

Commission of Indian Affairs ^[1]

Commission of Indian Affairs

by Wiley J. Williams, 2006

See Also: [NC Commission of Indian Affairs](#)^[2](Tarheel Junior Historian)



Logo, NC Commission of Indian Affairs. Image courtesy of the Commission of Indian Affairs.

^[3]The [North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs](#)^[3] was created by the 1971 General Assembly as a response to requests of concerned Indian citizens. Among the important concerns of the commission were coordinating federal, state, and local resources to support various programs relating to the state's Indian population; providing aid and protection to Indians and their cultural and religious traditions; furthering the economic and social development of [Indian](#)^[4] communities; and protecting the rights of Indians in the state as well as making the general population aware of these rights.

Commission membership as established in the 1971 act consisted of 12 North Carolinians of [Indian](#)^[4] ancestry commissioned by the governor following selection by their tribal communities. Certain state officials also served as ex officio members. During its early years, the commission operated as an independent agency, with its budget and personnel matters being handled generally by the [Department of Administration](#)^[5]. In 1977 the state legislature reformed the commission and formally transferred it to the Department of Administration, placing it under the direction and supervision of the department's assistant secretary for advocacy programs. By the early 2000s the commission consisted of 19 representatives of the Indian community, 2 persons appointed by the General Assembly, the secretary of health and human services, the director of the [State Employment Security Commission](#)^[6], the secretaries of the [Department of Administration](#)^[5] and the [Department of Environment and Natural Resources](#)^[7], and the commissioner of labor.

At times friction has developed between a particular tribe and the Commission of Indian Affairs. For example, in August 2001 the North Carolina Court of Appeals overturned the recommended decision of an administrative law judge in 1999 that the [Occaneechi](#)^[8] had met the criteria to be recognized by the state as an Indian tribe. In September 2001 the commission decided that it was not ready to accept the tribe into its fold and asked the [North Carolina Supreme Court](#)^[9] to consider hearing the case. This case was later decided in favor of the Occaneechi, who officially became the [Occaneechi Band of Saponi Nation](#)^[10]. Other tribes and Indian organizations represented on the Commission of Indian Affairs are the Eastern Band of [Cherokee](#)^[11] Indians, the [Coharie](#)^[12], the [Haliwa-Saponi](#)^[13], the [Guilford Native American Association](#)^[14], the [Lumbee](#)^[15], the [Meherrin](#)^[16], the [Waccamaw](#)^[17]-Siouan tribe, the [Triangle Native American Society](#)^[18], the Sappony, the [Cumberland County](#)^[19] Association for Indian People, and the [Metrolina Native American Association](#)^[20].

Reference:

North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, "A Historical Perspective about the Indians of North Carolina and an Overview of the Commission of Indian Affairs," *NCHR* 56 (April 1979).

Additional Resources:

NC Commission of Indian Affairs: <http://www.doa.state.nc.us/cia/>^[3]

Image Credit:

Logo, NC Commission of Indian Affairs. Image courtesy of the Commission of Indian Affairs. Available from <http://www.doa.state.nc.us/cia/>^[3] (accessed May 24, 2012).

Subjects:

[American Indians](#)^[21]

[Government agencies](#)^[22]

[Governmental programs](#)^[23]

Authors:

Williams, Wiley J., [24]

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1 January 2006 | Williams, Wiley J.

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[1] <https://ncpedia.org/commission-indian-affairs> [2] <https://ncpedia.org/government/nc-commission-indian> [3] <http://www.doa.state.nc.us/cia/> [4] <https://ncpedia.org/american-indians/introduction> [5] <http://www.doa.state.nc.us/> [6] <https://ncpedia.org/employment-security-commission> [7] <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/guest> [8] <https://ncpedia.org/occaneechi-indians> [9] <https://ncpedia.org/supreme-court-north-carolina> [10] <http://www.obsn.org/> [11] <https://ncpedia.org/cherokee/overview> [12] <https://ncpedia.org/coharie-indians> [13] <https://ncpedia.org/haliwa-people-and-haliwa-saponi> [14] <http://maps.google.com/maps/place?oe=utf-8&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&um=1&ie=UTF-8&q=Guilford+Native+American+Association&fb=1&gl=us&hq=Guilford+Native+American+Association&cid=11166665774655649069> [15] <https://ncpedia.org/lumbee/introduction> [16] <https://ncpedia.org/meherrin-indians> [17] <https://ncpedia.org/waccamaw-indians> [18] <http://www.tnasweb.org/> [19] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/cumberland> [20] <http://www.metrolinanativeamericans.com/> [21] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/american-indian> [22] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/go> [23] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/governmental-prog> [24] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/williams-wiley-j> [25] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/encyclopedia->