



The Navajo Nation
Yideeskáądi Nitsáhákees

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Navajo President Buu Nygren to sign legislation to change name of Social Services to Navajo Division for Children and Family Services

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. - The Navajo Nation Division of Social Services will have a new name on Friday.

It is now the Navajo Nation Division for Children and Family Services.

“Our division is the tribe’s leader for the Navajo peoples’ overall social well-being,” said Thomas Cody, for first time director of the Division for Children and Family Services. “We needed a new name so the people know clearly who we are and what we do. It’s simple.”

The Navajo Nation Council approved the name change without debate through Legislation 0143-24 last week during its summer session.

A ceremony to commemorate the name change will be Friday from 10 a.m. to noon at Navajo Nation Administration Building 2. Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren will sign the legislation then.

The name “Navajo Division for Children and Family Services” is the result of an intensive and inclusive strategic process that gathered input from division staff from all areas of service.

“The name change was not a whim decision,” Director Cody said. “This has been an objective of

the division staff since it was ignited by the division’s strategic planning process back in the summer of 2019.”

The best component of this strategy, he said, is that it was developed inclusively by the staff.

“This name change is a major accomplishment for them,” he said. “Its dedication to the effort did not waver, even while enduring the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The need for a name change was simple, said Mary Descheeny Reyna, interim deputy director.

“It was our belief the Division of Social Services name did not reflect what its services stand

for,” she said. “We offer many beneficial programs, but, with a name like Division of Social Services, the public could not see us providing anything beyond protective services.”

The division reported that a recent focus group showed that just by name alone, most people in the group thought the division’s only purpose was to remove children from poor home environments.



“Renaming our division aligns with our services which is case management, financial benefits, career development, childcare services, protective services, counseling, crisis intervention, family reunification and our message, *Yidees'káqdi Nitsáhákees Niha' Átchíní Bá* – future thinking for our children,” Cody said.

The division will unveil its new identity and catapult P.L. 102-477 reorganization efforts as soon as President Nygren signs the legislation, he said.

As a P.L. 102-477 organization, the Division of Children and Family Services will be able to provide

services that support both the social and economic well-being of all people.

“Our division is the tribe’s leader for the Navajo peoples’ overall social well-being.”

***– Thomas Cody, executive director,
Navajo Nation Division for Children and Family Services***

“This name change is a simple act with great benefits for the Navajo people,” Cody said. “As simple as

it seems, it will be the foundation of the division’s efforts to become a P.L. 102-477 organization. We believe positive social effects can flourish rapidly through self-sufficiency, benefiting our children and youth.”

P.L. 102-477 will allow for the division to operate as one division rather than be separated by our funding sources, he said.

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