

Oct-Nov 2026

BAKERSFIELD AMERICAN INDIAN HEALTH PROJECT

NEWSLETTER

Supporting Families, Health & Heritage

BAIHP continues to make a difference in the lives of local families through programs, outreach, and cultural events. Our work spans a variety of areas, including housing assistance, behavioral health, disability support, and maternal care, helping individuals connect with valuable resources.

Through our Youth Gathering of Native Americans (GONA) 2026 event, BAIHP welcomed youth and families for cultural education, traditional storytelling, food, raffles, and helpful resources.

The gathering offered participants an opportunity to share experiences, learn together, and celebrate their cultural connections.

BAIHP is proud to support a community that values resilience, cultural heritage, and the well-being of future generations. By working alongside families, local partners, and other organizations, we continue to create opportunities that help people thrive.

Together, we are building a healthier future while honoring the heritage and traditions that connect generations.





Top News

Join the BAIHP on Saturday, November 21, 2026, to celebrate Native American Heritage Month and honor the rich cultures and contributions of American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

BAIHP Updates

On September 26–27, BAIHP attended the Honoring Our Ancestors Powwow at CSUB. The event included craft vendors, food booths, traditional dancing, and singing.

Bakersfield American B·A·I·H·P Indian Health Project

Our Feathers Soaring Higher

www.BakersfieldAIHP.org

CEO Update

Throughout the past months, BAIHP has focused on strengthening services and supporting community well-being. Our priorities included housing stability, access to care, disability support, and maternal health as we prepare to celebrate Native American Heritage Month.

Housing Assistance & New Beginnings
BAIHP's Housing Assistance Program offers rental assistance, transitional housing, permanent housing support, and move-in essentials for formerly incarcerated adults. The program serves individuals ages 18 and older who were previously incarcerated in a California state prison, prioritizing those recently released or currently on state parole. Call (661) 327-4030 to learn more.

Medical Support & Updates
We continue working to strengthen medical, dental, and vision referral coordination and follow-up. Our referral-based medical program helps eligible community members connect with providers and resources. Kern County HICAP's free webinar on November 13 at 10 a.m. will cover Medicare and Social Security updates for 2027. Call 1-800-434-0222 to register.



Behavioral Health & Care Coordination
Emotional well-being is an important part of overall health. BAIHP's behavioral health services support individuals and families as they navigate challenges and work toward wellness. Also, our Enhanced Care Management (ECM) team helps eligible members coordinate care, navigate referrals, and connect with community resources. If you or a family member needs support, contact BAIHP at (661) 327-4030 to learn about available services and eligibility.

Kern Regional Center & Disability Support
Supporting individuals with developmental disabilities and their families is part of our commitment to accessible services. Our proposed service arrangement with Kern Regional Center (KRC) outlines a role for BAIHP in providing developmental disability services, with KRC offering training and technical assistance. Our goal is to help families feel informed, included, and supported.

Birth Equity & Family Health
BAIHP's Enhanced Care Management Birth Equity program focuses on connecting eligible Native pregnant Medi-Cal members in Kern County with culturally responsive support.

Through Tribal Liaison outreach, coordinated referrals, and doula partnerships, this work addresses barriers to maternal care and helps families navigate available services. Supporting healthy beginnings means listening to families and respecting their needs and cultures.

Celebrating Native American Heritage Month
Join our 6th Annual Native American Heritage Celebration on November 21, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at the CSU Bakersfield Student Union. Doors open at 9:30 a.m.

Thank you to our staff, Board of Directors, partners, Veterans, and community members for helping us strengthen support for the families we serve.

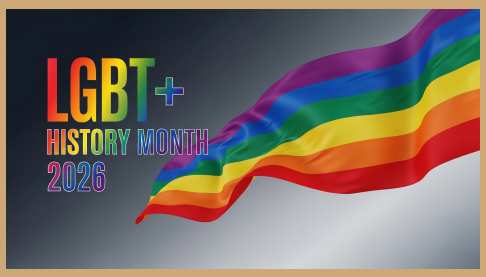
Understanding Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer Identities

LGBTQ+ History Month, observed annually from October 1 through October 31, celebrates the history and achievements of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people.

It also provides an opportunity to educate others about the experiences and contributions of Indigenous people within the LGBTQ+ community, highlighting the intersection of sexuality, gender identity, and culture.

LGBTQ History Month was first celebrated in October 1994 and founded by Rodney Wilson, the first openly gay public-school teacher in Missouri. While widely celebrated, it also faced criticism from conservative groups who called it "indoctrination."

At its core, LGBTQ History Month promotes understanding, acceptance, and honesty about LGBTQ+ identities. The community is represented by various acronyms, including 2SLGBTQIA+, reflecting its diverse identities.



What does "2S" mean? The term "Two-Spirit" was introduced in 1990 by Ojibwe elder Myra Laramee. Traditionally, some Indigenous cultures recognized individuals who embodied both masculine and feminine qualities. These individuals held distinct roles within their communities, with some recognizing Two-Spirit people as a third gender and Two-Spirit women as a fourth.

Practices varied among tribes, as did the terms used in their Native languages. However, many shared similarities, including specialized roles in traditional arts such as weaving, basket-making, and leather work.

In some Indigenous communities, Two-Spirit individuals held respected roles as healers and ceremonial leaders. In certain tribes, they were also associated with good fortune in love and formed same-sex relationships. Their contributions to cultural and spiritual life made them valued community members.

You may also encounter the term "Indigiqueer," coined in 2004 by Plains Cree filmmaker TJ Cuthand. It describes how a person's gender identity and sexual or romantic orientation intersect with their Indigenous identity.

You can identify as both Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer, though some feel "Two-Spirit" implies a strict gender binary. Ultimately, the terms you choose to use depend on your personal journey and connection to your Indigenous identity.

Content provided by Cheyenne Bond, Cultural Coordinator

GONA: Strengthening Cultural Connections

On October 17, 2026, BAIHP hosted its Youth Gathering of Native Americans (GONA) event.

GONA is a meaningful cultural gathering that brings people from different tribes together to explore four themes: Belonging, Mastery, Interdependence, and Generosity.

The gathering provides an opportunity for individuals to build relationships, exchange experiences, and strengthen their sense of belonging.

The event included two sessions: one for youth and another for parents and caregivers.





These sessions encouraged participants to explore their cultural identities, learn from one another, and connect with others in a welcoming environment.

Through conversations and shared activities, attendees strengthened relationships and reflected on the importance of preserving their cultural heritage.

The gathering created space for friendships to grow, knowledge to be shared, and meaningful connections to develop.

During the Interdependence session, youth and adults came together to exchange ideas about keeping their culture alive for future generations.

These conversations highlighted the value of learning from one another and working together to maintain strong cultural ties.

BAIHP would like to thank the Chalon Indian Nation for providing sweet frybread for attendees.

We also extend our gratitude to all the parents and caregivers who take the initiative to keep culture at the forefront of their youth's lives.



Honoring Indigenous Peoples' Day: Preserving Tribal Histories

Indigenous Peoples' Day is a holiday celebrated on the second Monday of October, which coincides with Columbus Day.

Rather than focusing on Columbus's "discovery" of the Americas, Indigenous Peoples' Day provides an opportunity to honor and recognize the Indigenous nations that have existed in the Americas for tens of thousands of years. The descendants of these nations and tribes continue to thrive today despite the lasting effects of colonization.



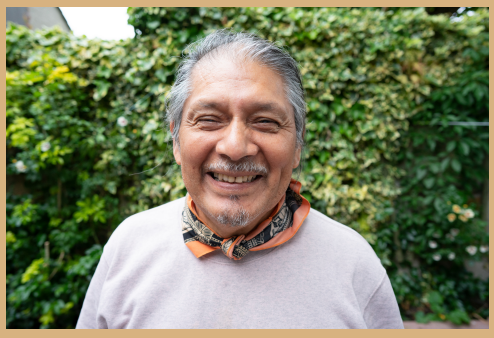


While the history of Christopher Columbus is still taught today, Indigenous history and perspectives have often been overlooked or misrepresented. In 2022, the California Indian Education Act was established to encourage the formation of California Indian Education Task Forces, which work to promote accurate education about local tribes.

This encourages local educational agencies to form partnerships with California Indian Tribes in their area and develop a shared understanding of local tribal histories.

We at BAIHP are glad to see California taking steps to ensure that the histories of local tribes are recognized and preserved.

We hope to see similar partnerships established across the United States so that tribal histories are not forgotten or overlooked, but instead recognized and respected for generations to come.



Save the Date:
6th Annual Native American Heritage Celebration



Join the Bakersfield American Indian Health Project (BAIHP) on Saturday, November 21, 2026, to celebrate Native American Heritage Month and honor the rich cultures and contributions of American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

The event will take place from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with doors opening at 9:30 a.m., at California State University, Bakersfield, Student Union, 9001 Stockdale Hwy, Bakersfield, CA.

Parking is available in lots K1 and K2, with designated parking for elders and vendors in Lot M. Free lunch and giveaways will be provided while supplies last.

BAIHP will also present its prestigious annual Warrior Award to honor an individual for their work on behalf of the American Indian and Alaska Native community.

We hope you'll join us for this special day of culture, community, and celebration!

Native American Veterans: Strength and Service

Veterans Day is a time to honor the brave men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces. For Native American communities, this day carries a particularly deep and complex history.

Indigenous people have served this country in every major conflict, often while facing discrimination, forced assimilation, and the continued struggle to protect their own cultures, lands, and sovereignty.

Native Americans have one of the highest rates of military service per capita of any ethnic group in the United States. Indigenous warriors have answered the call to serve for generations, bringing with them values rooted in courage, responsibility, family, and community.

For many Native people, service is not simply about wearing a uniform. It reflects a longstanding tradition of protecting their people, caring for future generations, and standing strong in the face of adversity.

One of the most recognized contributions of Native American service members was the use of Indigenous languages during World War II.

The Navajo Code Talkers, along with other Native American code talkers, used their



Native languages to transmit sensitive military communications that helped protect Allied operations.

Their contributions were invaluable, yet many returned home to communities where their languages and cultural identities had been suppressed through government policies and boarding schools.

Their story reminds us of the strength of Indigenous identity and the importance of preserving our languages for generations to come.

Today, Native American veterans remain important pillars of their communities. They are parents, grandparents, mentors, cultural knowledge keepers, and leaders.

Their experiences and sacrifices deserve recognition not only on Veterans Day but throughout the year.

Many carry stories of service that are rarely told, making it important for families and communities to create opportunities to listen, learn, and preserve their legacies.

As we recognize Veterans Day, let us take time to honor the Native veterans in our families and communities.

Attend a local Veterans Day event, listen to a veteran's story, thank those who served, or support programs that address the unique needs of Indigenous veterans.

Most importantly, let us remember that behind every uniform is a person, a family, and a community forever shaped by their service.

To our Native American veterans: Thank you for your courage, your sacrifice, and your continued commitment to your people. Your strength, dedication, and service to our country are deeply appreciated .

Your service is part of our history; your strength is part of our legacy, and your stories deserve to be carried forward for generations to come.

Current Job Openings at BAIHP



The following are the current job openings at BAIHP. For more information about our positions, please visit the BAIHP Careers page at bakersfieldaihp.org/careers/.

Director of Behavioral Health (Behavioral Health Department, Full-time in Bakersfield)

The Director of Behavioral Health Services provides strategic, clinical, and operational leadership for all Behavioral Health programs at BAIHP. The position is responsible for the planning, implementation, oversight, and evaluation of behavioral health services to ensure the delivery of high-quality, patient-centered care that reflects BAIHP's mission and integrated healthcare model.

Those who are interested in applying and meet the minimum requirements for a position can apply through our company website.

Celebrating Native American Heritage Month

November is Native American Heritage Month, a time to honor the histories, cultures, traditions, and contributions of Indigenous peoples across the United States. It is an opportunity to recognize the original peoples of this land, celebrate the strength of our communities, and reflect on the generations who have fought to preserve their identities, languages, traditions, and ways of life.

Long before the United States existed, Indigenous nations had established thriving communities, systems of governance, trade networks, agricultural practices, and deep relationships with the natural world. Our ancestors carried knowledge of the land, traditional medicines, storytelling, and cultural practices that continue to guide our communities today.

Indigenous history is not simply a chapter in America's past. It is a living history that continues through our families, our Elders, our children, and the traditions we carry forward.

However, Native American Heritage Month is also a time to acknowledge the painful history Indigenous peoples have endured. Colonization, forced relocation, broken treaties, and federal policies aimed at assimilation caused lasting harm to Native communities.



Generations of Indigenous children were taken from their families and sent to boarding schools where they were punished for speaking their Native languages and practicing their cultures.

Despite these injustices, our ancestors persevered. They protected their knowledge, maintained their traditions, and created pathways for future generations to reconnect with their identities.

Today, Indigenous communities continue to demonstrate resilience, strength, and leadership. Native people are educators, healthcare professionals, artists, veterans, advocates, Tribal leaders, and knowledge keepers.

We continue to protect our sovereignty, revitalize our languages, advocate for our families, and address health and social disparities that affect our communities. Our cultures are not relics of the past; they are living, evolving, and essential to who we are.

Native American Heritage Month also reminds us of the importance of honoring our Elders. They carry stories, teachings, and lived experiences that connect us to our ancestors.

By listening to their wisdom, supporting cultural programs, and encouraging younger generations to learn their histories, we help ensure that our traditions remain strong.

As we celebrate this month, let us remember that honoring Indigenous peoples requires more than recognition in November.

It means respecting Tribal sovereignty, supporting Native-led organizations, learning the true history of this land, and creating opportunities for Indigenous voices to be heard throughout the year.

Our ancestors made it possible for us to stand proudly in our identities today. We honor their sacrifices by continuing to learn, heal, advocate, and care for our communities.

Homeless Youth Awareness Month

During Youth Awareness Month, we recognize the important contributions young people make every day.

This month is dedicated to raising awareness about the needs of youth, promoting healthy development, and encouraging community involvement. It also highlights the importance of providing young people with access to resources, opportunities, and guidance as they navigate different stages of life.

Let us continue working together to create safe, supportive environments where all young people can succeed and reach their full potential.





BAIHP is proud to participate as a vendor at the Second Annual Youth Connect Event, supporting young people ages 14–24 who are experiencing housing instability. Join us for this event, sponsored by the Youth Action Board of the Bakersfield-Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative.

🗓️ November 6, 2026

🕙 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

📍 1830 Truxtun Ave., Bakersfield, CA

The event will be held in the southeast parking lot at the corner of H Street and Truxtun Avenue.

Admission is free, and attendees can access a variety of resources, including employment assistance, clothing, games, food, and more!

Need a ride to the event? Call (661) 636-4921.

Stop by to learn about BAIHP's housing and supportive services and connect with valuable resources available to youth and young adults.

We look forward to seeing you there!



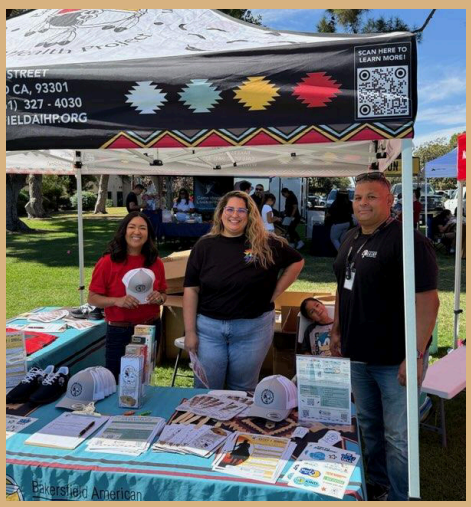
BAIHP at the Honoring Our Ancestors Powwow

On September 26–27, BAIHP participated in the Honoring Our Ancestors Powwow held at CSUB. The event featured craft booths, food vendors, dancing, and singing.

Powwows are important cultural gatherings that bring Indigenous people together to celebrate their cultures, honor their ancestors, and strengthen community connections.

The drum is often considered the heartbeat of the powwow, representing unity and bringing individuals together through song.

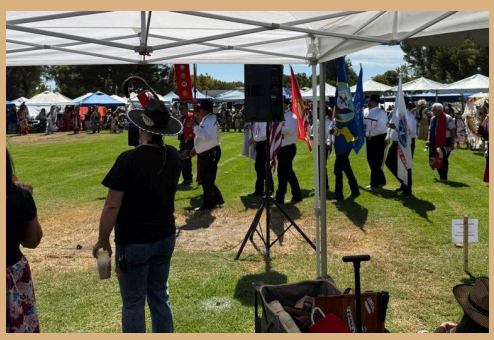




Dancers wear regalia that may reflect their tribal identity, family history, personal experiences, and cultural teachings. Each piece can hold deep meaning, with designs, colors, feathers, beadwork, and other materials reflecting individual and community traditions. Powwows are also opportunities for non-Native visitors to learn about Indigenous cultures.

Visitors should follow the guidance of organizers, ask permission before photographing individuals, and respect designated sacred or private activities. Powwows are more than celebrations. They represent resilience, cultural preservation, and the continued strength of Indigenous peoples.

By honoring tribal differences and respecting cultural protocols, we can recognize the diversity of Indigenous nations while celebrating the connections that bring communities together.



Native Culture Trivia



What is one reason acorns were an important traditional food for some California Native communities?

A. They could be stored for later use.

B. They grew only during winter.

C. They never needed preparation.

D. They were used only for decoration.

E. They could be eaten straight from the tree without processing.

F. They were used only to feed animals.



What were traditional bedrock mortars commonly used for by some Native American tribal communities throughout California?

A. Measuring rainfall.

B. Storing drinking water.

C. Carving roads through mountains.

D. Pounding acorns and other foods.

E. Making glass bottles.

F. Building metal cooking pots.



The Tachi Yokuts and other Native peoples of California's Central Valley used tule reeds for many purposes. What is one example?

A. Making glass windows.

B. Building mats and boats.

C. Producing metal tools.

D. Making plastic containers.

E. Creating electrical wires.

F. Manufacturing concrete.



Pumpkin Banana Muffins



Author: American Diabetes Association
Prep Time: 10 min.
Cook Time: 20 min.
Servings: 12

Ingredients

1. White whole wheat flour - **1 1/2 cup**
2. Brown sugar - **1/3 cup**
3. Baking soda - **1 tsp**
4. Salt - **1/2 tsp**
5. Pumpkin pie spice - **2 tsp**
6. Eggs - **2**
7. Pumpkin puree - **1 cup**
8. Canola oil - **3 tbsp**
9. Banana(s) (mashed) - **1 small**
10. Vanilla extract - **1 tsp**
11. Walnuts (finely chopped) - **1/4 cup**

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F and line a muffin tin with liners.
2. Mix flour, sugar, baking soda, salt, and pumpkin pie spice in a large bowl.
3. In a small bowl, mix together the eggs, pumpkin puree, oil, banana, and vanilla.
4. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and stir to combine. Gently fold in the walnuts.
5. Scoop the batter into the muffin tins and bake for 18-20 minutes, until a toothpick comes out clean.
6. Serve and enjoy!

Employee Spotlight

Evelyn recently completed 500 internship hours for her Master of Social Work (MSW) program through Walden University at BAIHP, where she provided individual therapy, facilitated groups, completed assessments, and supported families involved with



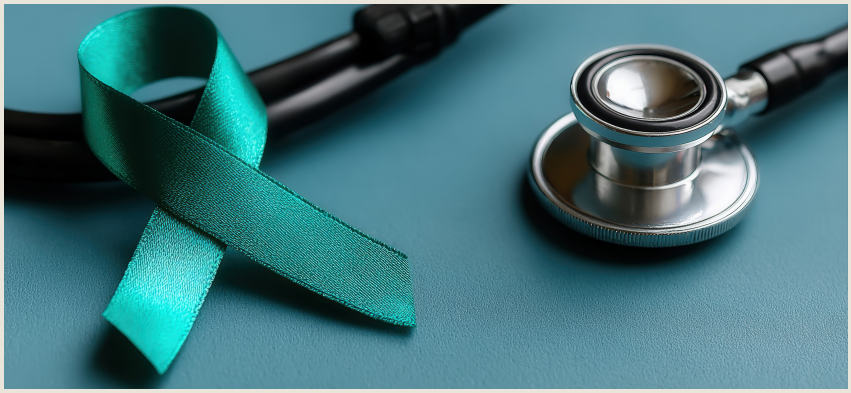
ICWA through advocacy, court support, and resource navigation. This experience strengthened her clinical skills through LCSW supervision and deepened her understanding of culturally responsive social work and the importance of culture, family, and community when serving American Indian and Alaska Native individuals and families. She is working toward ASW registration and future LCSW licensure.

Subscribe to our Newsletter

Paypal venmo

Donate to BAIHP

Healing and Preventing Sexual Violence in Indigenous Communities



Sexual assault in Indigenous communities is an issue deeply connected to historical trauma, colonialism, and the ongoing fight for Tribal sovereignty and justice. For generations, Indigenous peoples have experienced violence through colonization, forced displacement, and systems that disrupted traditional family structures and community protections. These historical harms continue to affect the safety and well being of Native communities today.

Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit individuals face disproportionate rates of sexual violence. However, these statistics represent more than numbers; they represent our relatives, our families, and our communities. Every survivor deserves to be heard, believed, and supported without shame or judgment.

Addressing sexual assault requires culturally grounded, survivor centered approaches that honor Indigenous values, restore trust, and recognize the importance of community healing. Traditional teachings often emphasize respect, balance, interconnectedness, and responsibility to one another. These teachings can help guide prevention efforts while ensuring that survivors retain control over their healing journeys.

Access to culturally safe healthcare, advocacy, mental health services, and justice systems is essential. Native survivors should not have to choose between receiving support and maintaining their connection to their culture or community. Tribal Nations, Indigenous led organizations, healthcare providers, and allies all have a role in creating environments where survivors feel safe.

Healing begins when we break the silence, challenge harmful attitudes, and hold perpetrators accountable. Protecting our relatives means believing survivors, teaching consent, and restoring the safety and dignity every person deserves.



Happy Birthday to BAIHP Staff for October and November!
Rosalyn Hammond (Oct. 6), Johnny Delgado (Oct. 15), Lawrence Salcido (Oct. 24), Shubhangi Shrivastava (Oct. 25), Suzanna Kiraly (Oct. 29), Michael Lara (Nov. 9)

501 40th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301
12308 Mountain Mesa Road, Lake Isabella, CA 93240

@TheBAIHP @BAIHP @BakersfieldAme1