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NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
RANKING MEMBER

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY, AND
SECONDARY EDUCATION

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Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on THUD, Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives

Mike Quigley
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on THUD, Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member Quigley,

I am requesting \$2,913,204 under the FY 24 HUD-Economic Development Initiative program for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe's proposal to fund construction for an Early Childhood Learning Center.

The construction site for the Early Learning Child Center (ELCC) is a public facility and will have two phases for development and implementation. It will be located on Pascua Yaqui Reservation at a site that was chosen specifically by the Pascua Yaqui Tribe (PYT) for further expansion of its culture & educational services. The launching of the center's 6am-6pm operations is set to begin in August 2024.

The Strategic Goals for the Early Learning Childcare Center

1. Create a free/affordable and safe quality early learning childcare center with resources and specific services that focus on Yaqui language, culture, and traditions.
2. Integrate critical educational components such as the S.T.E.M. AND S.T.E.A.M. with the critical elements of Yaqui language, culture, traditions, and history.
3. Create collaborations with government agencies, Arizona public colleges/universities/schools, to help with gaining skills for employment or attending college throughout the nation.
4. Hold intellectual growth and professional growth workshops to create structured federal and state core curriculum with indigenous historical Yaqui narrative and culturally responsive to address traditions, social, emotional and language to equip tribal members.

Phase 1 is construction of a 19,145 sq. ft. facility to include: eight (8) classrooms with shared teacher pod to serve 116 children aged 0-6, also an Infant room with attached lactation/nursing room to serve eight children aged 0-1, and two age-appropriate covered playgrounds located centrally between the administration offices and the multipurpose room/kitchen buildings. Phase 2 of the ELCC construction is 2,494 sq. ft. and includes two additional classrooms to serve 40 children aged group of 7-8 years old.

The estimated project cost of the Early Learning Center for both phases is \$15,607,892. The project cost for Phase 1 only is \$13,088,532. A total of \$9,906,626 has been secured for the project through Discretionary Funds from Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) FY19-23 and Department of Treasury American Rescue Plan Act funds. A \$2,913,204 Congressional Directed HUD-EDI grant will allow PYT to begin construction, with the balance of the funding for Phase 1 emanating from the CCDF FY 2024 allocation.

The success of building and implementing a solid learning environment with spiritual healing begins with this ELCC public facility and will incorporate structured project-based, hands-on Yaqui inherent and tear down social barriers and social challenges and allow PYT Council to focus on culturally responsiveness by rebuilding with positive learning environments and spiritual healing. With this public facility constructed the Social Services Department will help to preserve and integrate important cultural and learning components to address educational needs of Indigenous children and the PYT community. Research conducted by Nobel Laurette James Hackman unveils the depth of an investment in early childhood learning. Hackman states that for every \$1 invest equates to \$16 return on that investment.

This investment will help to create a Tribe that is socially, emotionally, fiscally, physically, culturally, and linguistically healthier. The project meets eligibility requirements, is ready to begin and able to obligate funds within a year.

Thank you for your consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress