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THE TUNICA-BILOXI TRIBE OF LOUISIANA AWARDED \$2.3 MILLION GRANT TO PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR TRIBAL STUDENTS

Marksville, La. – (Oct. 14, 2016) – The U.S. Department of Education awarded the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana \$2.3 million over the next four years to improve education and provide native students with the resources needed to be college and career-ready. Through the federal grant, the tribe expects to reduce drop-out rates, enhance academic performance and improve school completion rates for tribal students on the Tunica-Biloxi Reservation and throughout Avoyelles Parish.

“Education holds a great value and we believe it lays the foundation for shaping the lives of our tribal youth,” said Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana chairman Joey Barbry. “We are grateful for this contribution and look forward to leveling the playing field and arming our tribal students with the knowledge and learning tools needed to succeed.”

Through its Native Youth Community Projects grants, The Department of Education, along with the Obama administration, is allocating \$18.2 million for community-led projects to help American Indian and Alaska Native students become college-and career-ready. Each grant will support a coordinated, focused approach chosen by community partnership that includes a tribe, local schools and other organizations. The Department is awarding grants to 32 recipients in 13 states that will impact more than 30 tribes and 48 schools, allowing tribes to identify culturally-appropriate, community-specific supports including early learning, language immersion and mental health services.

“We would like to thank the Department of Education for the contribution and especially thank the Avoyelles Parish School Board for their support,” said Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana vice-chairman Marshall R. Sampson Sr. “We are hopeful this program will create greater opportunities for our local youth and their futures.”

The program will be coordinated by grant project director and Tunica-Biloxi tribal member John Barbry. The Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana plans to partner with the Avoyelles Parish School Board, Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana, Institute for Indian Development, Tulane University and the Tunica-Biloxi Vocational Rehabilitation Program to further its educational services for native students.

About the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe

The Tunica-Biloxi people first appeared in the Mississippi Valley. In the late 1700s, they settled near Marksville, Louisiana where they were skilled traders and entrepreneurs. Today, the Tribe has more than 1,200 members throughout the United States, primarily in Louisiana, Texas and Illinois.

The Tunica-Biloxi Tribe received federal recognition in 1981 for its reservation within the boundaries of Louisiana. The Tribe owns and operates the Paragon Casino Resort, the largest employer in central Louisiana. Through its compact, negotiated by the late Tribal Chairman Earl J. Barbry Sr. and the State of Louisiana, the Tribe has assisted local governments in the area with its quarterly distribution of funds, totaling more than \$40 million over two decades. For more information about the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana, visit www.tunica.org and follow us on [Facebook](#).

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