



ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS

Protecting Sovereignty • Preserving Culture
Educating Youth • Building Capacity

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS WELCOMES NEW OFFICE MANAGER

Native Country, May 7, 2026 - The Association on American Indian Affairs, the longest serving national Native nonprofit in the country, is pleased to announce that Vanessa (Q^wiy' mtk^w) Covington, a citizen of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and descendant of the Shoshone Bannock Tribes, has been appointed to serve as the Association's Office Manager.

As Office Manager, Q^wiy is the Association's first point of contact for the public, Native Nations, and donors seeking information or support. Q^wiy will oversee the Association's operations, as well as the scholarship program, which is the oldest Native undergrad and graduate student scholarship since 1947; Native Youth Summer Camp Grants, providing support for small Native Nation and Native-led camps; the volunteer and internship program that grows experience in non-profit and Native Nation work; and will grow the Association's connections with donors, partners, and members.

Q^wiy says, "My work is guided by the teachings of my People—to move with respect, to protect our languages and lifeways, and to serve in a way that strengthens our Nations. I am grateful to join the Association and support its century-long commitment to empowering Native Peoples and their Nations and ensuring our future generations continue to thrive."

Prior to working with the Association, Q^wiy served Native Nations and nonprofits for fifteen years in governance, executive support, human resources, public safety, policy, and systems management. She began her career with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, supporting her Nation's government, the Colville Business Council, and key community-serving departments. Q^wiy later served with the Northwest Area Foundation as a liaison and executive support for its Board of Directors, as well as Project Coordinator and Systems Manager, supporting an eight-state region and the seventy-six Native Nations within it. Most recently, she worked with GRID Alternatives as a Research and Policy Specialist, advancing Native Nation energy sovereignty and equitable access to renewable energy. Unfortunately, her position was cut when federal funding collapsed in 2025.

"Qwiy comes to us with a large heart for giving back to Native Country," said Shannon O'Loughlin, citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and Chief Executive and Attorney for the Association. "Qwiy's experience and leadership empowers the Association so that it can fulfill its vision to create a world where diverse Native cultures and values are lived, protected, and respected. Her skills, cultural knowledge, and practical experience will increase the Association's capacity to continue its longstanding work supporting Native Peoples and their Nations."

Qwiy's leadership is guided by cultural integrity, community responsibility, and commitment to strengthening sovereignty and well-being across Native Country. Qwiy works from the homelands of the Shoshone Bannock Peoples in the Association's connected virtual environment.

To learn more about the Association, visit Indian-Affairs.org.

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The Association on American Indian Affairs is the oldest national Native non-profit protecting sovereignty, preserving culture, educating youth and building capacity. The Association was formed in 1922 to change the destructive path of federal policy from assimilation, termination and allotment, to sovereignty, self-determination and self-sufficiency. Throughout its more than 100-year history, the Association has provided national advocacy on watershed issues that support sovereignty and culture, while working at a grassroots level with Native Nations to support the implementation of programs that support Native Peoples.

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