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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PEACEMAKING PROGRAM AWARDED GRANT

The Navajo Nation's Peacemaking Program has been awarded a grant by the Administration for Children and Families Tribal Court Improvement Program to develop local peacemaker capabilities in housing subdivisions and rural communities.

Under this grant, traditional peacemaking services, including traditional dispute resolution, teaching of cultural life values and youth mentoring, will become available to affected families on a far more local basis than ever before.

The grant is entitled "Peacemaking Toward Asset-Building Navajo Nation Rural Communities." The award is made in annual budget increments; \$146,602 has been initially awarded for 2012-2013 with the budget renewable for up to three years for a total of \$439,807. The Judicial Branch applied for the funding because vast rural distances on the Navajo Nation create difficulties in enforcement of protection orders, and in treatment, rehabilitation and assistance to at-risk children and their families.

Peacemakers will hold peacemaking and life value engagements for local residents on a regular basis and also serve as a touchstone for community issues, especially those regarding the well-being of the community's children. The grant will provide funding to pay peacemaker fees and is expected to fund about one-quarter of referrals expected as a result of the *Álchíní Bi Beehaz'ánnii* Act of 2011 per year.

As the grant is limited, not all communities can be funded. A Tribal Court Improvement Program Team will be established, which will consist of courts, agencies, peacemakers, schools, families and communities. The team is expected to identify and target priority communities where peacemakers will be placed and where services will be funded with the goal of maximizing those communities' cultural strengths. Furthermore, a community development specialist will be hired under the grant to assist with the goals of the program.

Finally, consultants with a background in assisting in inter-program collaborative dialogue will be brought in to help bring the Judicial Branch and Social Services together in formulating

holistic approaches to resolving issues facing at-risk children in efforts to keep children in their homes and increase accountability of families.

The award now goes to the Navajo Nation legislative process for acceptance.

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