

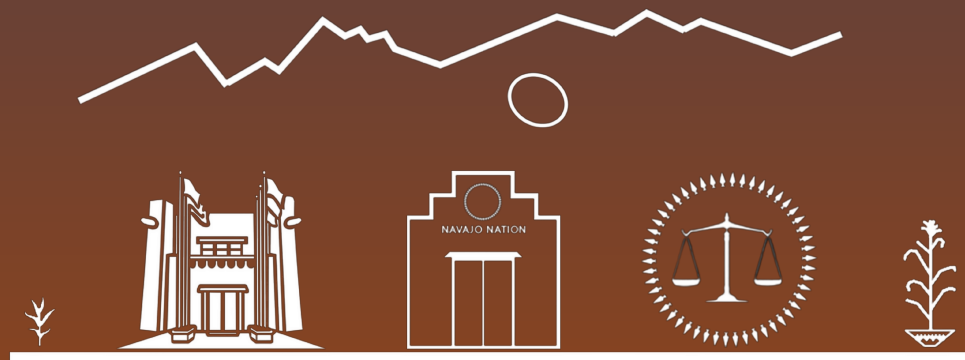


Diné Local Governance Summit

“LET'S PLAN LOCAL GOVERNANCE”

Report & Recommendations

September 2023



Office of Navajo Government Development

Visit our website:
<https://ongd.navajo-nsn.gov>

Contact us at:
928-871-7214
NavajoGovDev@gmail.com

Follow us on:





Introduction

In 1989, the Navajo Nation Council enacted Title II amendments creating the Commission on Navajo Government Development and the Office of Navajo Government Development with quasi-independent authority to accomplish the Navajo People's project of instituting reforms necessary to promote the Navajo people's interests to ensure an accountable and responsible government.

The Office & Commission on Navajo Government Development are tasked with the
Navajo Government Reform Project.

Commission on Navajo Government Development

The Commission on Navajo Government Development is made up of twelve commissioners representing various parts of Navajo Government and Society.*

Chair Marcus Tulley
Vice-Chair Loretta Seweingyawma
Comm. Anslem Morgan
Comm. James Benally
Comm. Sharon Warren

Central Agency
Western Agency
Eastern Agency
Northern Agency
Ft. Defiance Agency

Comm. Larry Rodgers
Comm. Zane James

Legislative Branch
Executive Branch

Comm. Rex Lee Jim
Comm. Rachel Brown
Comm. Natasha Goldtooth

Traditional Practitioner
Graduate Student
Diné College Student

**Vacant: Judicial Branch, Women's Commission*





Office of Navajo Government Development

The Office of Navajo Government Development is a resource hub that is tasked with the Comprehensive Navajo Government Reform Project & provides support to the Commission on Navajo Government Development.



Harrison Tsosie
Executive Director



Damon Clark
Policy Analyst



Triston Black
Policy Analyst



Alex Zhao
Statistical Research
Analyst



Mariah Stanley
Research Assistant



Wanda Nelson
Senior Office
Specialist

The Office & Commission Goal Statements:

1. Work on the Navajo Government Reform Project.
2. Draft the government reform proposal. (measure by articles, sections)
3. Empower the Navajo people by amending Title 11 Initiative procedures.
4. Public engagement regarding the Navajo Government Reform Project.
5. To develop recommendations and proposals for alternative forms of central and chapter government.



Office of Navajo Government Development



Diné Local Governance Summit



The Office of Navajo Government provided four (4) presentations regarding: Traditional Governance, Diné Governance History, Attributes of a Democracy, and the Comprehensive Government Reform Survey.

Traditional Governance

Since time immemorial, Diné governance was once governed by the Diyin Dine'é and through the emergence of the four worlds; that responsibility was given to the Diyin Nohookaa Dine'é Bilá' Ashdlaii.

Diné Governance (1923-Present)



In the past 100 years, the current Navajo government has been developed by various historical events. The presentation details the creation of chapters, the 3-branch government, and the history of CNGD & ONGD. History illustrates how the creation of the Navajo Government has been heavily impacted by U.S. Federal Indian Law and Bureau of Indian Affairs policies & leadership.



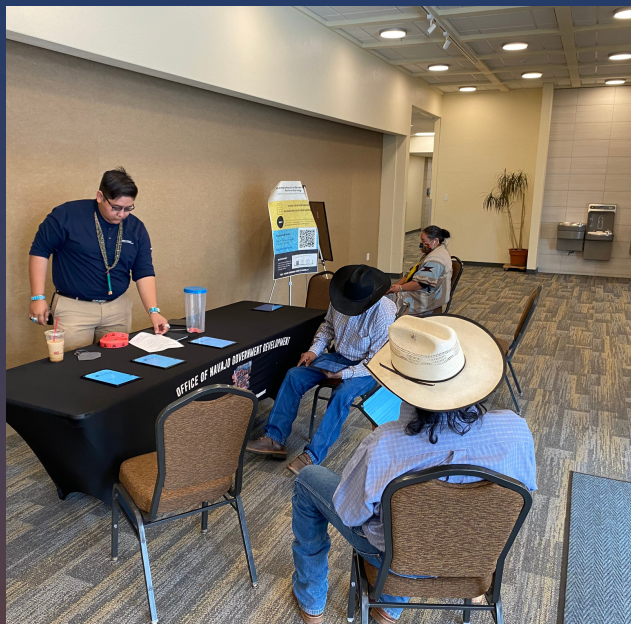
Office of Navajo Government Development



Diné Local Governance Summit

Comprehensive Government Reform Survey

Do Navajo citizens prefer more presidential or parliamentary systems of governance, or even want democracy? This summer, we fielded the Navajo Comprehensive Government Reform Survey incorporating all of the different government reform proposals from 1989 to present. While providing the Navajo Nation with citizen preferences for future government reform, we investigate pluralism within the Nation.



The Essential Attributes of A Democracy



The presentation covered three components: (1) the Navajo Nation Supreme Court's interpretation and pronouncements regarding CD-68-89 including the Whereas provisions; (2) the essential attributes of a modern democratic nation including legitimacy, rule by the people, respect for the rights of citizens; and (3) the structural components of a democratic nation such as unitary or federal state, separation of powers, & checks and balances in power.



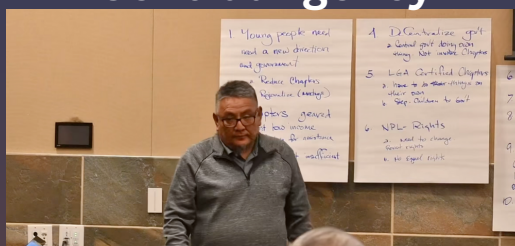


Diné Local Governance Summit

Navajo Agency Breakout Sessions

The Commission on Navajo Government Development facilitated breakout sessions according to agency boundaries. Each agency expressed their challenges they face in the local community and offered solutions to address local governance across the Navajo Nation.

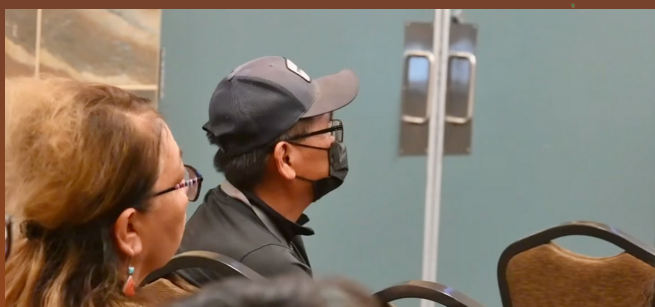
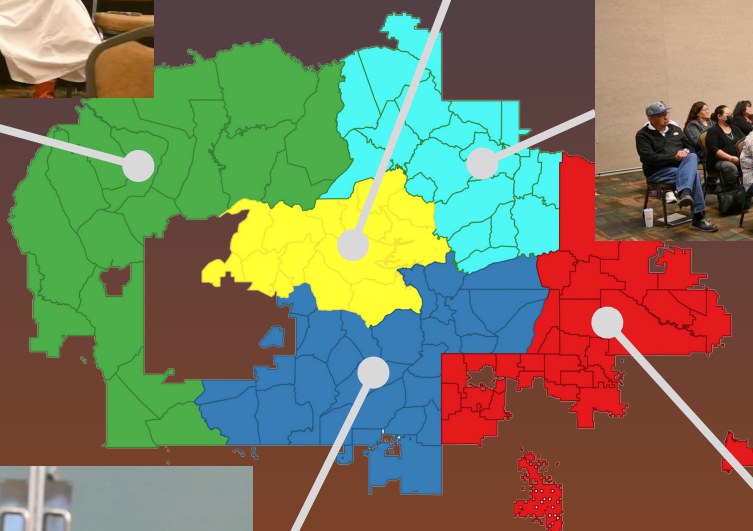
Central Agency



Western Agency



Northern Agency



Fort Defiance Agency



Eastern Agency



Office of Navajo Government Development



What are the essential attributes of a democracy to the Navajo people?

Central Agency

- Decentralize Government
- Local Empowerment
- More authority to make local decisions.
- Restructure local authority to benefit the people.
- Maintain Ké and human value.

Eastern Agency

- The US needs to recognize Navajo Nation Chapter Governments.
- Initiatives, Referendum, Petitions, and Civic Engagement.
- Recommendations based on History ideology and government serving the people.
- Changing demographics means how we define democracy changes.
- Responding to community needs.
- Reform is needed to make Navajo Nation Democracy work.

Ft. Defiance Agency

- Government Reform.
- Educating the Public.
- Consulting the People.
- 4th Branch of Government.
- Involving Traditionalism in Gov.
- Chapter Resolutions are enforced by Window Rock.
- More information shared on previous and current work.
- Lack of compliance & transparency.

Northern Agency

- Participation by the People.
- Eligibility to Vote.
- Participation by the Youth.
- Three branches of Government
- Increased communication.
- Democracy is a difficult word for many to understand.
- Representation by Geography.
- More education on "Democracy".
- Communication, Research, and Activity within communities.

Western Agency

- Hard to discuss Western Concept.
- Do what the people want.
- How do we get oversight on our funds?
- Identify how funds are spent and allocated.
- Fundamental Beliefs & Education.
- Lack of communication.
- Accountability, not Shaa Diné.
- Leader represents the people.
- More information & education.
- What about the middle class?





What powers and authorities do chapters need to effectively govern at the local level?

Central Agency

- Have authority to decide budgets.
- Authority within the 164 Process.
- Regional government or commission.
- Keep personnel hiring & management.
- Signature authority to officials on documents & contracts.
- Involve youth & decide projects.

Eastern Agency

- Control scheduling & communication.
- Master land use plans, policy to teach the youth.
- 2002 Recommendations revisit.
- Traditionalism should guide NN society
- Control over livestock, chapter projects, and other local government entities.
- Administrative personnel have greater authority than officials.
- Accountability in ethics and prevent nepotism/favoritism.

Ft. Defiance Agency

- Positions need clear qualifications.
- 5 Management System limiting.
- Title 26 isn't working.
- Every Navajo can vote.
- Chapter administration have more power.
- Additional meetings.
- Too much micromanaging.
- Homesteads than homesites.
- Reeducate communities on government policies.
- Accountability of elected officials.
- Delegates don't attend Chapter meetings.
- Central government has too much oversight
- Term limits are needed.
- Non-certified chapters are crippled.

Northern Agency

- Contracting projects, increase staff, & retain legal counsel.
- Reform 164 Process.
- Lack knowledge on how to function.
- Rewarding local participation.
- LGA Certification process slow.
- Greater fund limits on contracts.
- Educational events on certification.
- Non-LGA chapters don't have sovereignty.

Western Agency

- Issues homesite leases, Community Land Use Plans by region, boundaries need recognition.
- Title 26 - Rewrite powers section.
- Allocate annual budgets.
- Probation period for 2 years for elected officials.
- Title 26 is good, but not enough guidance from WR.
- Education.





What services, powers, and authorities do chapters need that could be shared amongst other chapters in your area?

Central Agency

- Certify all chapters as LGA.
- Share funding, equipment, personnel, costs, and projects.
- Authority to open/borrow gravel pits.
- Economic Development.

Eastern Agency

- Procurement for Non-LGA Chapters.
- Strategic Planning meetings, capital infrastructure, and budgets.
- Title 26 Revisions Needed.
- Redistricted Funding from Window Rock.
- No differences between LGA and non-LGA Chapters.
- Homesite and Business Lease Sites.
- Retain Legal Counsel.
- Education Reform.
- Consolidate smaller chapters into larger ones.
- Chapters can't cooperate.
- Remove Chapter Vice-Presidents for Project Managers.
- Pass Resolutions to Resolve Issues.
- Cooperate with all entities (Navajo Nation and United States), do research, and cooperate with staff.

Ft. Defiance Agency

- Approving homesite leases.
- Sharing heavy equipment, funding, specialists, match-fund for PEP.
- Communication.
- Doing without housing discretionary system.
- Regionalization.
- Make Council 30-day legislative session.
- Go back to 88 Delegates.
- Remove LDAs.

Northern Agency

- Chapters need to be consolidated.
- Decentralize Window Rock to regional or local services.
- Housing discretionary system.
- Funding for capital infrastructure, PEP funds, professionals and their services.
- NN Income requirements are so severe only the poor get help.
- Education on what powers and authorities chapters DO have.

Western Agency

- Public Safety, Roads, and Services.
- Legal Counsel, Grazing Permits.
- Strategic Planning and Funds.
- Clean Slate and Reform by the People.





What is the aspirational relationship and communication between Chapters and the central government?

Central Agency

- Equal representation and authority.
- Respect from Window Rock.
- Local Government should participate in planning & meetings with Window Rock.
- Limit meetings and oversight.
- Involve Local Government in Navajo Nation Decision Making.
- Services for all income levels.

Eastern Agency

- New Government is needed.
- Major miscommunication between Window Rock activities and chapters needs.
- Less red tape & improved communication needed.
- Better access to information, documents should be digitized.
- State funds should remain with chapters in that state.
- Virtual attendance for chapters.

Ft. Defiance Agency

- Regionalization is a good idea for saving money and CLUP-C, stipends, etc. and dealing with Window Rock.
- The current system reflects the design of another era.
- Window Rock should share everything (projects, POs, & budgets), meet with chapters (quarterly), & give feedback on projects.
- Mistreating certain chapters.
- Local mafia hinders cooperation and development.

Northern Agency

- More communication & accountability between Window Rock & chapters.
- Navajo Nation websites, contact numbers, & information are outdated.
- Delegates be focused and attend all chapter meetings.
- Chapter ability to petition Council, to get things moving.
- Software to track chapter work orders, resolutions, and phone calls.
- More material on AFOG.

Western Agency

- Proper listening & communication from Window Rock.
- Remove red tape & oversight.
- Chapter Recognition by the United States.
- Better qualified workers in Window Rock.
- Revise chapter level pre-contract laws & policy
- No relationship between Window Rock & Chapters. All funneled by DCD & ASC.





What strategies should local governments develop to improve the quality of life of its citizens?

Central Agency

- Provide assistance and services to all with equality.
- More funding for essential services from WR.
- Include and promote youth participation.
- Work Together.
- Reduce delegates and oversight.

Eastern Agency

- Infrastructure between Navajo Nation and New Mexico.
- Reporting and Bureaucratic assistance needed.
- Outreach to community members to organize carpools for meetings.
- Advance cottage industries to be self-sufficient.
- Plans of Operation for Agency council need to be revised with greater authority.
- Chapters can improve communication at agency level.
- Encourage community participation in planning.
- Navajo Nation needs accountability mechanism to improve all aspects of government.
- Improved health care and access.
- Rural addressing.

Ft. Defiance Agency

- Public safety.
- Assist youth with Homesite leases and rehabilitation services.
- Work with NDOT for roads, repaint lanes, etc.
- All chapters should be LGA to cooperate.
- Focus on homes and housing plant.
- Regionalization needs community input.

Northern Agency

- Exercise authorities to develop Chapter economies, public safety, capital infrastructure, education, peacemaking, services, data collection on housing.
- Land use planning needs more community participation.
- Revenue streams to Chapters not Window Rock.
- Too much power to grazing permit holders.

Western Agency

- Reports on Window Rock activity to Chapters.
- More Local Control.
- Traditional Governance Incorporated in Navajo Nation Politics.
- Self-Sufficiency, Economic Reform.
- Money is sent to Window Rock, but how much is returned.
- Regulate meetings to avoid grandstanding.
- Chapter funds stay within Chapter.
- Support businesses despite land issues.
- Tax certain funds like alcohol and other commodities.
- Strategic planning.
- Act rather than wait for others.





What do you envision local governance to look like in the near future?

Central Agency

- Youth run our government.
- Local governments deal directly with United States.
- 4th Branch as noted by Diné Fundamental Law.
- Maintain Navajo philosophy, culture, and teachings.

Eastern Agency

- Fixed 164 Process.
- Respecting chapter officials.
- If we don't adapt then we will repeat this.
- Decision should be coming from bottom down.
- People are empowered.
- Bottom-Up Change.

Ft. Defiance Agency

- 5 regional chapters working together.
- Allowing homesite leases to have businesses.
- Regionalization should be incorporated, toll booths to regulate traffic.

Northern Agency

- Guidance for new staff.
- Cooperation in harmony, lower role of delegates & Window Rock.
- Better communication.
- Chapter revenue stays in chapters.
- Better knowledge of elected officials and responsibilities.

Western Agency

- Local autonomy, ability to tax, LGA certification, hay sales, streamline interactions, Grazing permittees pay for land, slaughter houses for Chapters.
- Ability to hold elected official accountable.
- Schools teaching our language and education public on Navajo Nation government.
- No dictatorships from ASC and DCD.
- Housing renovation, commercial land, land consent.



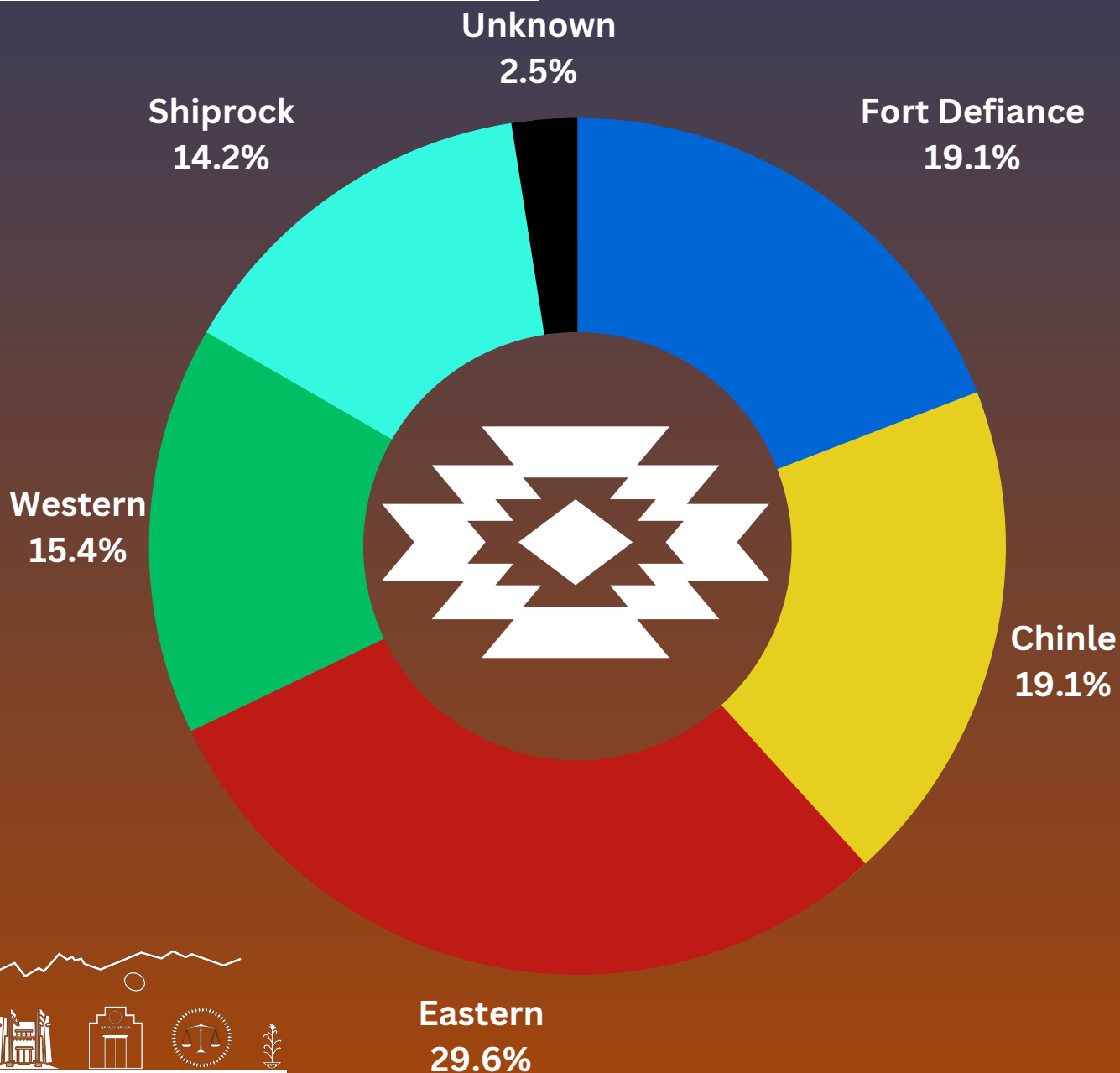
09-14-2023

REGISTRATION

On September 14, 2023 the Diné Local Governance Summit had **162 individuals attend from across the Navajo Nation**. The event had over **220 individuals registered** for the event.



AGENCY REPRESENTATION



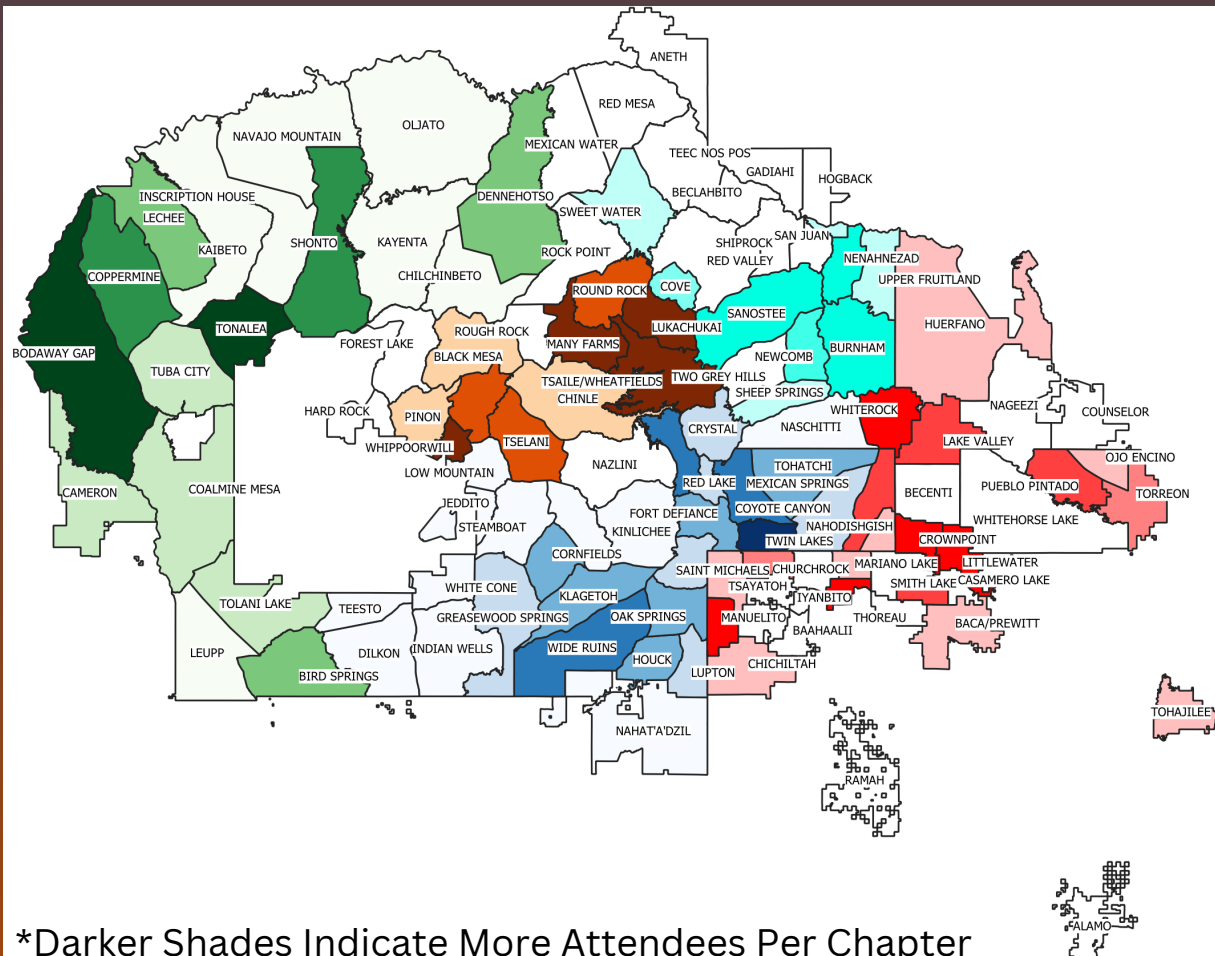
- BACA/PREWITT
- BIRD SPRINGS
- BLACK MESA
- BODAWAY GAP
- BURNHAM
- CAMERON
- CHICHILTAH
- CHINLE
- COALMINE MESA
- COPPERMINE
- CORNFIELDS
- COVE
- COYOTE CANYON
- CROWNPOINT
- CRYSTAL
- DENNEHOTSO
- FORT DEFIANCE
- GREASEWOOD SPRINGS
- HOUCK
- HUERFANO
- IYANBITO
- KLAGETOH

- LAKE VALLEY
- LECHEE
- LITTLEWATER
- LUKACHUKAI
- LUPTON
- MANUELITO
- MANY FARMS
- MEXICAN SPRINGS
- NAHODISHGISH
- NENAHNEZAD
- NEWCOMB
- OAK SPRINGS
- OJO ENCINO
- PINEDALE
- PINON
- PUEBLO PINTADO
- RED LAKE
- ROCK SPRINGS
- ROUND ROCK
- SAINT MICHAELS
- SAN JUAN
- SANOSTEE

- SAWMILL
- SHEEP SPRINGS
- SHONTO
- SMITH LAKE
- STANDING ROCK
- SWEET WATER
- TACHEE/BUEGAP
- TOHAJILEE
- TOHATCHI
- TOLANI LAKE
- TONALEA
- TORREON
- TSAILE/WHEATFIELDS
- TSAYATOH
- TSELANI
- TUBA CITY
- TWIN LAKES
- UPPER FRUITLAND
- WHIPPOORWILL
- WHITEROCK
- WIDE RUINS

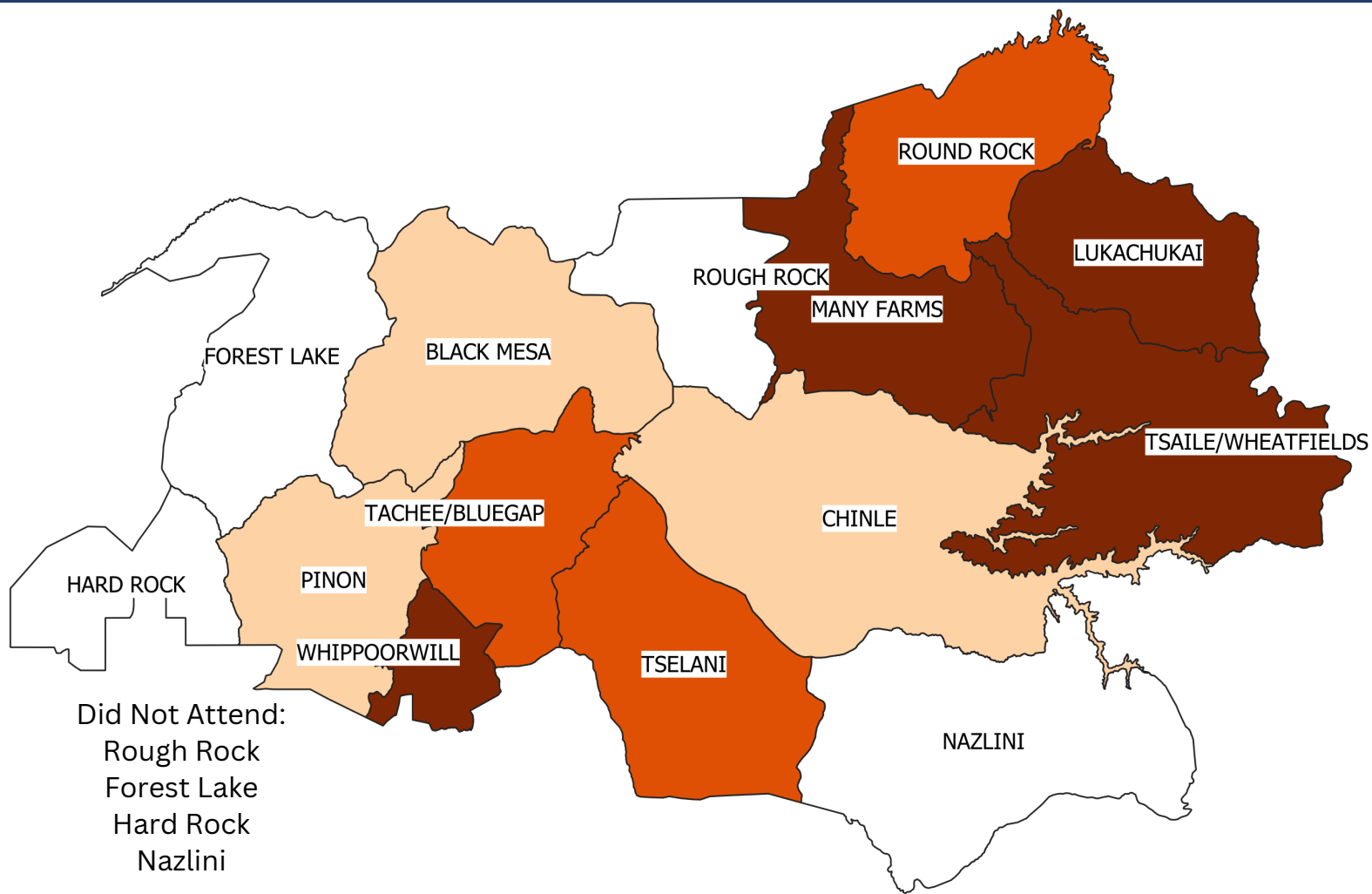
**65/110 CHAPTERS
ATTENDED***

**59.09% OF
CHAPTERS
REPRESENTED**



CHINLE AGENCY BREAKDOWN

10/14 (71%) CHAPTERS REPRESENTED



CHAPTERS

Many Farms Chapter
Lukachukai Chapter
Tsaile/Wheatfields
Whippoorwill Chapter
Blue Gap/Tachee Chapter

ATTENDANCE

7	Tselani-Cottonwood Chapter	3
4	Round Rock Chapter	3
4	Black Mesa Chapter	1
4	Chinle Chapter	1
3	Pinon Chapter	1

EASTERN NAVAJO AGENCY BREAKDOWN

19/31 (61%)

CHAPTERS REPRESENTED

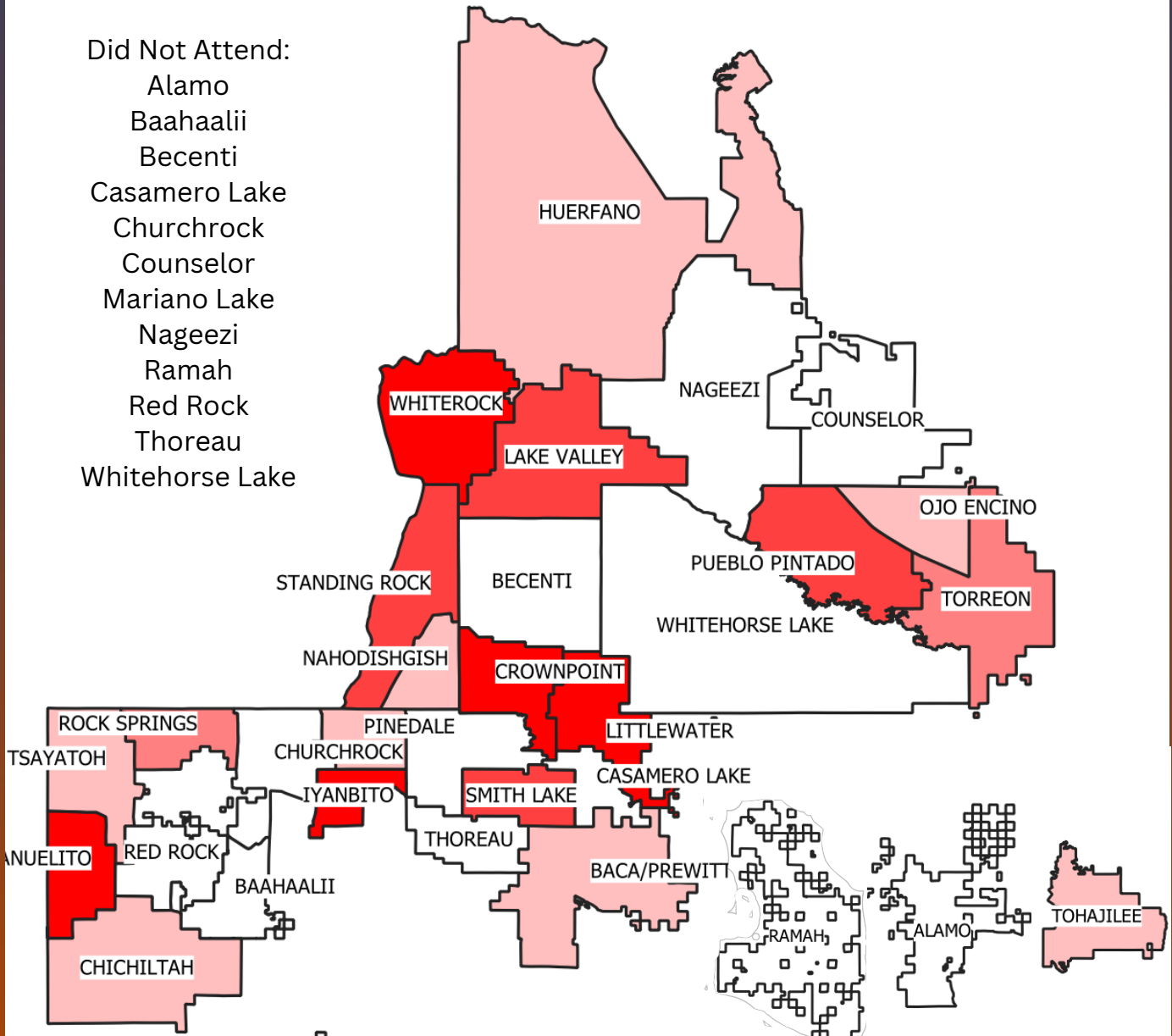
CHAPTERS

ATTENDANCE

IYANBITO	6	TORREON	2
MANUELITO	6	BACA/PREWITT	2
CROWNPOINT	4	CHICHILTAH	1
LITTLEWATER	4	HUERFANO	1
WHITEROCK	4	NAHODISHGISH	1
LAKE VALLEY	3	OJO ENCINO	1
PUEBLO PINTADO	3	PINEDALE	1
SMITH LAKE	3	TOHAJILEE	1
STANDING ROCK	3	TSAYATOH	1
ROCK SPRINGS	2		

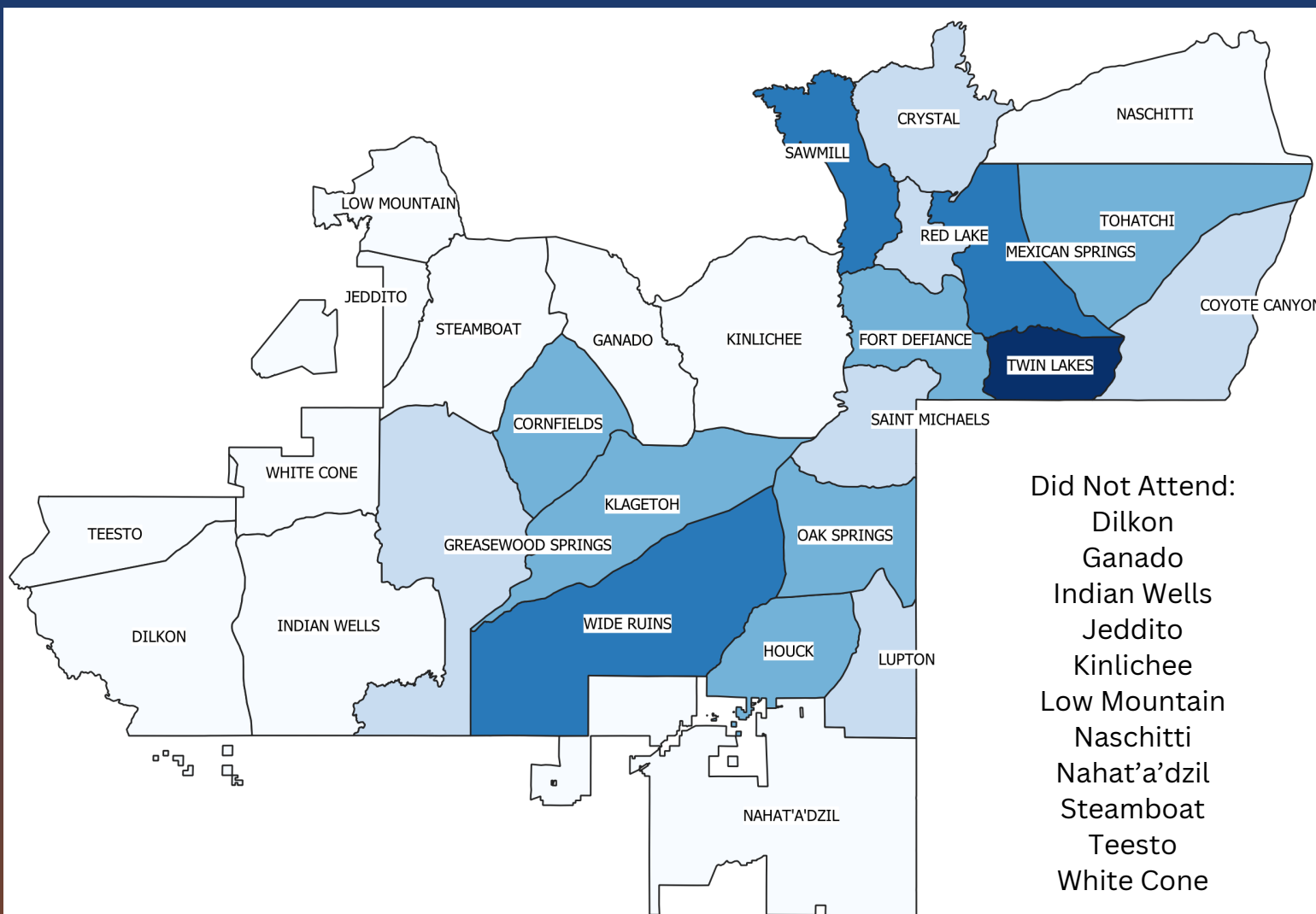
Did Not Attend:

Alamo
Baahaalii
Becenti
Casamero Lake
Churchrock
Counselor
Mariano Lake
Nageezi
Ramah
Red Rock
Thoreau
Whitehorse Lake



FORT DEFIANCE AGENCY BREAKDOWN

16/27 (59%) CHAPTERS REPRESENTED



CHAPTERS

ATTENDANCE

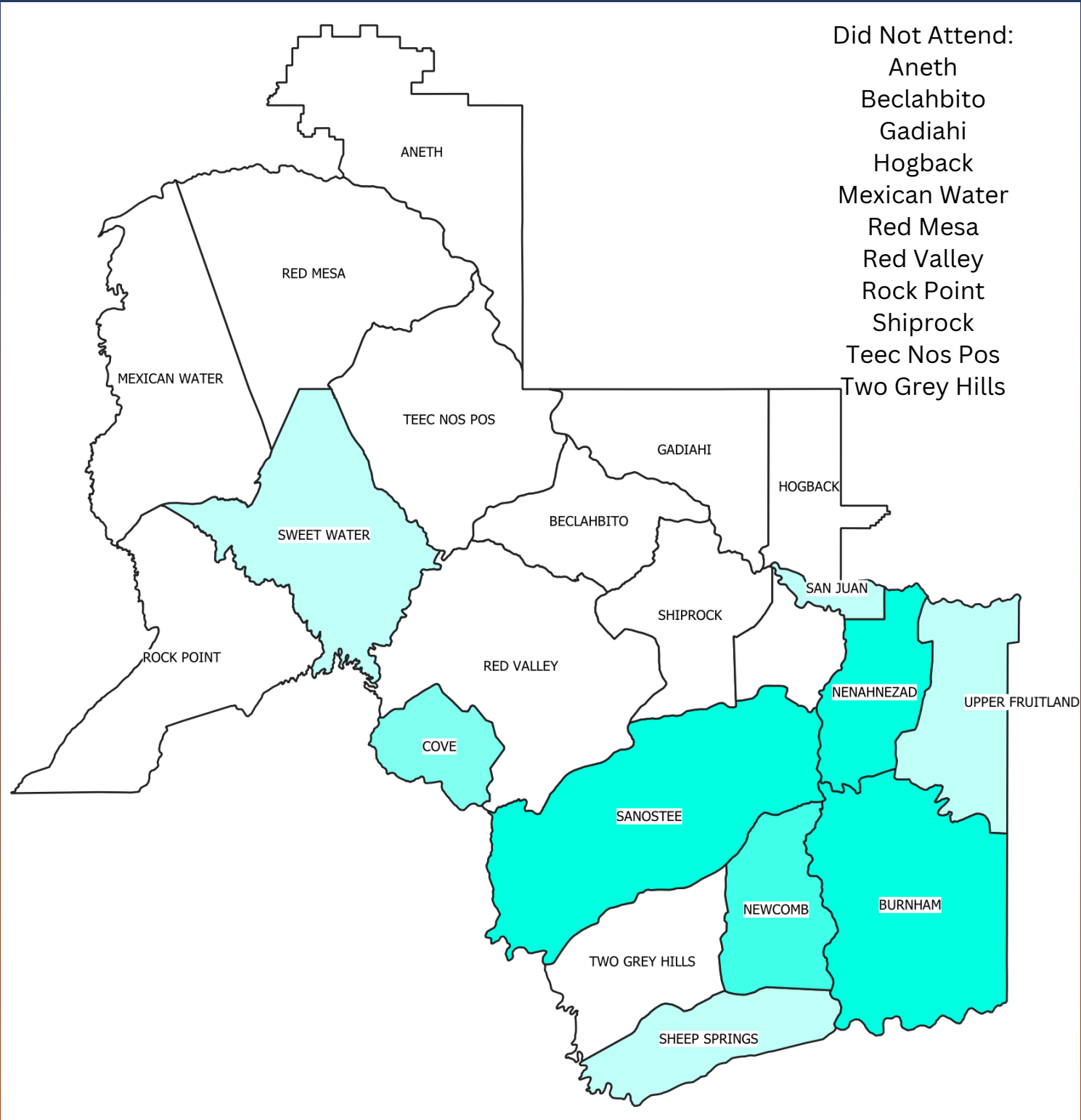
TWIN LAKES	4	OAK SPRINGS	2
MEXICAN SPRINGS	3	TOHATCHI	2
SAWMILL	3	COYOTE CANYON	1
WIDE RUINS	3	CRYSTAL	1
CORNFIELDS	2	GREASEWOOD SPRINGS	1
FORT DEFIANCE	2	LUPTON	1
HOUCK	2	RED LAKE	1
KLGETOH	2	SAINT MICHAELS	1

SHIPROCK AGENCY BREAKDOWN

9/20 (45%)

CHAPTERS REPRESENTED

CHAPTERS	ATTENDANCE		
BURNHAM	6		
NENAHNEZAD	4	SAN JUAN	1
SANOSTEE	4	SHEEP SPRINGS	1
NEWCOMB	3	SWEET WATER	1
COVE	2	UPPER FRUITLAND	1



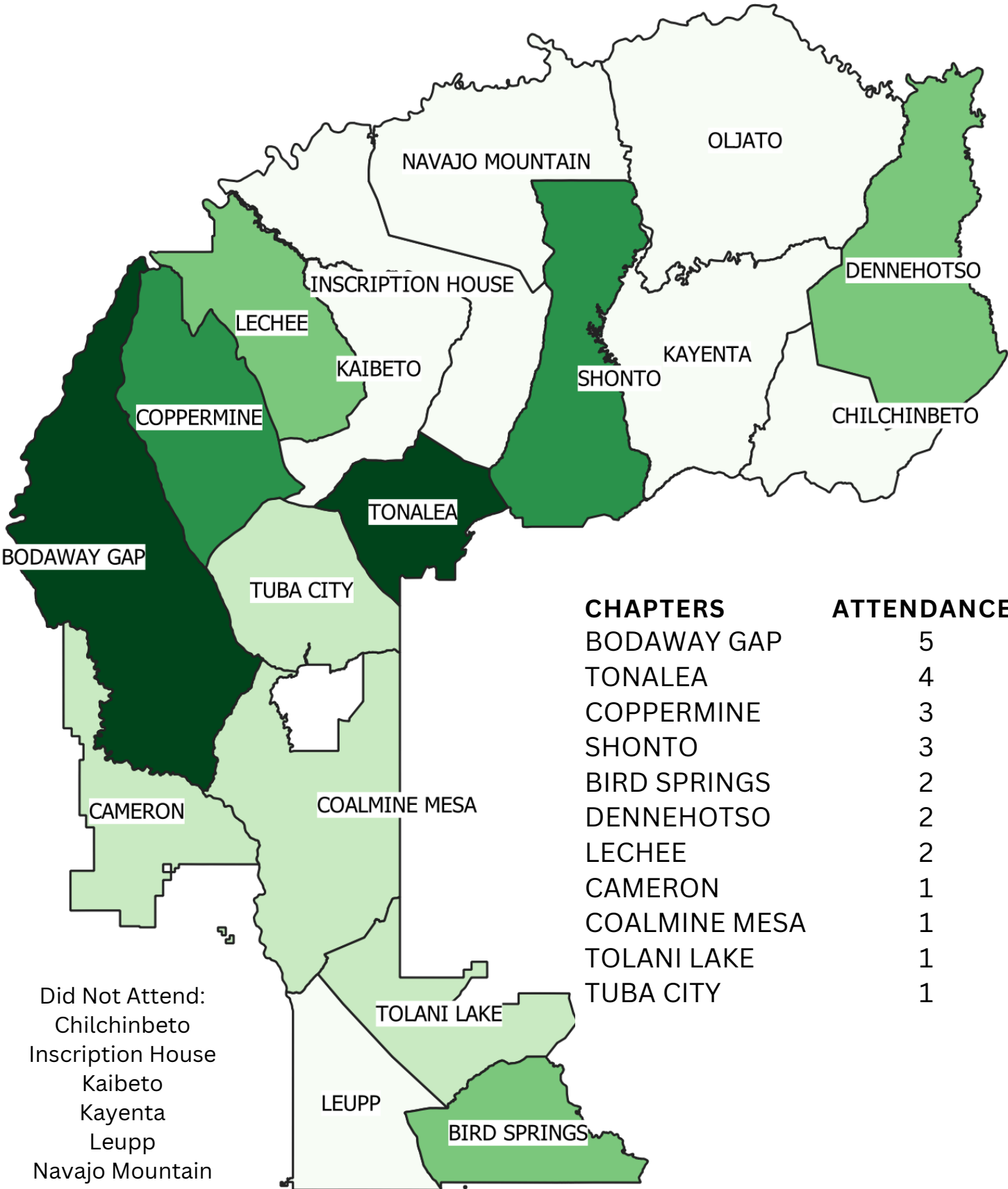
WESTERN NAVAJO AGENCY

11/18 (61%)

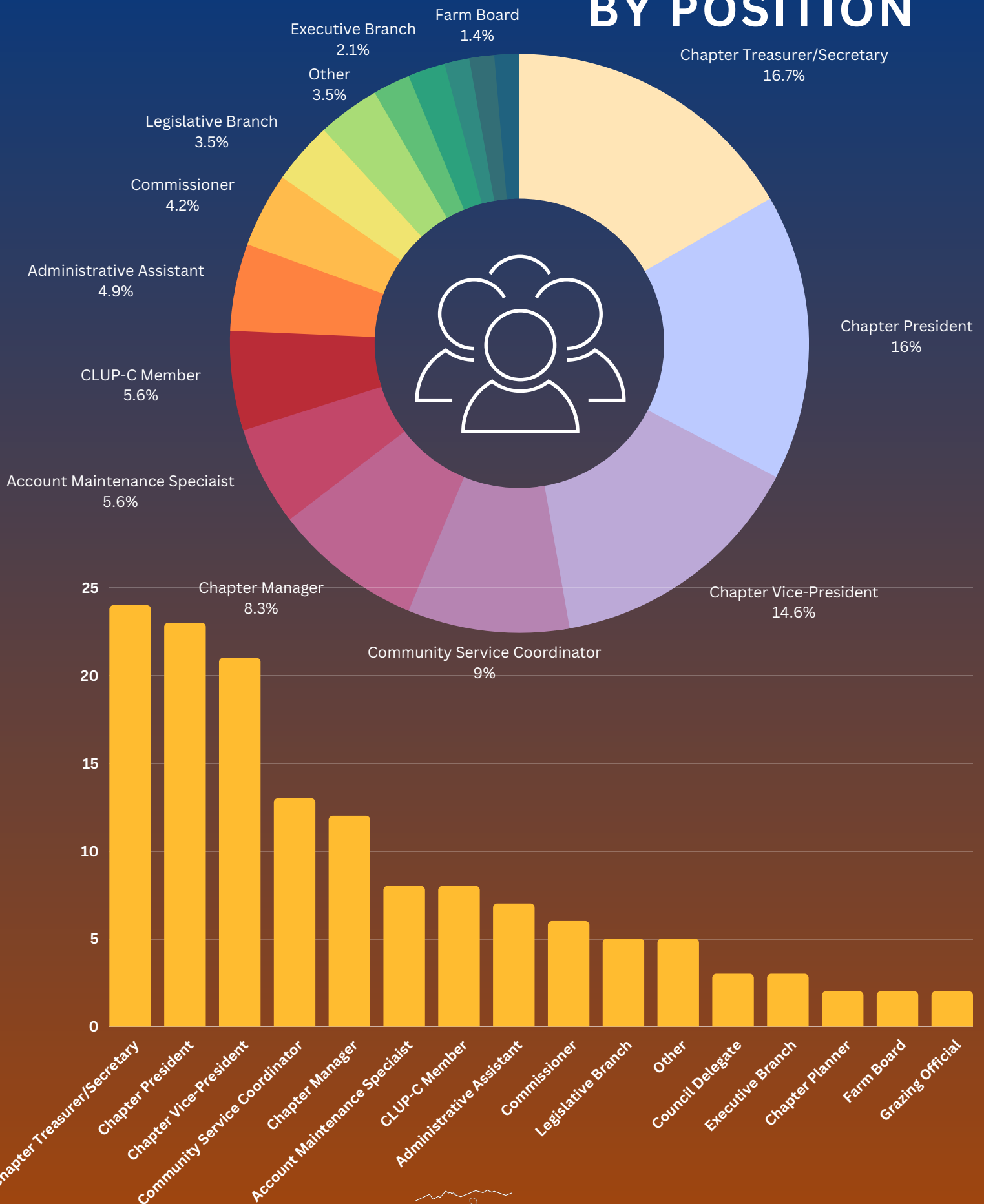
BREAKDOWN

CHAPTERS

REPRESENTED



ATTENDANCE BY POSITION



Main Takeaways from Feedback Survey:

- "I am very pleased and appreciate the historical information relevant to our Diné government. Exemplary presentation."
- "Navajo concept of Nahata"
- "The event was good."



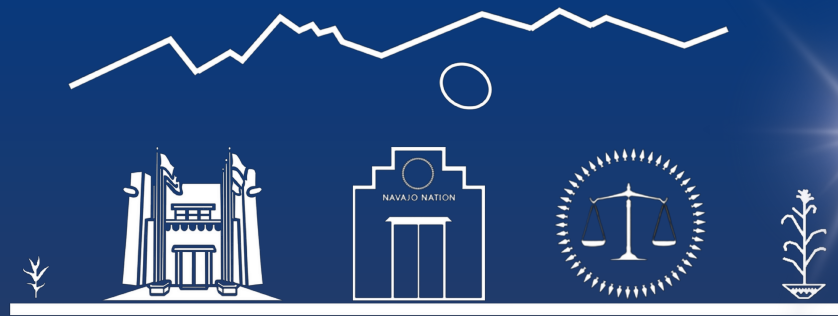
SUMMIT TAKEAWAYS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Takeaways:

- This was an incredibly in-demand event and future summits are needed to educate and engage with the public.
- The summit had great representation from various chapter positions across the Navajo Nation and its agencies.
- Commissioners had the direct opportunity to listen and hear from local Diné leadership
- Chapter officials & administrators need their voices heard as they raised concerns and solutions across policy areas.
- Feedback illustrated the event to be relevant & helpful for Chapters, while also generating interest in future events.

Recommendations:

- More education on Navajo culture, language, history, and government.
- Better communication from Window Rock to Chapters on central government activities.
- Chapters are pivotal for Navajo Nation governance and play a key role in encouraging community participation for economic development, strategic planning, public safety, and services.
- Any discussion on regionalization needs community input.
- Overall, serious reform is needed all across the Navajo Nation government.



Office of Navajo Government Development

Ahéhee' Nitsáágo



PHOTO: (Left to Right) Alex Zhao, Statistical Research Analyst; Triston Black, Policy Analyst; Comm. James Benally, Northern Agency; Wanda Nelson, Senior Office Specialist; Damon Clark, Policy Analyst; Harrison Tsoie, Executive Director; Vice-Chair Loretta Seweingyawma, Western Agency; Comm. Sharon Warren, Ft. Defiance Agency; Comm. Larry Rodgers, Legislative Branch; Comm. Anselm Morgan, Eastern Agency; & Chair Marcus Tulley, Central Agency.