



2015 Navajo Nation Criminal Justice Summit

“Strengthening the Diné Criminal Justice System

On Sept. 9-10, 2015, the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch (Alamo-To'Hajiilee Judicial District), Navajo Department of Law Enforcement, Navajo Nation Public Defender, and summit planning committee hosted the 2015 Criminal Justice Summit in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Over 77 individuals from 12 districts attended.

The summit provided important information and presen-

tations on restorative justice initiatives such as the Aneth Community Court, Alamo-To'Hajiilee Healing to Wellness Courts, Teen Courts and re-entry programming. Other presentations included information on the impacts of the Tribal Law and Order Act and the Violence Against Women's Act on justice-involved defendants in federal courts.

The Federal Public Defenders office and the Navajo Nation Public Defender's office made a joint presentation on the impacts to these defendants at the tribal and federal levels. There was also a presentation on the SORNA (Sex Offender Registration) initiative in the Navajo Nation and the impacts of alcohol-related crime on children by the Navajo Area I.H.S. Ft. Defiance hospital.

Nation Building: Action Plan

Former Chief Justice Herb Yazzie made a special appearance at the Criminal Justice Summit and talked about “Nation Building.” The Navajo Courts are the pillars for the Navajo communities, he said. When discussing your issues, keep in mind that the Navajo Nation courts have a restorative justice model that they have developed through

the Peacemaking Program and the development of multi-disciplinary approaches as in the Healing to Wellness Courts and Teen Courts, he said. Former Chief Justice Yazzie also encouraged participants to support community initiatives that strengthen courts and the justice system. All disciplines have to work together, he said.



Former Chief Justice Herb Yazzie

June 3, 2016

Top 3 Fears and Needs from 2015 Justice Summit– Tribal Action Planning:

- Domestic Violence/ Domestic Violence against Elderly
- Substance Abuse/ Addictions; alcohol abuse
- Suicide

Fears and Needs assessments were completed by 12 Judicial Districts of the Navajo Nation in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.



Dr. Carolyn Morris at the 2015 Criminal Justice Summit

Building Bridges with Health and Justice communities

Dr. Carolyn Morris, a Diné psychologist from United Healthcare, provided a presentation on the care and treatment of individuals with substance abuse and mental health issues.

We have Navajo words for mental illness and sometimes it doesn't translate into the western modalities of care, she said. However, our strength as tribal communities is our inherent systems of care.

Dr. Morris provided all summit participants with information

on how assessments are done and performed by clinicians. She said justice and health communities need to understand trauma in the reservations and how the care of these individuals is defined by their trauma, whether it be from social determinants such as poverty, lack of employment or lack of education.

We have to utilize trauma informed care when we work with these individuals, she said. She was glad that judges and their staff are part of understanding alcoholism as an illness and disease rather

than throwing these people in jail without treatment.

There is a definite need to build bridges between the behavioral health world and the justice communities because these people we serve can get well with the right support.

Dr. Morris worked for Navajo Department of Behavioral Health Services and now works as the director of the Native American department for United Health Care, a managed care organization in New Mexico.

Navajo Nation Tribal Action Plan

Melissa Riley, consultant with the U.S. Department of Justice, and Eve Shenale, teen court coordinator for the Judicial Branch facilitated the Tribal Action Planning session.

The participants were selected by utilizing a team concept for registration from each of the Navajo judicial districts. When the teams broke into groups, they were given a fears and needs assessment

worksheet. They were also asked to identify their resources utilizing a U.S. DOJ Tribal Youth Program tool called "Resource mapping" by individual sections of their communities, including education, judicial, law enforcement, social services, etc.

These tools were then analyzed and the top three fears and needs were identified: 1. Domestic Violence/domestic violence against elderlies; 2.

Substance abuse/addictions; alcohol abuse and 3. Suicide.

The Alamo-To'Hajiilee Teen Court program is funded by the U.S. DOJ Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention programs and offers grantees like the Teen Courts technical assistance for strategic planning.

Technical assistance can be provided for the teams in Navajo Nation upon request.

**Next Summit:
August 2016 to
work on
individual
district Action
Plans to address
the fears and
needs
assessments.**

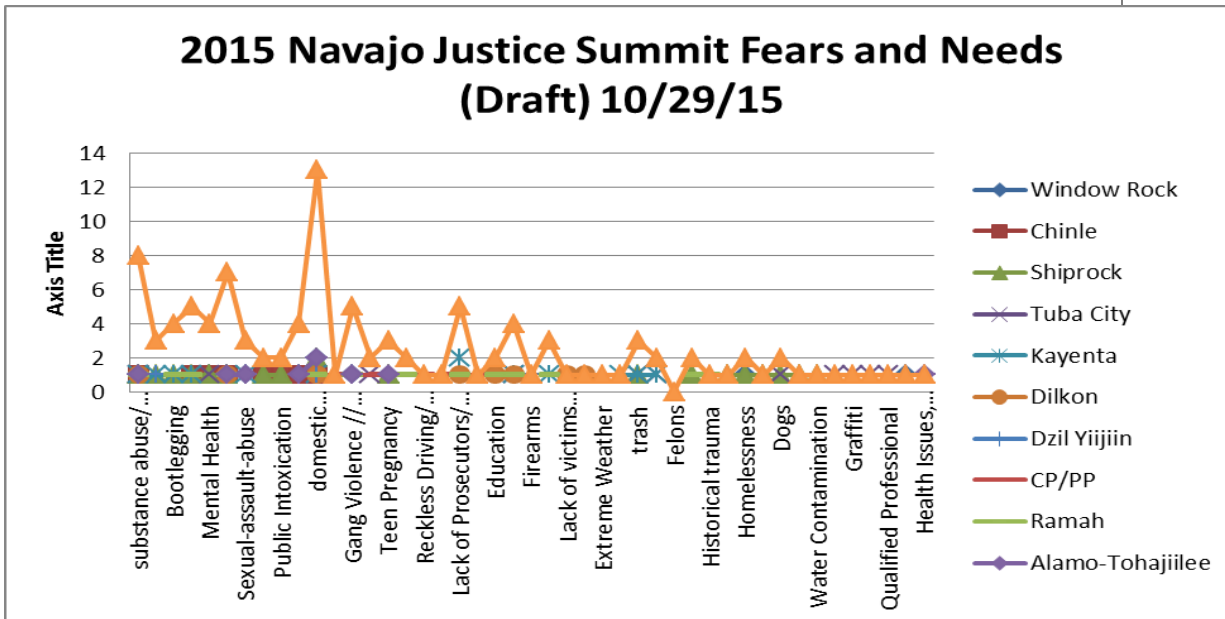
Tribal Action Planning in the Navajo Nation

Please note that Tribal Action planning for a large tribe like the Navajo Nation is a huge undertaking, said Regina Begay Roanhorse, court administrator. We asked the groups to continue their work in their communities and update their resource mapping materials. Navajo Area Indian Health Services assisted with printing large work space materials for each group. Webinars are

being developed for 2016



Data analysis of Fears/Needs Assessments



The Fears and Needs Assessment was developed using simple tools in small groups in order to gather qualitative data to assist the districts with identifying their top three priorities.

Having a strategic focus saves time and effort and keeps activities, events, and initiatives from being ineffective efforts to address a wide range of need.

Summit Goals:

Data from the U.S. Department of Justice on violent crimes, New Mexico Department of Health, and the Census was used to develop the goals of the summit. Public Defender's Office had input into what they wanted addressed.

Thereafter, the summit planning group worked on the agenda and presentations

Each of the small groups talked about their needs and fears. Dialogue amongst the group members opens up ideas and thoughts that fit each unique community.

Since the Navajo Nation has 110 chapters with different systems of care and resources, the fears and needs assessments by judicial districts is unique to each district. The next step for developing action plans is to focus

on the specific district's fears and needs.

Some examples for Alamo-To'Hajiilee Judicial District include: anti-drug proclamations; anti drunk driving billboards; education and training on culture and strengths during spring break or red ribbon week; anti-suicide billboards and flyers at schools, buildings; wellness and teen courts; substance abuse prevention in schools.

conviction offenders.

4. Strengthening victim services in Navajo Nation (SORNA, DV); 5. Strengthening recruitment and retention of Navajo attorneys in the justice system; 6. Ascertain whether the Navajo Nation should adopt the Tribal Law and Order Act or find other alternative solutions. 7. Developing re-entry programs for Navajo for adults and youth.

Data Driven Tribal Actions Plans are strategic efforts to address community issues.



Congresswoman Michelle Lujan-Grisham with Alamo-To'Hajiilee Wellness Court and Peacemaking staff at the New Mexico Metro Court. Congresswoman Grisham supports Drug Courts.



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Healing to Wellness, Teen Courts and Community Courts work !

Dine Bi Beenahaz'aani, 1 N.N.C. 201-206: The leaders of the Judicial Branch, (Alaaji Haskeeji Naat'aah) shall uphold the values and principles of Dine Bi Beenahaz'aani in the practice of peacemaking, obedience, discipline, punishment, interpreting laws and rendering decisions and judgements. 1 NNC Section 203(e)

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COUNCIL: FRIEND US ON
FACEBOOK AT TO'HAJIILEE
COUNCIL



As a result of including youth in the action planning process, the To'Hajiilee Youth Council painted two billboards: anti-drug and suicide prevention.

In 2011, the Alamo-To'Hajiilee Judicial District worked on a district strategic plan utilizing the goals and objectives of the Judicial Branch's overall strategic plan. Based on the numerous meetings with resources, the district offered several grant submissions through the Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation grant process. The Teen Courts for Alamo and To'Hajiilee were funded (best submission of all tribes in 2011). The Aneth Community Court and the Alamo and To'Hajiilee Healing to Wellness courts were also funded. The Alamo-To'Hajiilee Judicial District, under the leadership of Judge William J.J. Platero, provided the platform for the development of a drug court and teen court initiative that includes the community. It is a total community approach to address alcohol-substance abuse and youth delinquent behaviors.

The Aneth, Alamo and To'Hajiilee communities lack law enforcement and other resources that make the western model of justice successful in rural and frontier areas of the Navajo Nation. These specialty courts have coordinators that utilize a multi-disciplinary approach. The Aneth Community Court under the leadership of Judge Irene Black has offered a unique and successful model for restorative justice. Their outcomes are not to close cases, but to get the participants well and rehabilitated which corresponds well with traditional teachings and fundamental law. **The Judicial Districts would like to thank former Chief Justice Herb Yazzie for all his support, guidance and vision to address justice needs through the lens of Navajo Diné Restorative Justice principles.**

Message from Summit Planning member:

Domestic Violence, alcohol abuse and suicide are the top three issues in the Navajo Nation. Communities are aware of the needs and the barriers. A Tribal Action Planning effort needs to include youth and community in the development of actionable and realistic achievable efforts to be effective.

Other areas of concern include housing and culturally appropriate behavioral health services for veterans. The new Veterans Act that created an advisory council is a good effort by the President's office to address the needs of veterans in the Navajo Nation.

There are also efforts by other Executive Branch departments to address: communication, telecommunication, child care, and education.

Working together, using data and community needs, a Tribal Action Plan can be a living document, to implement institutional and regularly policy changes or development.

One of the ideas that you may want to think of is working with Indian Health Services to get more clinical behavioral health providers available in rural communities. This may include asking the VA for psychologists and psychiatrists sta-

tioned at the local Indian Health Services. As a tribe, the federal consultation process would be an opportunity to promote these examples of institutional policy changes that would improve the quality of life for Navajos across the Navajo Nation. Good luck with your strategic planning. If you need assistance or information from our experiences, do not hesitate to contact us at: reginaroanhorse@navajo-nsn.gov or 505-908-2817.

Sincerely,

Regina Roanhorse, Court Administrator.