



# TRIBAL LAW AND POLICY INSTITUTE

*Serving Native Communities Since 1996*

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June 24, 2021

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To Our Circle of Supporters,

June is Pride Month, a time to celebrate the diverse and beautiful lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit (LGBTQ2S+) community while remembering and acknowledging the contributions of those who have and continue to fight for equality. The celebration and support of our LGBTQ2S+ relatives can be seen and felt in Tribal communities. Many of the efforts and work on the ground are largely attributed to the youth of our communities who are advocating for a return to and stronger acknowledgement of Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding our LGBTQ2S+ relatives.

We can see this in Tribal Pride celebrations organized and run by Tribal youth across Indian Country. Alray Nelson, a citizen of the Diné Nation and founder of the [Coalition for Diné Equality](#), an organization that works to advance indigenous LGBTQ+ equality, [spoke recently with NPR about his experience organizing Diné Pride](#), a celebration of the Navajo LGBTQ2S+ community in Window Rock, Arizona. He spoke about the sacred roles LGBTQ2S+ Navajos had within the community and the importance of their presence within the Navajo community. Diné Pride is a way of reclaiming those teachings and sharing that knowledge and letting LGBTQ2S+ Navajos know that “it’s OK to be who you are.”

Recently in the Oglala Sioux community, Tribal youth interns sponsored a resolution to make June LGBTQ2S+ Pride Month for the Oglala Sioux Tribe to celebrate and uplift the LGBTQ2S+ community. With support from the Office of the Vice President of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, these young leaders have organized a first of its kind, reservation-wide celebration complete with a series of events focusing on supporting and uplifting LGBTQ2S+ youth in the community culminating in a [Woitan Wicayuwitapi \(PRIDE Gathering\)](#). The Tribal Law and Policy Institute’s Tribal Youth Resource Center (TYRC) facilitated trauma/healing informed sessions for youth, along with peer-led sessions utilizing the TYRC Youth Ambassadors.

The focus on supporting LGBTQ2S+ in Tribal communities is of vital importance to the health and well-being of our Tribal communities. The [National Congress of American Indians Policy Research Center](#) reports that “LGBT young adults who reported high levels of family rejection during adolescence were: more than eight times more likely to have attempted

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suicide; about six times more likely to report high levels of depression; and more than three times more likely to use illegal drugs compared with peers from families that reported no or low levels of family rejection.” These issues follow our young relatives into adulthood. Many transgender Natives face workplace discrimination and low rates of full-time employment. More than half of LGBT Natives are food insecure and 1 in 3 children being raised by Native same-sex couples are living below the federal poverty level. (NCAI Policy Research Center)

Celebrating Pride in our Tribal communities requires celebrating the vitality and spirit our LGBTQ2S+ relatives bring to our communities while affirming and supporting their identities. There are numerous resources available to inform and assist community members, families and practitioners in creating safe and welcoming environments for their LGBTQ2S+ relatives.

- [WeRNative](#), a comprehensive health resource for Native youth by Native youth, has [resources](#) to help youth and families honor LGBTQ2S+ youth and protect them from suicide.
- [The Center for Tribes](#) has developed resources for community members and tribal child welfare professionals in supporting Native LGBTQ2S+ youth. You can find a [webinar](#) discussing the historical roles and identities of Native LGBTQ2S+ people, and a [resource list](#) and [webinar](#) sharing information designed to encourage tribal child welfare professionals to think through how they can better support Native LGBTQ2S+ youth.
- The [Tribal Youth Resource Center](#) (TYRC) recently facilitated a workshop at the 2021 OJJDP Tribal Youth Virtual National Conference, entitled [Building the Capacity of Tribal Youth Programs to Prevent and Reduce Juvenile Delinquency with Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Youth](#). On Wednesday, June 30th, TYRC is hosting an interactive online learning event, Knowledge Exchange: PRIDE on the Pine Ridge Reservation designed to share the experience, planning strategy, implementation, and initial outcomes of the Oglala Sioux Tribe PRIDE Month activities. You can register for the event [here](#).

Join the Tribal Law and Policy Institute in celebrating our LGBTQ2S+ relatives and honor the love they bring to our communities.

In community,  
TLPI