

# Navajo Nation Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Developed by the NN Division of Economic Development

April 2018

## **Overview:**

The CEDS for the Navajo Nation was developed by the Division of Economic Development (DED), which is one of fourteen divisions within the Executive Branch of the Navajo Nation Government. The DED is the primary entity of the Navajo Nation to advance the economic development initiatives of the Navajo Nation.

## With the Begaye Administration, the following are the Executive Branches' Four Pillars:

- A. Infrastructure  
To Plan, create, and implement sound infrastructure to build stronger, sustainable economic development opportunities and to prepare for the future by laying a foundation that will remain agile within an ever-changing economic environment.
- B. Navajo Veterans  
To create quality jobs with the respect to the Nation's veterans. Providing for the veterans will be the guiding marker to create quality employment opportunities out of respect for their service.
- C. Navajo Elders/Youth  
The foundation for economic development will be based upon the respect for the strength and sacrifices of the elderly in anticipation of the needs of the youth. This approach encourages growing from within to prepare for the future.
- D. Job Creation  
To create quality sustainable jobs that will maximize the talent, skills, and education of our most valuable asset: our own Navajo People. The economic strategic direction encompasses and promotes a solutions-based approach to manage thereby empowering staff with skills and tools to be value-orientated, independently driven yet willing to readily access available expertise, and to expect a return. Beginning this internally plants the expectations of what we need to create for others: quality job opportunities.

The DED also reviewed and interpreted what they believe to be the priorities expressed by the three branches of government (Executive, Legislative, and Judicial) of the Navajo Nation as it would relate to the overall economic development direction of the Nation.

- A. Infrastructure Improvement & Development  
We remain committed to growth and development of a comprehensive long-term vision that prepares communities for the future.
- B. Economy  
By cultivating a more thorough understanding of Navajo Nation's economic environment, we will have better tools to value, analyze, review and interpret data that is critical to strategic, long-term, sustainable development. We also recognize we have to partner and participate with others to ensure support, success and viability of the Navajo Nation economy.
- C. Water Rights  
As water is essential for any development, those who actively manage water services and infrastructure within the local communities will generate a comprehensive plan.
- D. Housing & Public Facility

Housing and public facilities are critical to caring for our veterans, accommodating the youth and elderly and grow the economic environment. Economic development goes “hand-in-hand” with housing along with public facilities to accommodate the needs of these growing populations.

E. Education

Offering educational opportunities locally will also help retain a much needed cultural and language-rich workforce that possess valuable insight to help drive the success of a thriving economy.

F. Human Services

Promoting healthy lives and strengthening families comes with creating services with honor of our veterans, respect for our elderly in anticipation of the needs of our youth.

G. Natural Resources

Carefully managing, restoring and preserving our natural resources contributes to economic development via job creation.

H. Public Safety & Judicial

Support Public Safety and Judicial endeavors and remain committed to providing assistance when and where needed to preserve the health, safety and welfare of the Nation.

I. Governance

Partnering with the local governments and with each other garners support and promotes a unified approach to improving planning and project development. Doing so is conducive to engaging in a robust collaborative effort with colleagues, staff, the community and leadership.

**VISION:**

Create a self-sustaining economy that supports a high quality of life for our Navajo people.

**MISSION:**

Achieve self-sufficiency for the Navajo Nation by promoting economic opportunities.

**VALUES:**

*PEOPLE* We strive to improve the economic wellbeing and quality of life of the people of the Navajo Nation.

*COMMUNITY* We support Navajo communities in developing and being responsible for their own growth.

*PUBLIC TRUST* We will ethically uphold public trust through accountability, transparency, and resourcefulness by adhering to a higher degree of standards.

*LEADERSHIP* We will engage in exerting innovative managerial skills by taking a solution-based approach to leadership.

*SERVICE* We will deliver services while maintaining the utmost respect to all people.

*RESPECT* We respect, honor and value the elderly and veterans and will create a sustainable economic environment to serve their needs.

*VALUE* We value our community members and our Nation to provide the best of our expertise, experience and service in the best interest of all shareholders.

**SWOT ANALYSES:**

Strengths:

Culture	Regulations	Largest Tribal Population
Technology	Transportation	Treaties
Qualified Professionals	Railway	Bill of Rights
Workforce	Investments	Ke' Clan System
Experience	Navajo Nation Fair	Leadership
Scenery	Federal Incentives	Water Rights
Bilingual Staff	New Market Tax Credits	Wildlife
Division	Small Business	Corporate Activity
Departments	Government Loans	Home
Land	Government Structure	Rural
Sovereignty	Judicial Court	Tourism
Navajo Nation Laws	Peacemaking Solutions	Livestock
Policies	E-Commerce	

Weaknesses:

Border Town	Perception	Social Issues
Budget	Cash Flow	Brain Drain
Lack of Training	No Investments	Change
Lack of Infrastructure	Lack of Knowledge	Leadership
Workforce	No Zoning	Government Structure
Qualifications	High Unemployment	Administrative Terms & Platforms
Customer Service	Tribal Entities	Politics
Lack of Technology	Competition	Land Restrictions
Mismanagement	Small Business	Cultural Changes
Bureaucracy	Lack of Economic Development Sector (Commercial/Industrial/Tourism/Small Business)	Loss of Culture
Bureau of Indian Affairs	Regulatory Requirements	Long-Term Planning
Trump Administration	Lengthy Contract Approval Processes	Business Attraction
No Compliance Enforcement	No Jobs	Lack of Marketing
Entitlement	No Motivation	Cash Leakage

Opportunities:

Tourism	Community Improvement	Hotel Accommodations
Culture and Language	Financial Investments	E-commerce
Scenic Natural Landscapes	Farming	Arts and Crafts
Eco-Tourism	Agri-Business	Tax Base
Navajo-Owned Companies	Transportation	Water management (CAP, APS, SRP)
Branding and Marketing	Airport	Politics
Native American Education	Retail	Sovereignty
Business Opportunities (8(a), Joint Ventures, tec.)	Coffee Shops	Workforce
Wireless Technology	Hunting	Education (K-12, Higher ED, Vocational, College)
Promote investment	Forestry	Collaboration
Renewable Energy	Recreational	Partnership
Exporting Opportunities	Update Policies	Hotels
Community Development Corporation	Restaurants	Visitors Center

Threats:

Jobs	DOJ Laws and Policies	Abandoned Towns (Mines, Mills, Uranium)
Technology	Restrictive Land Policy	Depend on Outside Companies
Budget	Land Suitability	Environmental Impacts (Uranium, Water, etc.)
Funding	Floodplain	Continuation of Cash Leakage
Unemployment	Grazing Permits & Holders	Education
Micro-Management	Infrastructure	Qualifications
New Administration	Water	Lack of Technology to Improve Economic
No Collaboration	Natural Resources	School Closures
Streamline Policies & Processes	Closing of Coal Mine & Power Plants	Threat of Unfavorable Business
War and Terrorism	Sovereignty Rights	Follow through with Plans
Politics		

Provided with the information noted in the first part of this summary, the Economic Development Strategic direction is as follows:

**ECONOMIC VISION STATEMENT:**

To empower the Navajo People to envision and create a self-sustaining economy that enhances a high quality of life on the Navajo Nation.

**NAVAO NATION ECONOMIC GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLANS**

Key Priority Areas in order of priority

Human Capital

The Navajo people are valuable assets and the foundation to improving and self-sustaining the economy, collectively as a people, within the Navajo Nation.

Goal

- To grow and nurture the existing untapped assets, the Navajo People, toward self-empowerment and self-sustaining economy.

Objective

- To create education and employment opportunities to maintain the skilled workforce of Navajo employees on the Navajo Nation.
- To explore innovative solutions in technological advanced opportunities in creating a better competitive advantage.
- Invest in sustainable, long-term development through education and workforce development opportunities.

Action Plans

- Invest in a Fabrication Lab with the Navajo Technical University (NTU).
- Enhance job opportunities on the Navajo Nation based on existing occupation, workforce and industry trends.
- Explore job creation on the Navajo Nation based on future economic market feasibility studies at the regional and community level.
- Partner with NTU and Dine' College to better understand the needs of the student body.

Naat'aanii Development Corporation

The Navajo Nation must explore, create and diversify the business climate to strengthen the economy and foster a more vibrant business friendly environment.

Goal

- To allow the Navajo Nation to engage and create diverse business and economic development opportunities on the Navajo Nation.

Objective

- To obtain net income from large businesses and enterprises to increase revenue streams & profitability for the Navajo Nation.
- To incorporate business development and shift from solely acting as a project manager.

Action Plans

- Fund seed capital to establish the Naat'aanii Development Corporation.

- Establish new policy, structure and requirements to obtain net income from large businesses and enterprises to benefit and strengthen the economic foundation for the Navajo Nation.
- Set up one of two hotel operations and management companies on the Navajo Nation.
- Encourage staff to engage in business development and entrepreneurship.

### Tourism

The Navajo Nation has the opportunity to educate, create and share a unique cultural visitor experience within the global tourism industry.

#### Goal

- To enhance and improve the Navajo experience, emerge as a leader in the tourism industry, and attract the global tourism market.

#### Objective

- To share and educate the uniqueness of the Navajo Nation, while remaining sensitive and respectful to the Navajo people, tradition, language and cultural.

#### Action Plans

- Develop a series of Navajo-owned hotels highlighting the unique Navajo communities across the Navajo Nation driven by a community-based approach. Hotels are being planned in the communities of Shonto, Shiprock, Cameron, Crownpoint, Tuba City and LeChee.
- Create, develop and implement a comprehensive tourism strategy that will be designed to increase visitor count, re-brand the Navajo Nation and create the Navajo experience with respect and sensitivity to the Navajo People using technology and data analytics.
- Expand tourism staff to include a marketing specialist to better develop marketing campaigns, data analytics and track tourist activity on the Nation.

### Healthcare

The Navajo nation needs advance, quality and compassionate health care services and facilities for the overall health, safety and wellbeing of the Navajo people and communities.

#### Goal

- To provide health care services for the overall wellbeing, healing, recovery and quality of life for the Navajo people.

#### Objective

- Create a community-based approach in caring for the elderly, sick and non-critical patients.
- Re-instill traditional teachings and beliefs into the healing and recovery process for people and community to take an active role in their personal health care.
- Establish health care facilities in Navajo communities to create a healthy environment that promotes healing and recovery within traditional Navajo values.

#### Action Plans

- Establish compassionate elderly care, cancer centers and assisted living facilities on the Navajo Nation.
- Establish a self-care health center to promote self-care, recovery and healing within a traditional and culturally relevant setting.
- To promote and create educational opportunities and training in the health care related fields.

## Technology

The Navajo Nation has various innovative technological opportunities to explore in developing our Nation to foster economic development.

### Goal

- To provide technological based employment to retain the talented, skilled and brightest within the Navajo Nation.
- To create competitive wage paying jobs to encourage the Navajo workforce to stay on the Nation.
- To position the Nation to become an active competitor in the fast growing ever changing advanced manufacturing industry.

### Objective

- Develop and expand advance manufacturing by promoting and collaborating with the Navajo Nation's educational institutions.
- Develop and expand environmental sustainable technology, such as renewable energy, solar, wind and biofuel.

### Action Plans

- Work collaboratively with the Navajo Technical University to create and promote educational opportunities and training in the technology related fields.
- Expand the Navajo Technical University Fab Lab as a commercial and educational facility.
- Create a new Operating & Management Facility on the Navajo Nation.

## Small Business

Navajo-owned small businesses are vital toward economically self-sustaining our communities within the Navajo Nation for future generations.

### Goal

- To promote and support Navajo-owned small businesses to build a self-sufficient economy on the Navajo Nation.

### Objective

- Promote and support Navajo-owned small businesses to create jobs, keep money in the local communities and decrease dollar leakage into the surrounding border towns.
- Update the streamlining process, incentives, financing and policies to establish and maintain Navajo-owned small businesses.
- Provide educational training and technical assistance in starting and maintaining small local business on the Navajo Nation.

### Action Plans

- Organize the Annual Navajo Nation Economic Summit to promote Navajo business strategies, celebrate entrepreneurs and create networking opportunities toward enhancing the Navajo business environment.
- Allow small business owners to actively create, develop and facilitate a workshop series during the Economic Summit.
- Promote the Business Opportunity Act by utilizing Navajo Priority One Businesses for goods and services within the Navajo Nation.
- Provide Navajo entrepreneurs' and opportunity to generate new ideas, new business models, and new ways of selling goods and services.

- Increase outreach, training, and educational forums to promote the idea of small business ownership and entrepreneurship.
- Develop a youth orientated small business program that will provide incentives for the youth to consider a career in business.

### Women Small Business

Traditionally, the Navajo Nation is a matrilineal society and Navajo women are the center of the families, communities and Nation.

#### Goal

- To promote and support the growing number of Navajo-women owned small businesses across the Navajo Nation.

#### Objective

- Advance and empower Navajo women entrepreneurs to increase economic growth opportunities for women.

#### Action Plans

- Provide the Navajo Women Chamber of Commerce a platform to organize, strategize, support and promote women businesses on the Navajo Nation.
- Explore opportunities for Navajo Women Business to be benefit from the Business Opportunity Act and Navajo Priority One Businesses procurement processes.
- Establish a Navajo Women Business of the Year Award at the Navajo Nation Economic Summit.

### Natural Resources

Historically, the Navajo Nation's abundant amount of Natural Resources has largely contributed toward the Navajo Economy.

#### Goal

- Explore future Natural Resource opportunities through innovative technology and renewable energy development.

#### Objective

- Explore large-scale renewable energy development in the southwest.
- Develop local community and regional Natural Resource projects throughout the Navajo Nation.
- Develop and expand environmental sustainable technology, such as renewable energy, solar, wind and biofuel/biomass.

#### Action Plans

- Research impacts on the closure of the Navajo Generating Station.
- Examine and analyze continued usage of the train as a tourism venture.
- Incorporate parks and recreational opportunities in the comprehensive marketing strategy.
- Invest in the expansion of the park system.