

Evers Announces Tribal Initiatives in State Budget

Written by GOV Press Wisconsin
Tuesday, 26 February 2019 18:30

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New \$8 million, 36-bed youth wellness center, higher education grants for tribal college students, and using tribal gaming revenue for family services and elderly transportation top list.

MADISON – Today, Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes met with Wisconsin tribal leaders at the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College in Hayward to share details of several tribal initiatives in advance of Governor Tony Evers' budget address this Thursday.



"For far too long, the needs of our Native American communities have been neglected," said Lt. Gov. Barnes. "But under the leadership of Gov. Evers, those days are over. We're committed to listening to, working with, and investing in Wisconsin's tribal communities."

Key highlights of the governor's budget proposal include:

- Funding the next phase of the creation of an \$8 million, 36-bed youth wellness center to treat opioid addiction for both tribal and non-tribal populations;
- Increasing funding in higher education grants for tribal college students, as well as for the language revitalization grants program which go to schools on or near tribal lands to teach tribal heritage languages;
- Using tribal gaming revenue to increase funding for tribal family service grants and tribal elderly transportation grants that assist in providing transportation services for elderly persons.

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"The investments Gov. Evers is making in Wisconsin's tribal communities are well overdue, and we applaud the steps he's taking to support Native American children and families," said Michael Decorah, the Senior Intergovernmental Affairs Director for the St. Croix Chippewa Indians. "Wisconsin's tribal nations contribute immensely to the state of Wisconsin. We provide job opportunity, stimulate local economies, and are rich in culture. However, Native Americans throughout the state face some of the biggest gaps in opportunity, and these investments will help Native communities thrive. The St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin look forward to working with Gov. Evers in the coming years, and also look forward to seeing leaders in the legislature follow the governor's lead and work in a bi-partisanship manner to finally prioritize all families and kids in Wisconsin."

“My budget puts kids first—and that includes Native American kids,” said Gov. Evers. “I’m excited that our budget will make investments that will help Native American children, families, and communities thrive.”