



Office of the Executive Director

Navajo Division for Children and Family Services



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Navajo Division for Children and Family Services walk to raise awareness for Domestic Violence and People with Disabilities

The Navajo Division for Children and Family Services (NDCFS) participated in walks for Domestic Violence and Disability Awareness in Window Rock, Ariz., on October 20, 2025.

The Division's Department of Family Services (DFS) joined the Domestic Violence Awareness Walk from the Navajo Nation Museum to the Navajo Nation Council Chamber. The Office of Executive Director, Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP), and Financial Assistance Unit walked for Disability Awareness from the Lowe's market to the Council Chamber.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the Department of Family Services has been taking part in various events to raise awareness throughout the month. ADABI, Northern

To advocate for change, empower and strengthen our children, families, and communities by providing quality, holistic, cultural, and value-based services.

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TREE House Shelter in Shiprock, Tsehootsooi Medical Center Family Advocacy Center, and advocates joined the walk and delivered remarks in support of domestic violence awareness.

Althea James, DFS Victim Witness Advocate, thanked leadership and advocates for recognizing Domestic Violence Awareness Month. “It means a lot to us service providers when we are acknowledging this month. I believe it’s very critical that we get the word out,” she said.

Their job is 24 hours, 7 days a week, she said. “We do our best to empower victims and their children,” she said. One of the biggest challenges is getting lodging for victims at a moment’s notice, especially with limited resources, she added. “We hope that we can get better to advocate for our victims and immediately house them in a place where they can be safe,” James said.



Trudy Chee, Northern TREE House Shelter Manager, said that ground will be broken for a new shelter in Shiprock this month with 10 bedrooms for individuals affected by domestic, sexual and family violence.

Supporting domestic violence awareness is important for the NDCFS. The NDCFS leads the effort to implement the Diné Action Plan for the Navajo Nation, which provides a road map to address the Navajo Nation’s biggest challenges, known as nayéé or modern-day monsters, including violence, suicide, substance abuse, and missing and murdered Diné relatives.



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The Navajo Nation Advisory Council on Disability is holding walks throughout the Navajo Nation this week in recognition of Navajo Nation Disability Awareness Week. Former President Russell Begaye declared the third week of October Disability Awareness Week in 2015.

Navajo Nation Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez said he will be sponsoring amendments to the Vulnerable Adult Protection Act (VAPA), which the NDCFS and Advisory Council on Disability are working on. “A lot of our disabled relatives are also victims of domestic violence. Many of them are taken advantage of with abuse and neglect. We want to make sure our Navajo Nation has a process and a procedure that helps to bring them justice, to bring them resources,” he said.

Dr. Nez said he is also sponsoring legislation to address accessibility to chapter facilities and co-sponsoring legislation to adopt polling procedures for elections to enhance accessibility for people with disabilities.

Hoskie Benally, who has served on the Advisory Council on Disability since 2006, said there are 40,000-50,000 Navajos with various types of disabilities. He also spoke about the VAPA amendments that he is working on with the NDCFS.

Benally announced that the Advisory Council and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services under the Navajo Department of Diné Education are sponsoring the



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Navajo Disability Awareness Conference on October 29, 2025, at High Country Conference Center in Flagstaff, Ariz. The conference is celebrating 50 years of vocational rehabilitation services. Vocational rehabilitation services assist people with disabilities to obtain and keep employment.

Freida White of the DDP said she walked to support individuals with disabilities throughout the Navajo Nation. “This is an important awareness walk for our Division and our program,” she said.

The Navajo Developmental Disabilities Program under the NDCFS is a comprehensive case management system to ensure medically necessary services are delivered to Medicaid-eligible members with developmental disabilities. Its vision is to empower individuals with development disabilities to lead self-directed, healthy and meaningful lives. The program provides support and services to eligible Arizona residents on the Navajo Nation in collaboration with the Arizona Department for Economic Security – Division of Developmental Disabilities. The DDP has offices in Chinle and Tuba City.

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