**Cuts to a federal workforce program could hurt training for Native Americans By-Jeanette DeDios**

**NNN-NATIVETRAINING**

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**INTRO:** More than half [of Native Americans](https://www.nadcnm.org/our-caucus/nm-native-population) in New Mexico live in urban areas, and many rely on programs to help them transition from the reservation to cities, including workforce training. But the Trump administration is proposing [federal cuts](https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-resources/budget/the-presidents-fy-2026-discretionary-budget-request/) that could defund such programs. Jeanette DeDios has more.

The Native Professional Advancement Center was founded in 1961 when advocates demanded the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Department of Labor create a workforce training program for Native Americans in New Mexico.

**We have a large group of people that just kind of make the urban setting a little easier for Native peoples. A lot of the time we're coming out of our reservations and into the cities for the first time, you don't really have that connection that you did back on the reservation.**

Deanna Aquiar is a citizen of Isleta del Sur Pueblo and is director of programs and development for the center. It has 76 worksites around the state and has helped over 4,000 Native Americans access education. It also provides training opportunities, and helps place people in jobs. Since 1972 it’s been funded by the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa). But that program has been targeted for cuts by the Trump administration.

Aquiar says if federal funding goes away the center would likely be turned over to the state, but that could be detrimental.

**We've been overlooked by the states, just because we don't have a large participant base and that often leads to the state overlooking us, and we end up invisible.**

She says it’s critical to continue programs like this to address poverty in Indigenous communities.

**The poverty that our communities have been known for for decades. To rise above that, we need access to education and good jobs. And access to that is not readily made to those who are coming off the reservation.**

The program began its new year on July 1st, and is safe for now, but Aquiar is uncertain if they will be able to continue in the years to come.

For National Native News, I’m Jeanette DeDios