



A COLLABORATIVE ARIZONA

**UPLIFTING TRIBAL COMMUNITIES AND
ENSURING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO
OPPORTUNITY**

From the Desk of Katie Hobbs

Arizona is proudly home to 22 tribes, each with its own rich history, culture, language, and land base. Together, we can collaborate to build a better future for Indigenous Peoples across our state. For too long, our leaders have failed to prioritize proactively working with tribes to address the challenges Indigenous Peoples face. From fixing education, to lowering the cost of everyday necessities, to finally addressing the impacts of prolonged droughts, I will work with tribes to solve these issues.

This plan lays out seven ways my administration will work with tribes and other stakeholders to make sure we live up to our ideal that everyone deserves the opportunity to succeed. We will:

- ***Actively engage tribal leaders in discussions and policymaking.***
- ***Increase and promote access to economic security for tribal communities.***
- ***Ensure that educating and preparing the next generation of leaders fully includes students in tribal communities.***
- ***Protect and expand the fundamental freedom to vote for everyone.***
- ***Build a fairer and more accountable justice system to better protect and serve tribal communities.***
- ***Expand access to health care, especially for our children.***
- ***Protect our water and adapt to a changing climate.***

I was born and raised right here in Arizona, and I know we can make our state the best place to live, work, and start a family. Our tribal communities are at the heart of our identity and our culture. As governor, I look forward to a strong partnership with you to put our state on a path to greater opportunity and prosperity.

– Secretary Katie Hobbs

TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY AND PARTNERSHIP

Each tribal community is an independent sovereign nation with a unique set of issues and priorities. Solving complex problems requires people coming together. That's why Katie's plan for tribal communities starts with making sure our state recognizes and brings together leaders to get the job done. As governor, Katie will:

Bring stakeholders together to comprehensively tackle the pressing issues facing Arizona's tribes.

- Respect tribal sovereignty and work together with tribal governments as true partners in solving problems that affect tribal communities and the state as a whole.
- Revitalize the Office of Tribal Relations, which has been underutilized, to work with indigenous communities across our state.
- Hire a dedicated Tribal Policy Advisor for the Ninth Floor to lead outreach and work with tribal governments, the governor's other policy advisors, and state and federal agencies to act as a catalyst to solve the most critical needs of tribal communities.

ECONOMIC SECURITY AND OPPORTUNITY

Tribal communities have been leading the way in entrepreneurship and creativity for hundreds of years, and Katie knows supporting their economic development will benefit everyone. As indigenous communities are essential partners in the state's economy, we must ensure the Arizona Commerce Authority commits to proactively working with key economic leaders, including the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, the Navajo Nation, the American Indian Chamber of Commerce, and the Arizona Office of Tourism. She knows that access to capital is critical, and many Native American-owned businesses face unequal lending access from large banks. That's why Katie will:

Make sure tribal communities benefit from investments.

- For too long tribal communities have been left out of the state's shared revenue pot. Katie will work with the state legislature to allow tribal nations to keep a portion of state transaction privilege taxes generated on their land. Tribal communities are economic engines that should have parity with other jurisdictions on tax policy.
- Consult with tribes to expand opportunities in tribal gaming policy.

Increase access to capital for startups, and women- and minority-owned businesses.

- Leverage a combination of tax credits, grants, special economic development zones in local communities — like the Pascua Yaqui’s successful agreement with the City of Tucson — and microloans to promote new business startups and growth in small but successful businesses.
- Develop a program administered by the Arizona Commerce Authority to provide fixed-rate loans and lines of credit to entrepreneurs through partnerships with local institutions.
- Foster partnerships between cities, tribal communities, and the Arizona Office of Tourism to develop new economic opportunities in tribal communities.

Promote economic opportunity, increase commerce, and cut red tape.

- Prioritize providing financial resources to assist tribes in implementing federally compliant travel ID cards for any tribal members who would like one so we can ensure secure and easy travel across borders and protect tribal sovereignty.

Supporting housing security for elders.

- Ensure that seniors receive the support they need to remain at home by funding a home repair and safety assistance program, which would help lower-income seniors make repairs to their homes. This includes financial assistance for common issues such as important plumbing repairs, safety products, and retrofitting entrances for accessibility.
- We must do more for our veterans to reduce homelessness by expanding funding to build new State Veterans Homes, which could be matched with federal dollars. Katie respects that Indigenous Peoples often serve in the armed forces, including at critical installations such as Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and Fort Huachuca. She will work to make sure funding is prioritized and accessible to reduce homelessness for indigenous veterans.

CHILD WELFARE

With the Indian Child Welfare Act at risk of being overturned by the Supreme Court, tribal communities and the state must work together to create a plan to protect indigenous children and every tribe’s sovereignty.

We must start by convening tribes and key stakeholders to provide input and shape legislation that will protect Native American tribes and children.

- By forming a coalition of tribes, key stakeholders, and legislators, we can identify the gaps left by overturning the Indian Child Welfare Act. Then we can collaborate on legislative solutions that respect tribal sovereignty and provide fair treatment for Native children. And we must ensure this includes a mandate that all efforts are made so Native children are protected from removal from

their families, tribes, and culture. We cannot allow a return to forced assimilation that would deeply harm Native children and erode cultural identity. By working with tribes across Arizona, we can create a compassionate and culturally appropriate response that will preserve tribal sovereignty.

THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

Every child in Arizona deserves access to a world-class education. Education will continue to be a key driver in economic prosperity. To advance educational opportunities for tribal communities, Katie will:

Invest in the next generation of leaders right here in Arizona's tribal communities.

- Expand opportunities for students to learn and preserve their Native languages, histories, and cultural practices. This will ensure the survival and continued vitality of Native American traditions.
- Work with tribal communities to increase the high school graduation rate and post-secondary attainment rate.

Support educators who are teaching tribal students.

- Ensure that educators who teach on or near reservations receive salary increases commensurate with other educators across Arizona to ensure those educators are able to do their best work for indigenous children.

Invest in the necessary infrastructure to ensure tribal students can succeed.

- Increase funding to tribal colleges to expand their impact on tribal communities.
- Invest in high-speed internet and improve transportation so that every student can easily get to school and stay connected.

THE RIGHT TO VOTE

As Secretary of State, Katie worked to expand ballot access in indigenous communities by helping voters with non-standard addresses register to vote. Katie has prioritized proactive outreach to tribal communities, from creating the first Tribal Outreach Coordinator position in the Secretary of State's Office to ensuring voter education materials are translated into Native languages. She has also included the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona as part of her Voter Community Advisory Council. As governor, Katie will build on her work to expand voter participation by:

Protecting and expanding the fundamental freedom to vote.

- Building on her work as Secretary of State, Katie will ensure tribal members have the opportunity to vote by expanding outreach and access to early voting in locations where tribal members frequently gather.
- Dedicating additional funding toward voter education and ballot access in indigenous languages.

A FAIRER, MORE ACCOUNTABLE JUSTICE SYSTEM

For too long, our state has not prioritized seeking justice for missing and murdered Indigenous Peoples, ensured Native Americans have leadership roles throughout our judicial system, or fully recognized the historic injustices these communities face. We will work to create and increase support for programs that address these critical issues, which Katie knows are actively harming local communities. That's why Katie will:

Bring together tribal communities, law enforcement, and social services to better protect and serve Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

- Build cooperative partnerships between tribal, local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to better respond to and investigate cases involving missing and murdered Indigenous Peoples, including human trafficking.
- Work with social service agencies, victims advocate offices, and key stakeholders to create comprehensive solutions that will have positive outcomes for impacted communities, including reforming barriers to prosecuting non-tribal members who commit heinous crimes.
- Review recommendations from state studies on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women to implement administrative and legislative actions to address this crisis.

Appoint more Indigenous People to government and judicial leadership roles.

- Prioritize and support Indigenous People and other people of color being appointed to judicial and court leadership roles and state commissions.

Recognize the injustices that indigenous communities have faced.

- Support efforts to investigate and uncover the sordid history of Native American boarding schools, including the tragedy of indigenous children burials.

ADEQUATE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected Native American communities in Arizona—both highlighting and exacerbating preexisting health inequities facing Indigenous Peoples. Yet tribes showed resilience and persistence. They embraced mitigation measures, including testing and vaccination, to save lives and protect communities. Still, tribal communities continue to face significant health challenges. As governor, Katie will:

Support tribal communities in their work with federal agencies on critical programs and resources.

- Direct state agencies and work with the legislature to provide comprehensive dental care to pregnant women and maintain the work requirement exemption for tribal members.
- Target new funding and resources, especially for tribal communities which have been hit hard by the opioid crisis and can benefit from more support for drug prevention and state funded treatments.

Expand health care for children across our state.

- According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, 1 in 10 Arizona children are uninsured, placing Arizona in 48th place for uninsured children. A June 2020 study by the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families reported that American Indian/Alaska Native children have the most uninsured children, with 21 percent not having health coverage. That's why Katie will work with the legislature to raise income eligibility for KidsCare and ensure a brighter future for our children by no longer leaving matching federal funds on the table.

Foster partnerships and provide additional resources to localize health care treatments and reduce maternal mortality.

- Indigenous communities have a long history of elevated cancer rates, especially in light of Arizona's history of uranium mining. Their communities deserve more easily accessible treatment options. Katie will increase partnerships in health care to have more cancer treatments offered locally for indigenous communities, such as treatments provided by the Tuba City Regional Health Care Corporation's Priority for Cancer Treatment program.
- The maternal mortality rate is four times higher for Indigenous women than white women. A key goal of Katie's agenda will be to reduce maternal mortality, which has disproportionately impacted mothers of color. She will work to improve AHCCCS care for pregnant and postpartum women by extending Medicaid coverage from 60 days to 12 months postpartum and dedicate specific funding to ADHS to implement the proposals by the Advisory Committee on Maternal Fatalities and Morbidities.

WATER RIGHTS AND EXTREME WEATHER

Given the complexity of Arizona's water resources and delivery system, tribal communities must be at the table as partners to determine the long term viability of Arizona's water resources, and to develop a plan to ensure resilience in a changing climate. We need everybody at the table. As governor, Katie will:

Prioritize stakeholder cooperation and planning, regional discussions and negotiations on Colorado River issues and groundwater management, and advancing negotiations of tribal water settlements.

- Support a resolution of tribal water rights claims, which affect half of the federally recognized tribes in Arizona. This includes working to secure federal funding to make the resolution of tribal water rights claims a reality through the construction of water infrastructure on tribal lands. Katie will also work to rapidly distribute Arizona's portion of the \$4 billion in new federal drought funding to areas with the greatest needs.
- Invest in energy infrastructure, with a focus on disproportionately impacted communities. This includes increasing access to sustainable energy for rural and tribal communities and identifying funding to expand solar and other infrastructure to help save potable water and electrify rural homes.
- Allocate up to \$15 million in a one-time grant program to help rural and indigenous communities that are unable to secure a certified well driller dig permitted wells that don't risk contamination from nearby sources.
- Work with tribal leaders to protect tribal lands and help mitigate the effects of climate change on Native communities.

CONCLUSION

As Secretary of State, Katie worked to expand access to the right to vote for Indigenous Peoples and prioritized building relationships of mutual trust and active participation with tribal nations. In her first year, she hired a full-time tribal liaison and sought and incorporated feedback from tribal voices to inform all of the office's work. From expanding access to safe and secure early voting and ballot drop-off options in tribal communities, to protecting indigenous history for generations to come by memorializing the venerable Diné Bizaad and Navajo Times, Katie has collaborated with tribal communities across the state. In the legislature, Katie fought to successfully expand health insurance for Native Americans, and she worked in bipartisan fashion to provide resources to address the opioid epidemic.

As governor, Katie will foster a collaborative approach in addressing the issues facing each tribe, work to advance equity and opportunity for Native communities, and help tribal nations overcome new and long-standing challenges. This policy plan provides a roadmap of priorities for Katie's first term as

governor, but we've seen new challenges arise each year. Katie and her administration will not waver in their commitment to work directly with and on behalf of tribal nations. Together, we can all build a better future.