NACA’s Community Development Department believes in the philosophy that all people are connected. They utilize holistic approaches to help guests and patients attain balance, harmony, growth, and resilience. The Community Development team recognizes the strength of the community and uses those voices to honor and foster wellness. Their work is to support relationships compassionately and proactively with kin, collective cultures, and the environment. Through partnership and collaboration, the Community Development team strives to improve the wellbeing of patients, assist in healing, and focus on building community capacity.

The programs under the Community Development Department include:

* Supportive Services
* Reach UR Life
* Pathways
* Native Connections
* Economic Development

Each program has unique population focus and service approaches.

In the Supportive Services program, the staff focus on offering various direct or coordinated supports to aid individuals or families in meeting their overall social well-being, with financial or supportive services. These approaches can include referrals, or case managers reaching out to partners to alleviate the individual or families’ current need(s). At this time, the Supportive Services team, along with various community volunteers, have committed to conducting a Rapid Assessment, Response, and Evaluation (RARE) Assessment to identify areas of opportunity to better serve the Indigenous unsheltered relative population in the Flagstaff area. This assessment is in partnership with the City of Flagstaff and is currently in the analysis stage of looking over surveys, interviews, and focus groups that will supplement the final report. The information will be distributed across partners and the community, so as to utilize a better approach towards Flagstaff’s unsheltered relatives.

The Reach UR Life (RUL) Suicide Prevention program offers free trainings on topic areas related to suicide prevention and working with individuals in that vulnerable state. The RUL team also provides technical assistance to youth-serving agencies, schools, and other organizations in the system of care for youth. The initiative for this program is to create a suicide-safer community in the Flagstaff area. The program offers culturally based workshops and a pathway to healing, for youth ages 10-24, to ensure youth in the community receive the care they need, and do not “fall in between the cracks”.

The Pathways youth program is an after-school program housed at Puente De Hozhó every Monday through Thursday. The program’s focus is substance use prevention and tobacco cessation, tailored for Native American youth and their families. Pathways’ use of a culturally based curriculum brings a unique perspective to substance use prevention and creates successful opportunities for those youth.

The Native Connections program implements youth guided programming to reduce suicidal behavior, substance use, and some impacts of trauma, all while promoting mental health well-being among Native American youth up to 24 years of age. The program also focuses on improving the local mental health/behavioral health system by participating in various coalitions to address issues such as social justice, inequality, and systemic racism, as it appears currently.

Lastly, the Economic Development program currently operates a vendor program where Indigenous artisans and buyers can learn to market their wares. The project creates a unique opportunity for Native American vendors to enhance and develop their economic self-sufficiency and lessen public assistance dependency. As a result of being a part of this program, vendors have gained dignity, self-worth, economic empowerment, and renewed pride in themselves. For many of the families, the artists are multi-generational. By creating economic development opportunities at the individual level, the Economic Development program empowers individuals to seize control over their financial, social, and health circumstances. There are 250 Native American vendors in the program who showcase and sell their authentic and beautiful arts and crafts. NACA works in partnership with the Coconino National Forest to oversee vendors at the Oak Creek Overlook Vista and provide high quality authentic Native American crafts.

The Community Development department strives each day to better the Flagstaff community, with a focus on NACA’s mission, values, and Indigenous approaches, to enhance advocacy for vulnerable populations, or those underserved. The impact the Community Development team makes each day through financial assistance, referrals, trainings, presentations, cultural activities, collaborative events, vending, outreach booths, surveys, and interviews, has no number attached, but has a substantial ripple effect that continues to grow throughout the community.

For more information on upcoming events or to learn more about the Community Development department, please visit <https://nacainc.org/community-development/>.

*NACA’s Family Health Center currently offers the flu vaccine, as well as the COVID-19 vaccines, and COVID-19 bivalent booster. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call (928) 773-1245.*