Tribal Nations Initiative

Native Americans in Philanthropy

Tribal Nations Initiative
For over 30 years, Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP) has promoted equitable and effective philanthropy in Native communities.

Native Americans in Philanthropy is the only national organization that supports and educates all levels of philanthropy and funders to better understand and engage with issues that are important to Native peoples, Indigenous communities, and Tribal Nations.

The cornerstone of our work is our relatives and our networks. We support several communities that work together to build knowledge, community, priorities, and power in the philanthropic sector. These networks include Native professionals in philanthropy, elected Tribal leaders, Native youth leaders, and Native nonprofit leaders.

The following are key statistics related to American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN). Data about Native Hawaiians is usually grouped with Asian, Asian-American, and Pacific Islander groups and not with the other Indigenous groups of what is now known as the United States.

**Population**
- 9.7 million people or 2.9% of the U.S. population identify as AI/AN
- 574 Federally-recognized tribes
- 324 reservations
- In 2020, 87% of AI/AN do not live on reservations or trust lands

**Economics**
- Median household income: $51,212
- 22.6% live at the poverty level
- 11.7% unemployment rate

**Philanthropy**
- From 2002 to 2016, large U.S. foundations gave an average of 0.4 percent of total funding to Native American communities and causes

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1. Improved Race and Ethnicity Measures Reveal U.S. Population Is Much More Multiracial, United States Census Bureau
2. Source: U.S. Department of the Interior
3. Source: United States Census Bureau
5. 2021 Income in the United States, United States Census Bureau
6. Poverty in the United States: 2021, United States Census Bureau
8. Investing in Native Communities: Philanthropic Funding for Native American Communities Causes
While Tribes are not new to the practice of giving and helping their neighbors, Tribal philanthropy is a growing segment to support Native American communities.

Native Americans in Philanthropy’s Tribal Nations Initiative (TNI) supports a Native-led movement to bring Tribal Nations and the philanthropy sector together on one centralized platform. Beyond facilitating a space for connection and collaboration, TNI supports Native philanthropists across a spectrum, from established grantmakers expanding their impact to those just beginning to explore the landscape. By building visibility, Tribal coalition building, identifying priorities, encouraging meaningful partnerships, developing strategic pathways and creating technical support systems, the TNI aims to Indigenize giving, better connect the philanthropy sector, and direct more resources to support Native American communities.

TNI Listening Sessions

The Tribal Nations Initiative (TNI) engaged in a national listening tour in six distinct regions in 2022 to hear from Tribal Leaders, elders, and community members about their programs, needs, relationships with philanthropy, and where they feel philanthropic investments can best support their programs and initiatives. The TNI Listening Sessions also heard from Tribal Giving Programs and explored their community impacts.

A final report on the listening sessions and data findings will be made available, which will help Tribal Nations and the philanthropic sector better understand the landscape for Tribal philanthropy and the ways in which Tribal Nations and the philanthropy sector can connect, collaborate, and support priority needs.
Climate & Conservation

As the first caretakers of the land in these United States, Indigenous peoples have a special connection to the land, water, and many species that share their world. The Earth is a part of their culture, creation stories, and ways of life. Indigenous peoples have been stewards of the environment since time immemorial, preserving the land, water, and species that have sustained their communities for generations. They have long learned the delicate balance of sustainable practices while living in harmony with the environment. Native Americans in Philanthropy recognizes the importance of this relationship and supports Native-led climate and conservation work.

Tribal Nations Conservation Pledge & Funding Collaborative

Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP) has launched a Tribal Nations Conservation Pledge & Funding Collaborative (the Collaborative) that calls on the philanthropic sector to make significant investments in biodiversity and conservation projects led by Tribal Nations. With support from Biodiversity Funders Group and The Christensen Fund, the Collaborative provides a forum to strategize, share knowledge and educational resources, and participate in a funding mechanism to quickly move capital to Tribal Nations.

Components of the Collaborative:

- A Fund hosted by NAP that provides resources directly to the biodiversity and conservation efforts of Tribes, inter-Tribal organizations, and Tribal consortia
- A Pledge committing philanthropic institutions to a self-determined amount of funding, or a self-determined percentage of annual programmatic funding, over the next three years to support the biodiversity and conservation efforts of Tribes, inter-Tribal organizations, and Tribal consortia
- A learning circle of funders who have contributed to the Fund, or have taken the Pledge, that meet regularly for concerted dialogue and ongoing learning opportunities led by Tribal experts
Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP) recently supported Tribal grant applications for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s (NFWF) America the Beautiful Challenge (ATBC) by leveraging $800,000 to satisfy the funding opportunity’s required cash match for each grant awarded.

Through its Tribal Nations Conservative Pledge and Funding Collaborative, NAP provided the required matching contribution for projects awarded to Tribal Nations through ATBC. In total, NFWF awarded $91 million to 55 projects, with $26.7 million going to 14 projects from Tribal Nations. These critical investments will support much-needed, landscape-scale conservation projects in 42 states and three U.S. territories.

### ATBC Grant Breakdown

**Submissions**

Applications Submitted by Tribal Nations:

- 133 out of 522 (25.5%)

**Total Amount of Funding Requested by Tribal Nations:**

- $326 million out of $1.1 billion in total requests

**Total Amount Awarded to Tribal Nations:**

- $26.7 million out of $91 million

**Average Award Amount to Tribal Nations:**

- $2 million

### Awards

- **Funding Awarded vs. Funding Requested:**
  - $91 Million Awarded vs. $1.1 Billion Requested

- **Number of Awards to Tribal Nations:**
  - 14 out of 55 (25.4%)

- **Total Amount Awarded to Tribal Nations:**
  - $26.7 million out of $91 million

- **Average Award Amount to Tribal Nations:**
  - $2 million

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The Tribal Philanthropy Network is a community of practice made up of people who work in philanthropy on behalf of their Tribe. The network supports, connects, and elevates the work of Tribal professionals working in the areas of philanthropic advocacy, grantmaking, and grantseeking.

Tribal leaders, Tribal philanthropy professionals, Tribal grant writers, Tribal directors, managers and/or planners are encouraged to join this network to learn with others doing similar work, share priorities and challenges, and develop strategies to uplift Tribal philanthropy in support of Native communities.

The Tribal Nations Conservation Pledge and Funding Collaborative is a Native-led initiative with guidance and recommendations provided by a Tribal Leader Advisory Committee.

The Tribal Leader Advisory Committee is comprised of Tribal leadership and staff, and leadership and staff from inter-Tribal organizations, and helps oversee the Fund and makes recommendations on distributions from the Fund to make effective and equitable investments in Tribal Nations across the country.
Public-private partnerships are collaborations between the government and the private sector. These partnerships can produce lasting, systemic changes, especially when many public policy issues are more complex for one sector to address alone.

On December 2, 2022, NAP’s CEO Erik Stegman officially signed a historic agreement between NAP and the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI). Under this agreement, NAP will oversee the hiring of a new position that will develop the new Office of Strategic Partnerships. This office is a first-of-its-kind resource to Tribal leaders and agency staff across the federal government, focused on coordinating federal funding streams and leveraging philanthropy to support public-private partnerships such as NAP’s current collaboration with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.
Questions?

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