

FEMA Commemorates National Native American Heritage Month

Release Date: ??? 17, 2021

WASHINGTON -- November is [National Native American Heritage Month](#) in which we observe and honor the rich history, culture and contributions of our nation's first peoples.

As President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. highlights in his 2021 National Native American Heritage Month [proclamation](#), American Indian and Alaska Native peoples have represented unyielding perseverance, “Despite a painful history marked by unjust federal policies of assimilation and termination.”

“Every day, we are working to advance our mission to ensure our programs are fully accessible to all communities,” said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. “Tribal nations remain at the forefront of those efforts, and we are committed to helping meet their unique needs which have been exacerbated by climate change and the pandemic.”

With 574 federally recognized tribal nations that govern an estimated 100 million acres of indigenous land across the United States, native peoples have confronted the effects of climate change using innovative and traditional key mitigation measures dating back thousands of years. As a nation, and as an agency, we have the opportunity to develop future mitigation efforts that are inspired by techniques implemented by native peoples.

Administrator Criswell has heard directly from tribal leaders and community members throughout the year about the first-hand impacts and challenges they continue to face as a result of climate change. They voiced the ongoing threats to their ecosystems, water infrastructure, public safety, heritage, traditions and the need for increased funding and technical assistance to address these disproportionate impacts.

Through pre-disaster programs such as FEMA’s Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) and the \$6.8 billion in funding provided through



FEMA

President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal, tribal nations can access the resources needed to assist in mitigating the current and future impacts of climate change.

The observance of National Native American Heritage Month is also representative of FEMA's dedication to further racial equity and uplift the agency's core values -- compassion, fairness, integrity and respect. This month and every month, FEMA remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting tribal nations as they build resilient and prepared communities.

FEMA also recognizes its Tribal Employee Resource Group (FERG), established earlier this year to help foster a diverse and inclusive workplace. The Tribal FERG is a voluntary, employee-led group that will assist with recruitment and outreach events, organize networking and mentoring opportunities and host commemorative, cultural, educational and social events.

