

National Indian Health Board Health Policy Fellowship



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Yakima Nation

2018-19 National Indian Health
Board Health Policy Fellow

Hometown: Goldendale, WA

Education: Goldendale High School, current undergrad at Eastern Washington University

Major: Public Relations

I am currently a Project Coordinator at Yakama Nation Behavioral Health. With the grant I coordinate, we do a lot of health policy/protocol work in suicide prevention, intervention, and post-intervention. So my main motivation for applying to this fellowship program was to expand my knowledge of health policy and advocacy.

I hope to learn more about Indian health policy at Tribal levels, as well as at state and national levels. This fellowship provides all of these great resources and learning opportunities to enhance our skill level and knowledge when it comes to health policy and advocacy. I hope by the end of this fellowship I will be able to advance the health and wellbeing of my community and successfully advocate for my Tribal community's health issues.

What is an obstacle you have faced and overcome?

One obstacle I faced was working full-time managing a business called "Forever 21" in Spokane, WA while I attended Eastern Washington University as a full-time student. This was very difficult at times, because I was so far away from home. Plus with working full-time and going to school full-time I barely got to go home and visit my family. My family and I are very close, so this was tough.

Managing a business and leading a staff of 30 young adults and guiding them to reach company and store goals can be stressful at times. I overcame this by learning how to effectively manage my time. My schedule was pretty back-to-back every day but, I was able to push through to do both of these tasks. I overcame this obstacle by keeping my eye on the prize. I really wanted to finish my degree, so that one day I could come back and work for my Tribal community and serve my people. I have also taken pride in my work ethic and continued to work hard in both school and work. I managed to obtain a GPA of 3.6 at EWU and was promoted 3 times while I worked at Forever 21. My last promotion relocated me to Yakima, WA where I was given a higher position and helped open a brand new store that they built here. The last promotion and relocation brought me back to my Reservation. As much as I loved my job and the opportunities I had with the company, I felt the need to work for my Tribe and serve my people. That is how I ended up at Yakama Nation Behavioral Health.

My short-term goals are to continue to work on our health policies/protocols here at Yakama Nation Behavioral Health Services. I am currently in the process of working with other Project Coordinators here to create and maintain the "Yakama Nation Behavioral Health Coalition." I hope to improve the quality of services in our community.

My long-term goal is to continue to work with my Tribal community and community partners in a collaborative effort to provide high-quality professional services to our community members.

My advice to the younger generation who may be interested in working to improve the health of their people is to start while you are young! I would encourage today's youth to become active members of their community by joining their community's coalitions, boards, or youth councils. If youth do have these platforms available to them, I would highly encourage them to utilize them to voice their concerns and do advocacy work. It will put them ahead of the game when it comes to entering the healthcare field. You will gain real-life hands-on experience with your own community's issues.

I sit on several boards and coalitions as one of my duties here at YNBHS, and I have noticed that each lacks young advocates.

I would also recommend furthering your education, going to college, and majoring in a field that pertains to the type of work you are truly passionate about!