



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 10/18/21**

**Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation  
140 Rowdy Creek Road  
Smith River, CA 95567**

**Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, Victim Services Division was awarded a grant aimed to serve Tribal elders and vulnerable adults in our community.**

The Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation (Nation) has received a grant for the Tolowa Elder and Vulnerable Adult Victim Services project (TEVAS). This grant, from the Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime, will use this funding to establish a comprehensive victim services program for elders and vulnerable adults who have been, or are at risk of, abuse or exploitation.

The abuse and neglect of American Indian and Alaska Native elders occurs at an alarming frequency in our rural community. According to Dorothy Wait, the Nation's Director of Community and Family Wellness Services, *"More than 79 percent of elder abuse cases go unreported in tribal communities"*. Tribal leaders across the country have identified three major challenges in addressing elder abuse and neglect issues on reservations. There is a need to increase training about elder abuse and neglect, a lack of codes addressing elder abuse issues and a lack of policies and procedures for tribal agencies handling elder abuse and neglect issues.

Wait, is excited for how this work will impact the Nation. *"This is an opportunity to educate our community about Elder Abuse, educate our Elders on how to recognize if they are being abused, or have in the past, and reinforce the cultural practice of honoring our elders."* In order to help with the planning process, the Nation has brought on local consultant, Jermaine Brubaker, to help with the project. Brubaker is a Del Norte local that has been working in community and systems analysis work for eight years in Del Norte County. As part of the grant, Brubaker will be reaching out to key stakeholders including those currently working with the elder and vulnerable adult population. She will be helping facilitate a survey of tribal citizen needs through the National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative.

Working with the National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative to gather this survey data will help the Nation in establishing a baseline for the prevalence of maltreatment of elders within our community, which is a vital step in developing an advocacy program. *"By gathering this data, the Nation will be able to hone in on what community supports are needed to both address and prevent the maltreatment of elders, who are some of the tribe's most valuable resources, and should be honored and respected,"* states the Nation's Victim Services Manager, Ashley Taylor.

If you would like to know more about this project, or get involved please contact Ashley Taylor at 707-487-9255 Ext. 1134 or Jermaine Brubaker at 707-832-9733 or [jermaine.brubaker@gmail.com](mailto:jermaine.brubaker@gmail.com).

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The Tolowa Dee-ni Nation is a federally recognized Indian Tribe of Tolowa Dee-ni' People. The Nation is located 3 miles south of the Oregon-California border in Northwest California. The Tribe's general membership consists of over 1,700 members.