

Semi-annual report | Summer 2019

Seeds *of* Native Health
A Campaign for Indigenous Nutrition



SeedsOfNativeHealth.org



SMSC Business Council



SHAKOPEE MDEWAKANTON
SIOUX COMMUNITY

Guided by the Dakota tradition of “wóokiya” or generosity and helping, our tribe has a longstanding commitment to helping others and contributing to important causes, organizations and tribes.

Given the serious and widespread nutrition and food access crisis in Indian Country, supporting the dietary health of Native American communities is of particular importance to us. Five years ago, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC) set out to create a major effort to support the Native grassroots movement around food and dietary health. Many practitioners, researchers and advocates work tirelessly on this issue, and we wanted to launch a national campaign to bring about wider attention, broader strategic support, and collaboration.

The Seeds of Native Health campaign has since grown to a \$10 million philanthropic effort. Drawing on our focus areas of food research, education and access, we have utilized grantmaking as a way to build on localized efforts. For instance, the campaign recently helped establish two new charitable funds, which support innovative nutrition programs, policy work, and research by providing grants to tribes and Native-led initiatives.

The campaign has also been successful at helping bring Native health and nutrition issues to the national stage. Our advocacy efforts – including the Native Farm Bill Coalition – have helped tribes make their voices heard and influenced public policy to the benefit of Indian Country.

We are proud to help fund and partner on innovative projects, research and advocacy efforts like these through Seeds of Native Health. They are making a difference in the lives of Indigenous peoples across the country, and we hope they will pave the way for future generations.

Charles R. Vig Keith B. Anderson Rebecca Crooks-Stratton

SMSC Business Council
Chairman Charles R. Vig
Vice-Chairman Keith B. Anderson
Secretary/Treasurer Rebecca Crooks-Stratton

A message from Seeds of Native Health Chair Jesse Chase

As chair of Seeds of Native Health, I'm privileged to work with many organizations and tribes across Indian Country that are committed to improving Native nutrition. These nonprofits and communities are spearheading pioneering efforts to address the dietary health crisis, which you will learn about in the following pages.

The work summarized in this report has influenced national legislation, supported the health of Native kids here in Minnesota, and developed resources for tribes across the country. And it wouldn't be possible without our campaign's many partners.

The Seeds of Native Health campaign is proud to support this important work. For more information on our campaign, please visit SeedsOfNativeHealth.org.



Jesse Chase, SMSC Member

Native Farm Bill Coalition leads to historic achievement



Coalition members and Native youth at the White House

As one of the single largest pieces of domestic legislation in the United States, the Farm Bill funds and sets policy on a wide variety of national programs ranging from nutrition and agriculture to forestry and rural development. Indian Country has enormous interest in this legislation. But in previous Farm Bills, Native nations and producers have struggled to get Congress to pay sufficient attention to and act on their pressing interests.

Partnering with the Intertribal Agriculture Council, the National Congress of American Indians, and the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative, the SMSC helped launch the Native Farm Bill Coalition in 2017 to give Native Americans a strong, united voice to advance a common Farm Bill agenda.



"The number and significance of Native American-related provisions in the new Farm Bill is unprecedented. Congress has listened to Indian Country as never before and delivered on many of our requests."

- **Ross Racine** (Blackfeet)

Former Executive Director, Intertribal Agriculture Council

More than 170 tribes, intertribal groups, other Native organizations, and non-Native allies are now members of the Native Farm Bill Coalition. The membership developed the Coalition's priorities for the Farm Bill, which kept Congress focused on tribal concerns.

Thanks to the Coalition's research, education and advocacy at the U.S. Capitol and across the country, the 2018 Farm Bill was signed into law in December with 63 separate provisions that benefit Indian Country, a record number of substantive items benefiting tribal nations and Native producers.

This landmark achievement will help tribes reach new levels of self-sufficiency in feeding their own people, one of the most fundamental responsibilities of leaders in any community.



Coalition members with committee staff for U.S. Rep. Conaway (RTX), then-chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture



National
Congress of
American
Indians



Coalition members with staff for U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Luján (D-NM)



Continued Farm Bill advocacy



*SMSC Vice-Chairman and Coalition Co-Chair
Keith B. Anderson speaking at the USDA
Tribal Consultation in Washington, D.C.,
May 2, 2019*

In 2019, the Coalition has remained active to work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on the implementation of new tribal authorities and access under the Farm Bill. It is also continuing to educate policymakers in the new Congress on Native nutritional and agricultural issues, assist in oversight activities, and urge Congress to further expand its recognition of tribal self-determination authority in USDA programs.

This continuing work led SMSC Vice-Chairman and Coalition Co-Chair Keith B. Anderson to attend the USDA Tribal Consultation on the 2018 Farm Bill in May 2019. This consultation was part of the department's formal process to engage tribal leaders and solicit their feedback and concerns regarding the implementation of the new Farm Bill.

At the consultation, the Vice-Chairman spoke with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, USDA staff, and other tribal leaders about Native American interests in the Farm Bill implementation and the importance of the government-to-government relationship between the federal government and tribal nations.

"This Farm Bill acknowledges the fundamental sovereignty and competence of tribal governments far more than previous Farm Bills. It gives tribes greater control over our food systems and accords our tribal producers new parity in access to USDA programs."

- SMSC Vice-Chairman Keith B. Anderson

Special Recognition Award

In February 2019, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) awarded the SMSC the 2019 Special Recognition Award to honor the tribe's "instrumental role in elevating and helping secure key tribal provisions in the 2018 Farm Bill that will greatly benefit Indian Country." SMSC Vice-Chairman Keith B. Anderson, co-chair of the Native Farm Bill Coalition, accepted the award on the tribe's behalf.

Nutrition impact honored

The Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) bestowed its 2019 Health Promotion Policy Award to the Native Farm Bill Coalition for its "key contributions to Indian Country" in creating positive improvements in nutrition education through policy change.



SMSC Vice-Chairman Anderson at the NCAI Leadership Awards Banquet

Supporting healthy Native children in Minnesota



Created by the SMSC and Better Way Foundation, the Healthy Children, Healthy Nations Fund awarded \$220,000 in grants to 10 Native American tribes and nonprofits in Minnesota. These grants support innovation in and the expansion of early childhood development and childhood nutrition programs in Minnesota's Native communities.



In Minnesota there are more than 5,000 Native American children under the age of five. Many are at risk of starting school behind, and are more likely to suffer adverse childhood experiences than kids in other populations. The Healthy Children, Healthy Nations Fund is the first donor-advised fund dedicated to supporting the innovation and expansion of early childhood development and childhood nutrition programs in Minnesota's Native communities.

Grants were awarded competitively to tribes and Native nonprofits whose work aligns with the goals of the initiative and who need additional support to help advance a specific element of their work, develop a new initiative, or explore new collaborations, partnerships and strategies.

"These grant recipients are doing important work to strengthen Native communities here in Minnesota. We're proud to be a partner in the Healthy Children, Healthy Nations Fund, and we're thankful that its leaders are supporting these innovative projects."

- Eric J. Jolly, Ph.D.

President and CEO of the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundations

"The importance of good nutrition in the earliest years of a child's life is essential for healthy brain development. For this reason, our grant-making will intentionally support both early childhood development and childhood nutrition efforts."

- Jesse Chase

SMSC Member and Chair of Seeds of Native Health and the HCHN Fund advisory committee

The SMSC and Better Way Foundation each committed \$100,000 to seed the fund, and Casey Family Programs contributed \$20,000. This grant-making fund is administered by the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundations.

This collaborative fund is an outgrowth of the Healthy Children, Healthy Nations initiative, a project of the SMSC'S Seeds of Native Health campaign, Better Way Foundation, and the Center for Indian Country Development at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.



Grant recipients

American Indian Community Housing Organization – A grant for the organization to identify a strategy to provide early intervention to Native American families dealing with historical trauma.

American Indian Family Center – A grant to develop an urban intergenerational healing garden.

Indigenous Breastfeeding Coalition of Minnesota – A grant to hire a part-time staff member to lead planning and implementation for a community coalition workshop.

Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe – A grant toward developing a Native American language summit.

Lower Sioux Indian Community – A grant to support a Dakota language program for teachers at the tribe's Early Head Start and Head Start facilities.

Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center – A grant to support the organization's GroShed Food and Medicine Project, which will provide plant medicine and cooking lessons to families and children.

Montessori American Indian Childcare Center – A grant to strengthen the organization's Ojibwe language revitalization program for children.

Native American Community Clinic – A grant to support the organization's 10-week Indigenous healthy eating and child care program for young children and families.

Prairie Island Indian Community – A grant to develop a youth-focused program within the tribe's existing Dakota language education initiative.

Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians – A grant to establish a garden and develop educational materials for the tribe's early childhood immersion school program.



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Indigenous Food & Agriculture Initiative

“The Model Tribal Food and Agriculture Code Project offers tribal governments a starting point for the conversations necessary to enact legal protections for their communities and rebuild a strong food and agriculture infrastructure in Indian Country.”

- **Stacy Leeds** (Cherokee)
Vice Chancellor, University
of Arkansas

A blueprint for tribal policy

Without their own food and agriculture laws, tribes are subject to federal and state regulation, which can stifle food production, limit food access, and undermine tribal sovereignty. The adoption of their own tribal food and agriculture laws will allow individual tribal nations to better plan their nutritional and economic development destinies.

With a leading grant from the SMSC, the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative (IFAI) at the University of Arkansas recently completed a landmark set of model food and agriculture for tribal nations.

IFAI's Model Tribal Food and Agriculture Code Project serves as an indispensable resource for tribal governments, providing a comprehensive set of model laws for review, customization, adoption and implementation. Designed by IFAI and contributing attorneys with significant input from tribal nations across Indian Country, the model laws facilitate agricultural production, food systems development, and health outcomes improvement in Indian Country. The SMSC provided \$250,000 in initial funding to IFAI for this landmark project, which took more than three years to research, develop and publish.

Additional funders which followed the SMSC's lead gift include MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, Agua Fund, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

A culturally sensitive, nutrition-based approach to diabetes

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) is developing an interactive nutrition program specifically for Native American people. The SMSC's challenge grant of \$225,000 to fund this promising pilot project was joined recently by matching grants from Genentech and Vadon Foundation.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 15% of Native Americans have been diagnosed with diabetes, a rate higher than other populations. The implications of this are staggering: diabetes is the fourth leading cause of death for Native American people, a rate nearly three times higher than other ethnic groups in the country.

To address this issue, the ADA is adapting its successful "What Can I Eat?" nutrition program in culturally appropriate ways for use in Native communities to combat type 2 diabetes. The program is currently working at six sites across Indian Country. Dr. Kelly Moore (Muscogee Creek) of the Colorado School of Public Health serves as the principal investigator. If it is found effective, the program will be expanded and made available to Native communities across the country.





Planting seeds for innovative policy work in Indian Country

“Together, the American Heart Association and our tribe are giving Native American activists the important additional resources they need to work on improved policies relating to food access, dietary health and wellbeing.”

- SMSC Chairman
Charles R. Vig

To support Native-led advocacy, the SMSC and the American Heart Association have founded the Fertile Ground Policy Innovation Fund – the largest fund ever created for grant-making in direct support of Native nutrition and health policy work.

The \$1.6 million fund is providing grants ranging from \$75,000 to \$100,000 to support innovative projects designed to build community power and advance policy systems and change at the tribal, local, state and national levels to benefit Native American health.



American
Heart
Association.



Robert Wood Johnson
Foundation

MAKING EACH DAY HEALTHIER FOR ALL CHILDREN™



"Native Americans are experiencing extreme health disparities, making them twice as likely as the rest of the U.S. population to have nutrition-related health problems. We are proud to deepen our partnership with the SMSC to address this health crisis."

- Nancy Brown
CEO of the American Heart Association

First Nations Development Institute, an original strategic partner of the SMSC's Seeds of Native Health campaign, is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen Native American economies by supporting healthy Native communities. It is administering the Policy Innovation Fund's grant-making. The American Indian Cancer Foundation is serving as the technical assistance partner to the fund, providing grantees with support to fully realize their goals.

The Policy Innovation Fund is part of the SMSC and the American Heart Association's Fertile Ground campaign, which provides grants, leadership development and technical assistance, and supports movement-building activities that promote Native-led health advocacy.



The Policy Innovation Fund was first conceived at the Fertile Ground II convening, which brought together Native leaders, Native youth advocates, and national philanthropic leaders to discuss opportunities for policy work.

Recent grant recipients

California Indian Museum & Cultural Center (Santa Rosa, California) – A grant toward the Ma Phidin: Protecting Our Ground project, which will work to remove barriers to traditional food resources, such as updating county park codes, as well as conduct a community assessment to develop recommendations related to improving nutrition and health.

Karuk Tribe (Happy Camp, California) – A grant toward the tribe's Our Good Food project, which supports developing, advocating for and implementing policies that promote tribal food sovereignty.

Port Gamble S'Klallam Foundation (Kingston, Washington) – A grant toward the Shellfish Grow-Out Expansion Project, which will focus on ways to sustain and expand natural shellfish resources for a healthy traditional diet of the S'Klallam tribal community.

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Indigenous Food & Agriculture Initiative

Native Food Sovereignty Fellows wrap up their work in Indian Country

In 2017, the SMSC partnered with the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative to create a cadre of 21 Native Food Sovereignty Fellows. These fellows were AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers working with 10 low-resource Native American communities – from Alaska to North Carolina – to help establish and stabilize food sovereignty efforts, food systems and tribal economies.

The Seeds of Native Health campaign is thankful for the volunteers' commitment and talent, which have had real-world impacts in improving nutrition in tribal settings.



Native Food Sovereignty Fellows with SMSC Member and Seeds of Native Health Chair Jesse Chase, SMSC Chairman Charles R. Vig and SMSC Vice-Chairman Keith B. Anderson at the Third Annual Conference on Native American Nutrition in 2018

Fourth Annual Conference on Native American Nutrition

The Annual Conference on Native American Nutrition is the only scientific conference series in the world devoted to the nutrition and dietary health of Indigenous Peoples. Led by the SMSC and University of Minnesota Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives Institute, the conference has been growing each year, bringing together tribal officials, researchers, practitioners and funders to discuss Native nutrition, dietary health and food science. (In 2018, there were more than 600 attendees from dozens of tribes, 38 states and three countries.)

The Fourth Annual Conference on Native American Nutrition in September 2019 will be held in conjunction with the Native American Journalists Association's annual National Native Media Conference. Attendees of the conferences will have the opportunity to attend programming of each conference and network with each other at shared meals and receptions.





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