



# Native American Youth and Family Center

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**Testimony in support of SB 5516  
Submitted March 15, 2017  
Tamara Henderson**

Chair Monroe, Chair Smith-Warner, members of the Committee, my name is Tamara Henderson and I am the Director of the Youth and Education Services Department at the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA). Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. For those that are not aware, Portland is home to the country's 9<sup>th</sup> largest Urban Indian community. NAYA serves more than 2000 youth from more than 380 tribes in any given year. All NAYA services are provided through the Relational Worldview Model, a traditional model that strives to ensure all four quadrants of a person are in balance; the four quadrants are mind, body, spirit, and context.

Much of our work as an organization is to ensure our community gets to and through high school with a plan to pursue and complete some form of education and/or training beyond high school so they can find living wage careers and give back to their community, our community, at the highest level possible. Much of this work is done through providing youth and their families with NAYA's comprehensive wraparound supports which include programming such as youth advocacy, college and career services, a homeownership program, homeless youth services, gang prevention, energy and rental assistance, early childhood education and programming, foster care supports, and much, much more.

**Through our youth advocacy program we have leveraged resources to provide powerful results through our Wraparound Model.** For example, last year 60% of our case managed youth were served in camps, 80% of high school case managed youth were served in NAYA's Summer Credit Recovery program, 67% of case managed youth were served in Learning Center, and 50% were served in our Recreation programs. 91% of youth of these youth improved their self-esteem, and 85% improved their cultural identity. We have evidence that these are all outcomes directly tied to school success, reduced drug and alcohol use, and increased overall resilience. **One of our most powerful results indicating the academic success of our youth advocacy model is evidenced through the high graduation rates for youth in our program. Last year Madison and Franklin High Schools experienced 100% Native American graduation rates.** Each one of these students was provided Youth Advocacy, Native Clubs, and additional wraparound supports through NAYA.

Currently, we have 9 youth advocates serving about 200 youth with intensive case management and wrap-around supports at schools throughout the Portland Metropolitan area including East County, an area where many of our families are moving; two of our advocates, and therefore the youth they case manage, are largely supported through youth development council funds. We also serve more than 200 youth per year with a five person College and Career Services team, which includes approximately 75 – 80 youth who are receiving intensive supports in our culturally responsive career skills development program called Sunrise EAST. One of those staff is supported through youth development council supports as is our full time mentorship coordinator.



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Portland's Native American/Alaskan Native community benefits greatly from the services provided by the Youth Development Council; more than 110 youth and therefore families are positively impacted by youth development programming. NAYA is currently partnering with Multnomah County to provide 70 students in six school districts with the youth advocacy needed to ensure academic success at the middle school and secondary level. We also have two mentoring programs that serve 40 – 60 youth per year. One of our mentoring programs focuses on homeless youth and another is reconnecting up to 40 Opportunity Youth to education, culture, and employment. Opportunity Youth are defined as those who are disconnected from both education and employment. These youth are regularly being connected to services that will help them meet their educational and/or employment goals. Just within the past thirty days, we have seen successes in the lives of these youth as a result of the youth development support our organization receives. As a result of our wrap-around services, one twenty year old youth who had only completed one high school credit has been connected to their future goals through our services by entering Job Corps, with their coach and mentor's guidance and support, where they will complete their GED and begin their career training; another has been accepted into a construction apprenticeship after receiving the supports necessary to finish high school and pursue a career bridge training program with the supports of their coach.

On behalf of the Native American/Alaskan Native youth and families served by NAYA, I urge you to support SB 5516 so that youth and families can continue receiving the supports necessary. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Tamara Henderson

Director of Youth and Education Services