

Native American Handicrafts Retail Workgroup Meeting

TEAMs Video Conference

2:30 PM to 3:30 PM ET, October 21, 2021

Purpose:

Assemble NPS Commercial Services Program (CSP), DOI Indian Arts and Craft Board (IACB), NPS concessioners, and cooperating association representatives to share challenges, lessons learned, and resources available to support the purchase and sale of American Indian and Alaska Native (Indian) arts and craftwork in NPS concession and cooperating association-run retail stores park service wide.

Meeting Notes:

On Thursday, October 21, CSP hosted the second Native American Handicrafts Workgroup meeting as a follow-up to the meeting held in March 2021. Kenneth VanWey and Meridith Stanton from the DOI IACB provided concessioners with detailed information related to the authenticity, procurement, and sale of Native American Handicrafts in their retail operations.

Kenneth began by explaining what the Indian Arts and Crafts Act is and the penalties for violating it. When a retailer offers any art or craft product for sale that is falsely advertised as Indian produced or a product of a particular Indian Tribe, complaints can be filed with the IACB. IACB accepts complaints, works with the Fish and Wildlife Service to investigate and settle complaints/violations, and supports complainants filing civil suits. For state laws in addition to or independent from the Act, IACB will support complainants as best they can with the resources available to them. The IACB then provided images of authentic documentation that a retailer should look for when purchasing Indian products from vendors. Xanterra Parks and Resorts described how they worked closely with the IACB to develop a “certification of authenticity” that includes the IACB logo and a space for the artist/trader’s signature and that is required of all its vendors prior to offering their products in Xanterra’s retail operations.

The IACB described some of the resources that they have available for concessioners to help identify authentic Indian arts and crafts and to educate the public on Indian authenticity. The IACB maintains a free, searchable [Source Directory of American Indian and Alaska Native Owned and Operated Arts and Crafts Businesses](#). The IACB also hosts websites for the three museums that it operates which provide information about the exhibiting artist and their contact information so concessioners can connect directly with the artist. [Digital and hardcopy publications](#) on state and federal regulations and the authenticity of Indian arts and crafts are available from the IACB to help educate the public.

The IACB also explained what “Indian” is defined as – a person or tribe that is state-recognized – and that the proper terminology is ultimately up to the tribal group. “American Indian” used to be the formal regulatory title and is still referenced in many regulations; however, “Native American” is typically used. Though tribes do not usually have a preference, it is important to work with the tribe or tribal person and the park to ensure proper terminology is being used when describing Indian arts and crafts.

IACB ended the meeting by reminding concessioners that the IACB is always available to support in any way that they can, including connecting concessioners directly with authentic Indian artists and tribes and providing a variety of educational, legal, and other information resources. They also encouraged concessioners to continue supporting federally recognized Indian artists and communities by promoting and providing honest representation of authentic Indian handicrafts within their retail operations.

For those who were not able to attend this meeting, the Commercial Services Program intends to hold additional Workgroup meetings to continue these conversations.