

Minutes

Indigenous Advisory Council

Friday, January 9, 2026

12:30 PM PST – 2:30 PM PST

In-Person Meeting Location: Seattle City Hall 600 4th Ave, Seattle, WA 98104

Room 370; [Instructions for visiting Seattle City Hall \(bus access, parking, & building access\)](#)

Remote Meeting Location: Microsoft Teams

Members Present

Councilmember Jay Mills, Councilmember Jeremy Takala, Tia Yazzie, Suzanne Sailto, Eddie Sherman, and Jaci McCormack

Members Excused

Councilmember Donny Stevenson, Derrick Belgarde, and Esther Lucero

Meeting Guests

Mei-Li Thomas, Department of Education and Early Learning; Francesca Murnan, Office of Intergovernmental Relations

Items

Number	Topic	Time
1	Welcome and Opening Blessing	5 min
2	Approval of the Agenda (January) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approved without changes. Approval of the Minutes (December) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approved without changes.	5 min
3	Member Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• IAC members completed introductions and welcomed Eddie Sherman in the role of Position 8.	10 min
4	Department of Education and Early Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff from the Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) returned to share updates on the development of an Implementation and Evaluation Plan for the Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise Levy (FEPPL) that that was approved by about 80% of Seattle voters in November 2025. The levy will provide \$1.3 billion in funding from 2026-2032 with a focus on three stages of youth development:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ready to Start will provide support prenatal care and support through preschool education;○ Ready to Learn will provide expanded learning support, five new school based health centers available to all Seattle students, and expanded school and safety and health services; and	35 min

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- **Ready to Launch** will improve access to college and access to high-demand careers including trades and public sector jobs.
 - Staff shared an opening on the [Levy Oversight Committee](#) and encouraged information sharing among Native communities.
 - Staff reviewed the timeline for developing the implementation and evaluation legislation that will be transmitted to Seattle City Council in Spring 2026. DEEL seeks to partner with local organizations that serve Indigenous families in developing the Implementation and Evaluation Plan.
 - IAC members asked about who DEEL has been engaged with and learned that DEEL has engaged with national and local organizations to gain a better understanding of the landscape and programming that supports Tribal and urban Native communities.
 - IAC members expressed interest in improving data collection about the number of Native students and families participating in DEEL programs. DEEL acknowledged the opportunities for improving reach and impact in Native communities.
 - IAC members shared information about Tribal efforts to improve child outcomes through culturally relevant early learning providers. IAC members discussed the importance of culturally relevant programming and the challenges of sustainability funding strategies for early learning and childcare services in Tribal and urban Native communities.
 - IAC members decided to support DEEL's engagement efforts in February and will employ a small workgroup to assist with planning and implementation of 1-3 co-hosted community events to ensure more Native priorities and perspectives are integrated into the Implementation and Evaluation Plan.

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Office of Intergovernmental Relations

20 min

- Staff shared updates on citywide efforts to improve training opportunities for City staff to learn directly, and with reciprocity, from Tribal and urban Native leaders about trust and treaty rights, Tribal sovereignty, Tribal governance, Native history, culture, protocols, and appropriate ways to engage with Tribes and urban Indian organizations. This builds on the work that began in 2024 to address commitments that were made at the 2023 Tribal Nations Summit and builds on the IAC's feedback to improve Tribal and urban Native engagement across the City.
 - Staff reviewed learning objectives to be addressed in three modules: Module 1 build a shared language, explore the basics of Tribal Relations and Native engagement, practice a process of accountability; Module 2 will describe commonly shared worldviews and values, history and defining features of Seattle-area Tribal Nations and Native communities, and identify current priorities; and Module 3 will help staff understand principles and differences of effective Tribal engagement and consultation and Native engagement, as well as determine when and how to engage with Tribes and urban Indian organization to shape City work
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- IAC members will continue providing review and support in developing these trainings that will encourage actionable engagement with City staff.
 - Staff and members discussed and approved sharing known IAC priorities with representatives of the Mayor’s Transition Team. IAC members discussed priorities that have been identified related to improving early interventions for youth who are really struggling to build a sense of cultural connection and belonging; build understanding about Tribal Nations’ positions related to energy transmission and the development of data centers; invest in infrastructure that connects across community needs like an Indigenous community center and increased business development. Other priorities areas included investment in culturally relevant land stewardship, gender-based violence services, food security, youth development, healthcare, and housing.
 - Staff and IAC members discussed an opportunity to support a Native Civic Engagement Day. Discussion around the known interest and needs among connecting Native-led organizations and residents to City of Seattle programs and services. Discussions of opportunities for the IAC to co-host/sponsor an event at City Hall to strength relationships and increase knowledge and awareness of City programs and services among Native communities. IAC members supported continued discussion and planning for a Native Civic Engagement gathering in 2026.

6	Old Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staffing update<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The new IAC Liaison will join Department of Neighborhoods in January 2026 and staff the February 2026 IAC meeting• Annual Work Plan<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share the work plan electronically with elected officials and schedule meetings where IAC members can discuss their priorities	15 min
7	Member Announcements <ul style="list-style-type: none">• IAC member shared about the Ocean to Table program held last year in partnership with Seattle Public Schools.	Up to 5 min
8	Hybrid Public Comment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were no requests for public comment.	Up to 10 min
9	Closing & Next Steps	
