



# Elder Voices

Newsletter of the National Indian Council on Aging, Inc.

Summer, 1993

*A status report from Washington, D.C.*

## NICOA targets Agenda concerns

**A**fter several drafts following the 1992 Green Bay conference, NICOA's *National Indian Aging Agenda for the Future* was completed, published, and distributed nationally in Spring, 1993. In May, Sen. Daniel Inouye sponsored a special staff briefing for the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to examine the Agenda.

### Action on top Agenda issues

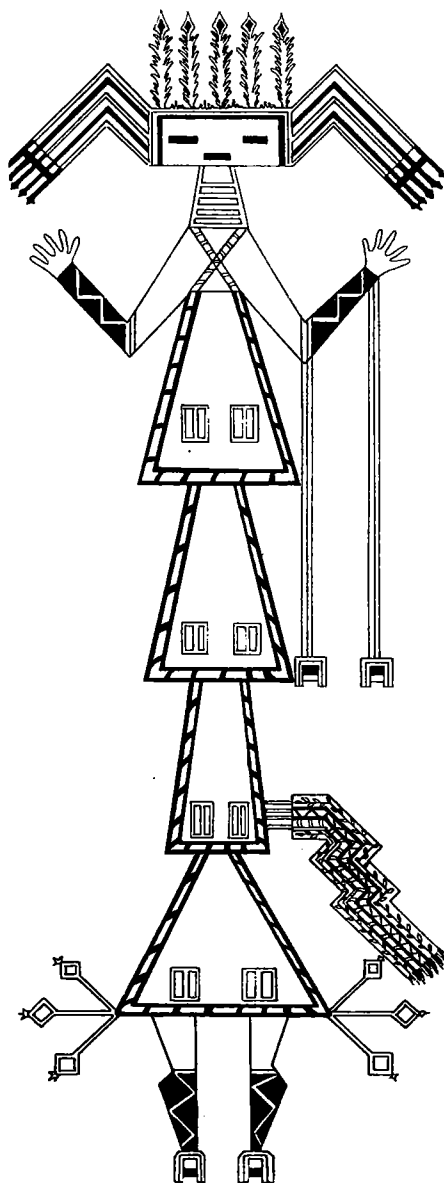
*National health care reform must include provisions for older Indians.*

NICOA succeeded on several counts: 1) representing the Work Group on Special Needs at the National Summit on Indian Health Care Reform at the Senate. The Summit Final Report for Hillary Clinton reads that "long-term and elder care should receive special consideration and funding to prevent the deterioration in health that results from forced migration out of the culture and community to access these services"; 2) presenting long-term care issues, in a 15-minute speech, to the President's health care reform staff, plus an exclusive two-hour meeting on Indian elder LTC; 3) meeting individually with five national aging organizations to generate Agenda support.

*Increase 1994 title VI funding from \$15 million to \$30 million.* 1)

NICOA, along with the National Assn. of Title VI Grantees, testified at a fall Congressional staff briefing; 2) met, individually and in groups, with staff of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and Appropriations subcommittees; 3) presented funding issues to the Administration on Aging's Task Force on Older Indians. [NOTE: Both the House and Clinton Administration have recommended budgets with no title VI increase. Our remaining hopes lie with the Senate].

*The IHS should adopt the recommendations of its Work Group on Aging.* NICOA has 1) met with IHS top leadership; 2) testified at a Congressional staff briefing on long-term care; 3) presented this issue at IHS conferences; and, 4) presented the issue to the National Indian Health Board (NIHB). NICOA and the NIHB will co-sponsor a November 10-12 health conference on older Indians in Las Vegas, Nev.



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**NICOA's advocacy  
papers available**

Every year, NICOA generates numerous written statements and testimonies—usually for Congressional subcommittees. Although these are often included as official records, NICOA's members seldom see them. These documents are available, at no charge, if you request them by mail or telephone:

**1992**

*"Older Americans Act Services to Low-Income Minority Individuals;"*

*"Recommended Improvements to the Indian Health Care Improvement Act;"*

*"Indian Elder Health Care"*

**1993**

*"Barriers to Participation by Older Indians in the USDA Food and Nutrition Programs"*

*"Long-Term Care in Indian Country"*

*"Older Americans Act Title VI Funding."*

*National Indian Aging Agenda for the Future*

*SSI Outreach Access Model*

**SCSEP to reach more reservation elders  
NICOA labor program to offer  
77 new jobs**

**A**fter a long, hard-fought legislative battle, American Indian and Pacific Asian labor programs for elders may finally see some much-needed growth. Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) training positions for Indian elders should increase by 77 in 1993-94 and up to several hundred in 1994-95, according to knowledgeable sources in Washington.

NICOA and the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA) are the two smallest of ten national organizations who operate the \$410 million Dept. of Labor program. NICOA and NAPCA have been limited, since joining SCSEP in 1989, to approximately \$1.6 million in annual funding and fewer than 300 training positions. Established program operators include national aging organizations, some of which receive annual funding of \$50-100 million and operate more than 15,000 positions.

Under SCSEP, temporary training positions provide elders 55 and older with wages and supervision for up to 1,500 hours of annual on-the-job work experience. For many rural Indian elders, SCSEP represents a much-needed source of steady income, pride, and first-ever employment training.

Congress, in its 1992 reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA), voted to increase each of the smaller programs to a \$5 million funding floor, based on increased '93-94 appropriations. According to NICOA program director Frieda Clark, NICOA's '93-94 growth will include 13 positions in Arizona, 24 in California, eight in Colorado, 14 in Louisiana, six in New Mexico, and 12 in Oklahoma."

**31% increase in elders receiving entitlement benefits**

**SSI outreach project helps rural elders**

**I**n two years of outreach on reservations from Arizona to New York, NICOA has helped enroll more than 312 elders in supplemental security income (SSI), Food Stamps, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and other federal entitlements.

The outreach program, "SSI Search," targeted tribes in eight states. The innovative project approach included training 179 Title VI directors and other service providers from 39 tribes. The series of intensive two-day advocacy sessions was taught by Ayn Crawley of Legal Counsel for the Elderly, an AARP affiliate. NICOA is currently applying for a grant to continue its "SSI Search".

The other Washington -- not the one with the Redskins

## ● Conference heads for Spokane in August, '94

**B**y unanimous vote of the NICOA Board of Directors, NICOA's 1994 conference will be held at the Sheraton-Spokane Hotel in Spokane, Wash. The event, scheduled for August 25-27, will utilize the Spokane Convention Center, adjacent to the host hotel.

The hotel also borders a 100-acre park, which hosts 300-400 dancers and thousands of spectators annually at a large August Pow Wow. The NICOA conference will coincide with the Pow Wow. According to NICOA board chairman Pat Woods, "It will also be the site of a first-class salmon feed for our conference."

NICOA's event, with more than 1,500 expected registrants, will be one of the city's largest conferences of 1994, according to Sheraton convention sales manager George Shoemaker. The eastern Washington city of 300,000 "has hosted numerous Indian conferences, recently including those of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), American Indian Physicians, the National Indian Health Board (NIHB), and the American Indian Science and Engineering Society," he said.

The first NICOA Indian aging conference was conducted in Phoenix, Ariz., in 1976. The second, held in Billings, Montana, in 1978, was the only biennial (two-year) NICOA conference to claim more participants than we did last year at Green Bay," said NICOA executive director Dave Baldrige. "That year, conference reports variously estimated delegates at 1,800, 2,500, and 'more than 3,000' . . . although NICOA conference records don't indicate that many people attending."

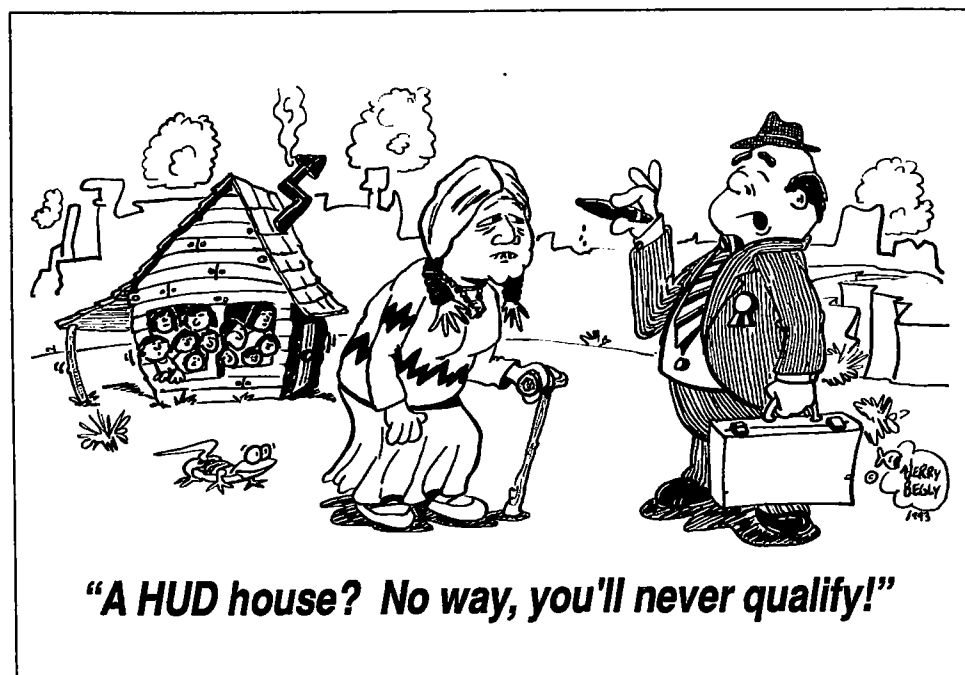
Beginning in 1980, subsequent NICOA conferences were conducted in Albuquerque, N.M., Reno, Nev., Tulsa, Okla., Phoenix, Tulsa, and Nashville, Tenn. The 1992 conference, in Green Bay, Wisc., drew 1,500 participants and 991 elders from 130 tribes. It was the second-largest Indian conference of any kind in the United States.

"We are optimistic," Baldrige said, "that the '94 conference will be NICOA's best ever. We think it's going to be a very productive year for Indian aging, even though the long-awaited and overdue National White House Conference on Aging has not been called."

## Eldercare Institute on Older Women

**T**he National Eldercare Institute on Older Women will host "Challenges in an Aging Society: A National Conference on Older Women" in Washington, D.C., on September 23-26. The Institute is sponsored by the National Council of Negro Women, Inc.

**I**The conference will focus on minority communities. For information, contact Kevin Grant at 202/659-0006.



## Notes from Indian elder country

The National Association of Title VI Grantees has hired **Joyce Knows His Gun**, former NICOA employee and sister of Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, as their new Program Director. The organization has moved its national headquarters to Albuquerque, sharing offices with NICOA . . . If the Administration's proposed '94 budget is approved by Congress, Indian elders will gain more than 500 new jobs under NICOA's SCSEP program . . .

The Urban Institute of Wash., D.C., is conducting an extensive study of Indian housing, interviewing tribal leaders, housing authorities, and residents of HUD and BIA housing . . . NICOA has agreed to co-host, with the National Indian Health Board (NIHB), the upcoming NIHB Annual Consumer Conference, targeting elder concerns. It's scheduled for Las Vegas, Nev., Nov. 10-12, 1993 . . . New leadership at the Administration on Aging bodes well for Indian elders: Fernando Torres Gil, Portia Mittleman, and Bill Benson are all strong supporters of elder issues.

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Telling it like it is

## Elder Public Service Announcements target Indian Communities

Indian Country radio stations are delivering some new, often jolting Public Service Announcements (PSA's):

*"You may think they're just old people. You may think no one cares. You may think you can get away with hurting them. But you're wrong! They're Indian elders. They're our pride. . . And we care. We're the National Indian Council on Aging."*

The hard-hitting PSA's are targeted to elders, to their families, and to their communities. "We decided its time to stop publicly ignoring these problems," said NICOA's Board Chairman Pat Woods.

The fifteen messages deal with topics ranging from elder abuse to respect for grandparents to tips for elders on obtaining SSI. A few stations that broadcast to single tribes receive the announcements in tribal languages—White Mtn. Apache, Navajo, and Zuni, to date.

"We want to know what stations we may be missing," said NICOA executive director Dave Baldrige. We need our members to write or call us with names and locations of Indian radio stations that may not be receiving the PSA's. And we're willing to record more messages in Indian languages, if we know which radio stations would use them."

The Indian elder PSA program, conducted under an Administration on Aging grant, will expand both its station network and its range of messages in 1994.

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