

PROJECT TIWAHU UPDATE

With the passage of HR 1560 in August 2012, the United States amended the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and Alabama Coushatta Indian Tribes of Texas Restoration Act with language that specifically rids the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo of restrictive enrollment criteria. In October 2012, Tribal Council appointed the Tribal Records Office as lead organizer of a comprehensive plan of action to determine membership criteria through Project Tiwahu.

Project Tiwahu – Redefining Tigua Citizenship is a self-governance expression by the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo to determine its own membership requirements.

On April 9, 2013, through Tribal Resolution TC-021-13, Tribal Council set the following objectives for Project Tiwahu: Establishment of Advisory Board, Revision of Tribal Enrollment Ordinance, Garnering Community Input, Assessing Tribal Programs and Services, and Analyzing Budget Impacts and Developing a Citizenship Campaign. In early May 2013, a 10-member Advisory Board was selected from the tribal community. As a first order of business for the Project Tiwahu Advisory Board, an executive education session was held. During this session both Tribal Council members and Advisory Board members held open discussions on YDSP enrollment while reflecting on its enrollment evolution, identifying expected changes to enrollment criteria, and brainstorming on possible methods to gain meaningful community input.

In September, Tribal Records and Tribal Operations published a report entitled-- Project Tiwahu: A look at YDSP Enrollment Pre/Post Federal Restoration. The report provides an internal glimpse and examination of the Pueblo's enrollment through the years. It incorporates interviews conducted with key tribal officials and contributors that presided during the tribe's initial federal recognition, to the transfer of trust under the Texas Indian Commission and the 1984 Federal Restoration period. The report was meant as a resource for the Advisory Board and focuses on the following four topics: Census throughout Tigua early history; The significance of the base roll in YDSP federal recognition; federal restoration and enacting tribal law; and a reflection of the new task at hand and the related implications.

In October 2013, a community education and input initiative spearheaded by the Advisory Board, YDSP Economic Development, Tribal Operations, and Tribal Records was initiated. A survey was developed to gather input from both enrolled members and descendants regarding current criteria while also gauging opinions about what changes should be made in the near future. An educational pamphlet entitled, "Redefining Tigua Citizenship-- An Informational Guide for Tiguas to Make an Informed Decision About the Pueblo's Future Enrollment Criteria" was also developed to provide important background information such as Tigua history, tribal population profiles, and fiscal impacts related to potential membership criteria changes. The informational guide was disseminated to the tribal community in conjunction with the Project Tiwahu Survey.

The survey was administered from December 4, 2013 through January 15, 2014 to all adult Enrolled and Descendant members. In conjunction with the survey, four community focus groups were also conducted. As of January 15th over 1,400 enrolled/descendant members responded. The aim of the survey is two-fold: to garner community input with respect to changes to enrollment criteria and to provide guidance to the Tribal Council as they make a decision that reflects community agreement. The Pueblo's Economic Development Department will analyze the survey results and yield a report that will be presented at a Pueblo Junta.

