many years at our annual NAIHM celebrations. This year's display consisted of a wide variety of cedar, spruce root and grass basketry; intricate beaded jewelry, and small Alutiiq mask replicas. It also included a beautiful hand woven Spruce root Alutiiq Hunting Hat with whale designs painted by Alutiiq artist Jerry Laktonen.
- Native background music and a continuous Slide Show featuring photos taken over the years at other events with our tribal partners like the Tribal Canoe Journeys and past Heritage Month celebrations. The event included a Tribal Informational Resource Table featuring DCS handouts, and other federal, state, and local Tribal resource materials.

We appreciate and want to sincerely thank the presenters, cooks, volunteers, and everyone who participated and donated. Without your help we could not host such an awesome event each year. We are looking forward to next year's NAIHM celebration and seeing you there!



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