



# Policy Report

Leveraging Policy for Native Food Sovereignty,  
Education, and Empowerment

Webinar 2

---

June 17, 2025

# WELCOME

---

All attendees will be **muted** throughout this webinar.

Please use the chat to **introduce yourselves!**

Dial in by phone under **Audio Settings**.

Use the **Q&A** feature! We will have dedicated time to answer **questions** at the end of webinar.

This webinar is being **recorded**, and will be made available with presentation materials.

1. Introduction: Getting Oriented around NF2S and Food Policy
2. PAST - Historical Context: Impacts of Federal Indian Policy
3. PRESENT - Reclaiming and Revitalizing Native Foodways
4. FUTURE - Policy Pathways for Native Food Sovereignty
5. Q&A and Closing



# Technical

---

01

## Audio

---

Choose **phone call** to switch to phone audio by dialing in with the number provided.

02

## Chat

---

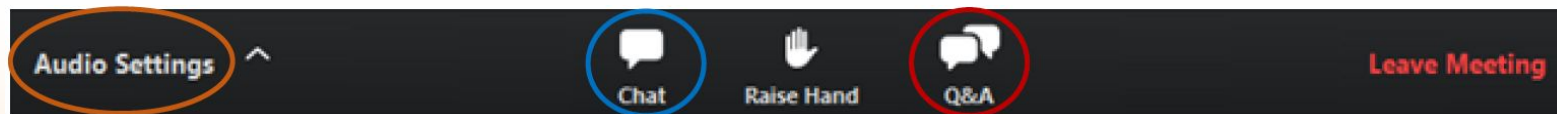
Aloha! **Introduce** yourself, and let us know where you are joining from!

03

## Q&A

---

Ask **questions** about the webinar material or request technical help.



# FIRST NATIONS PROGRAMS



Programs

NATIVE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS INVESTMENTS (NAFSI)

STEWARDING  
NATIVE LANDS

NATIVE ARTS, LANGUAGE,  
AND KNOWLEDGE

RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY FOR  
NATIVE ECONOMIC JUSTICE

## Impact Areas

Native  
Food Sovereignty

Native Food  
Security

Native Food  
Economies

Native Food  
Networks



# OUR NF2S TEAM

---



**Richard Elm-Hill**  
*(Oneida Nation)*  
FNDI Associate Director



**Cetan Christensen**  
*(Oglala Lakota)*  
FNDI Program Officer



**Nicole Benally**  
*(Dine'/Navajo Nation)*  
FNDI Consultant  
  
Ph.D. Candidate, University of Montana



**Leah Simeon**  
*(Spokane Tribe, Pauquachin First Nation)*  
FNDI Consultant

Director of Curriculum Development at Sister Sky Inc.



**Puanani "Pua" Apoliona-Brown**  
*(Kanakanoa Maoli/Native Hawaiian)*  
FNDI Consultant for Policy Research

M.A. Food Studies, New York University

# Native Food Sovereignty for Native Youth

---

## USDA Food and Nutrition Service - \$500,000 Implementation Grant

### Grant Focus:

Support for Native Farm to School programs across Indian Country

### Key Elements:

- Traditional foods, practices, language, and land stewardship
- Indigenous knowledge integrated into youth education

### Activities:

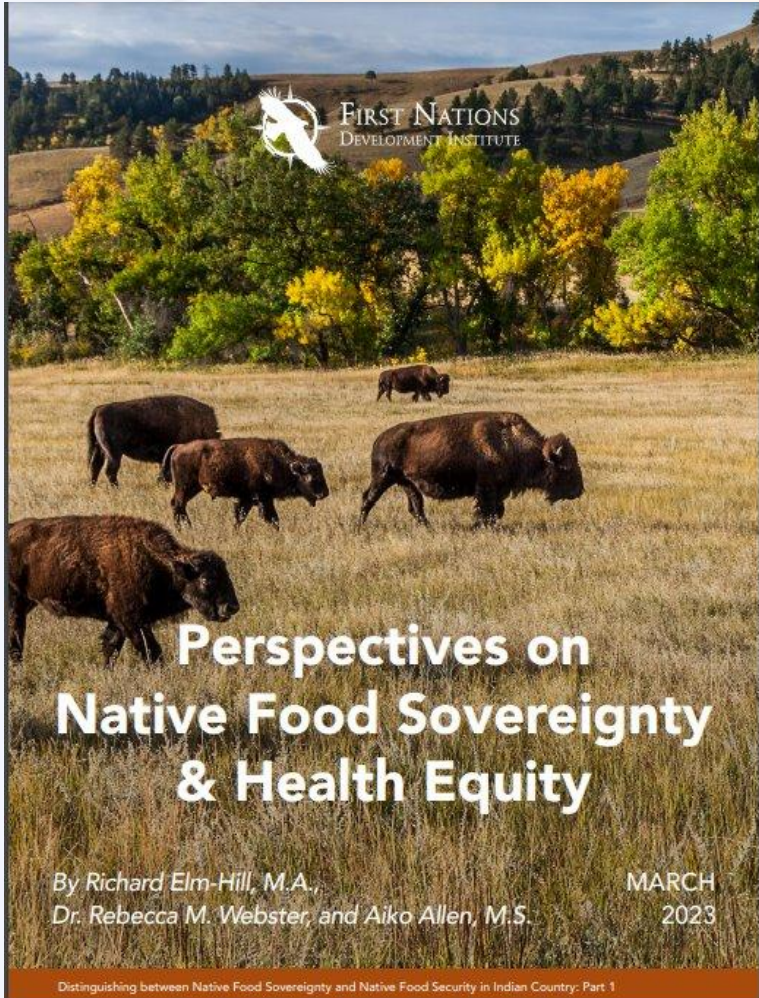
- Educational webinars
- In-person gathering at the **Food Sovereignty Summit**
- Technical assistance using the **Native Farm to School Program Planner**

### Deliverables:

- Evaluation Report
- **Research Report on Tribal, community, state, and federal policies**



# Native Food Sovereignty



*"the right of American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians to produce their own traditional foods on their own lands to sustain themselves, their families, and their communities."*

(First Nations Development Institute, 2023)



# POLL 1

---

**What is your sense of policy in terms of Native foodways?**

- 1. Positive**
- 2. Negative**
- 3. Unsure**
- 4. Optimistic**
- 5. Distrustful**
- 6. Neutral**



# What is Policy?

---

- A course of action or a set of rules and guidelines developed to address a specific issue or problem.
- Outlines how a government, group, institution, or agency intends to act or behave regarding a particular matter.
- Can take various forms, including laws, regulations, procedures, and administrative actions.
- Often reflected in resource allocations (i.e. funding decisions).

## Food Policy:

---

Addresses how food is grown, processed, distributed, and accessed. It guides decisions across the food system—from regulation and safety to food assistance—and can support community well-being, equity, and cultural priorities.



How can we use **policy** to affirm **Indigenous rights** and support **Native Food Sovereignty?**



PAST:

# Historical Context

“I ka wa mā mua, ka wa mā hope.”  
*The future is in the past.*

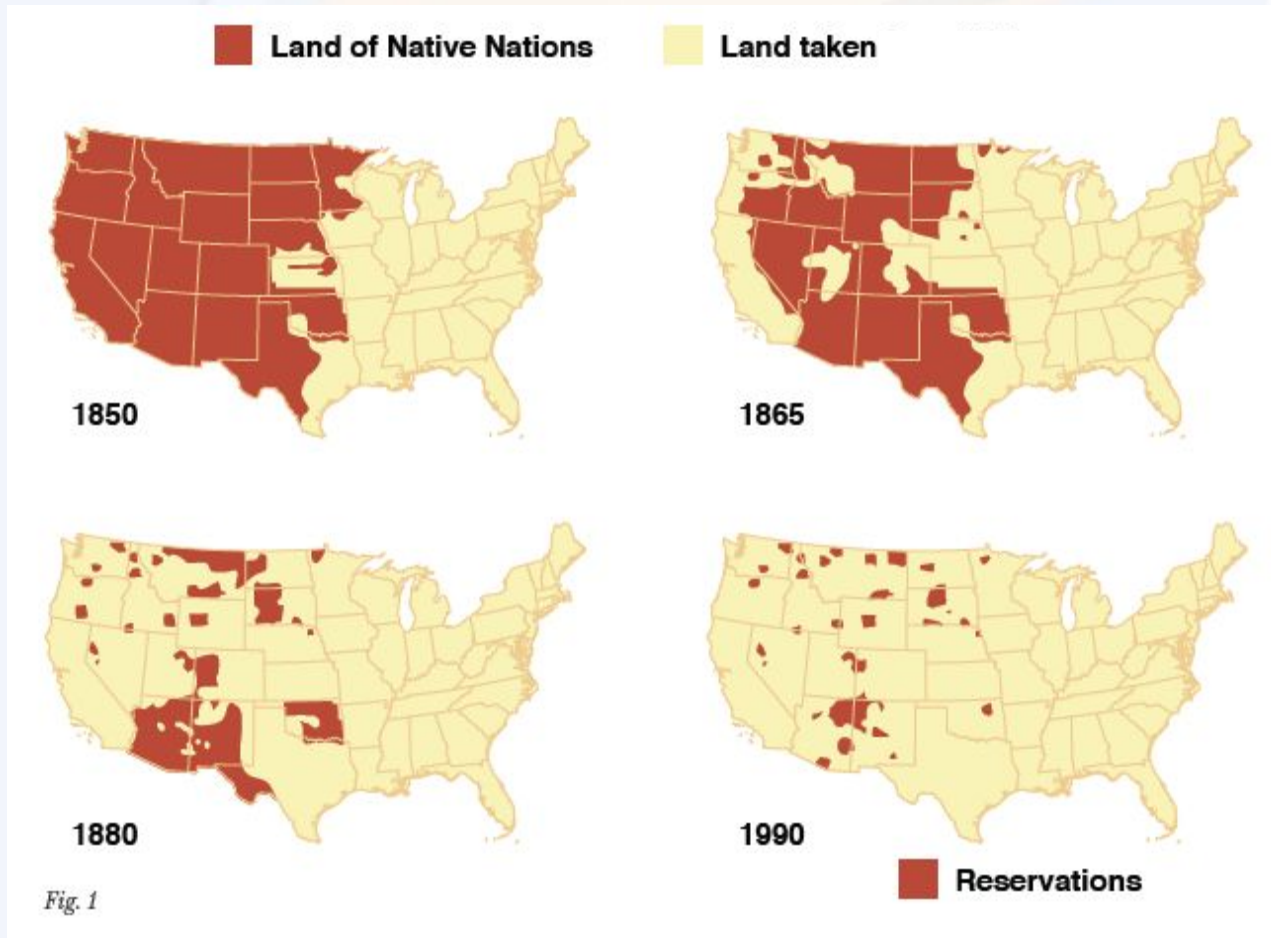
# Federal Boarding Schools Treaty-Making (1778-1829)

- Food is not a hand-out but a **reserved right**, at the foundation of trust relationship and responsibilities.
- Invoke strong **environmental protections** and reflect ancestors' understanding of importance of traditional foodways.
- The right to **hunt, fish, and gather** on usual and accustomed grounds - implies **access and availability** of those foods.

Art. III The right of taking fish at all usual and accustomed grounds and stations is further secured to said Indians in common with all citizens of the Territory, and of erecting temporary houses for the purpose of curing, together with the privilege of hunting, gathering roots and berries and pasturing their horses on open and unclaimed lands, Provided however that they shall not take shell fish from any beds, staked or cultivated by citizens; and that they shall alter all stations not intended for breeding horses and shall keep up and confine the latter.

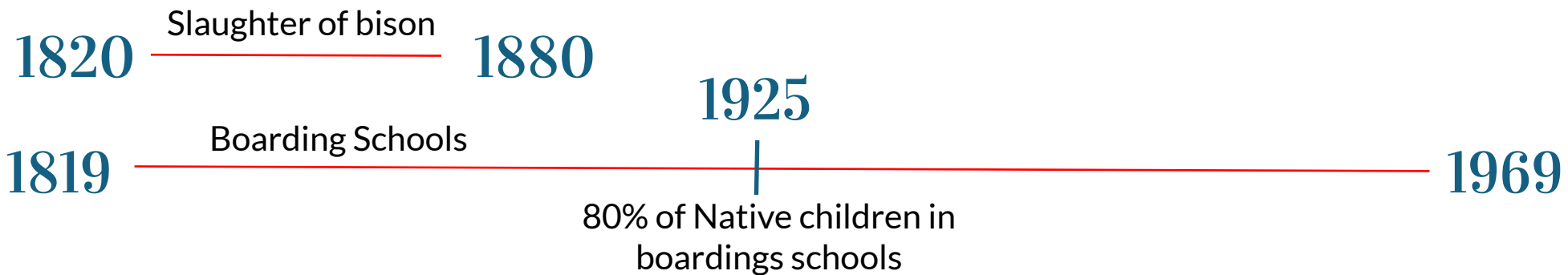
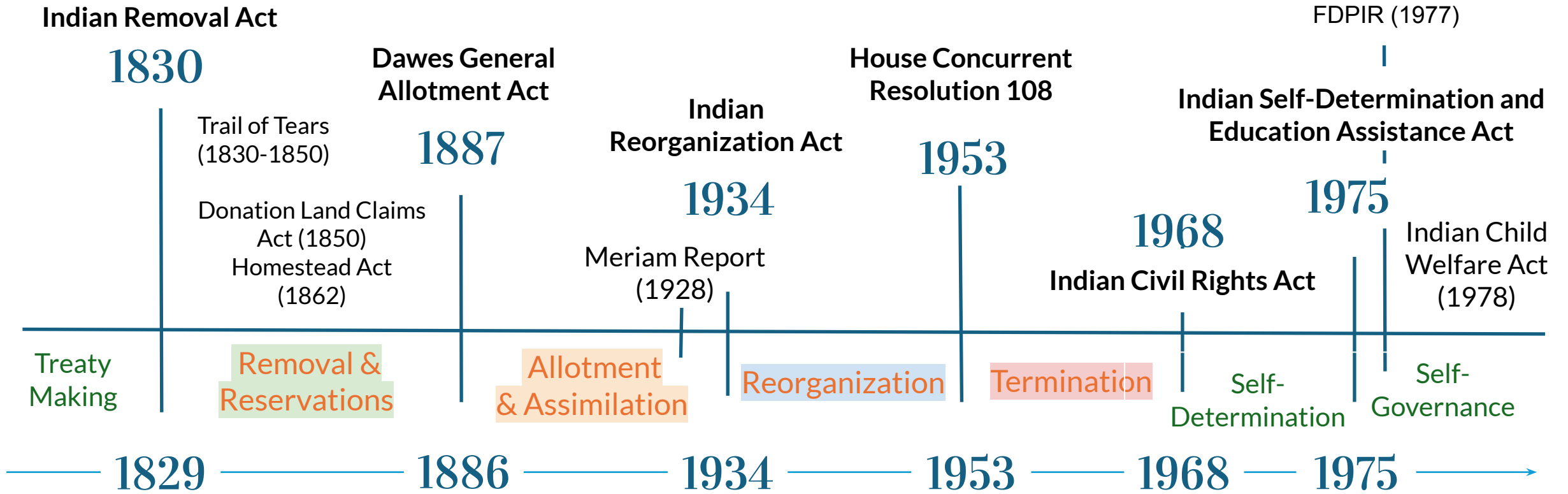
Art. IV In consideration of the above cession, the United States agree to pay to the said tribes and bands the sum of Twenty two thousand, five hundred dollars in the following manner, that is to say, For the first year after the ratification hereof, three thousand, two hundred and fifty dollars; for the next two years three thousand dollars each year, for the next three years, two thousand dollars each year, for the next four years fifteen hundred dollars each year, for the next five years, twelve hundred dollars each year, and for the next five years one thousand dollars each year: All which said sums of money shall be applied to the use and benefit of the said Indians under the direction of the President of the United States, who may from time to time determine at his discretion upon what beneficial objects to expend the same, And the

# Broken Promises



- 375 treaties define government-to-government relationship.
- Yet, long history of forced dispossession and broken promises.
- US government used policy to dismantle Indigenous communities in the pursuit of our lands and resources.

# TIMELINE OF FEDERAL INDIAN POLICY

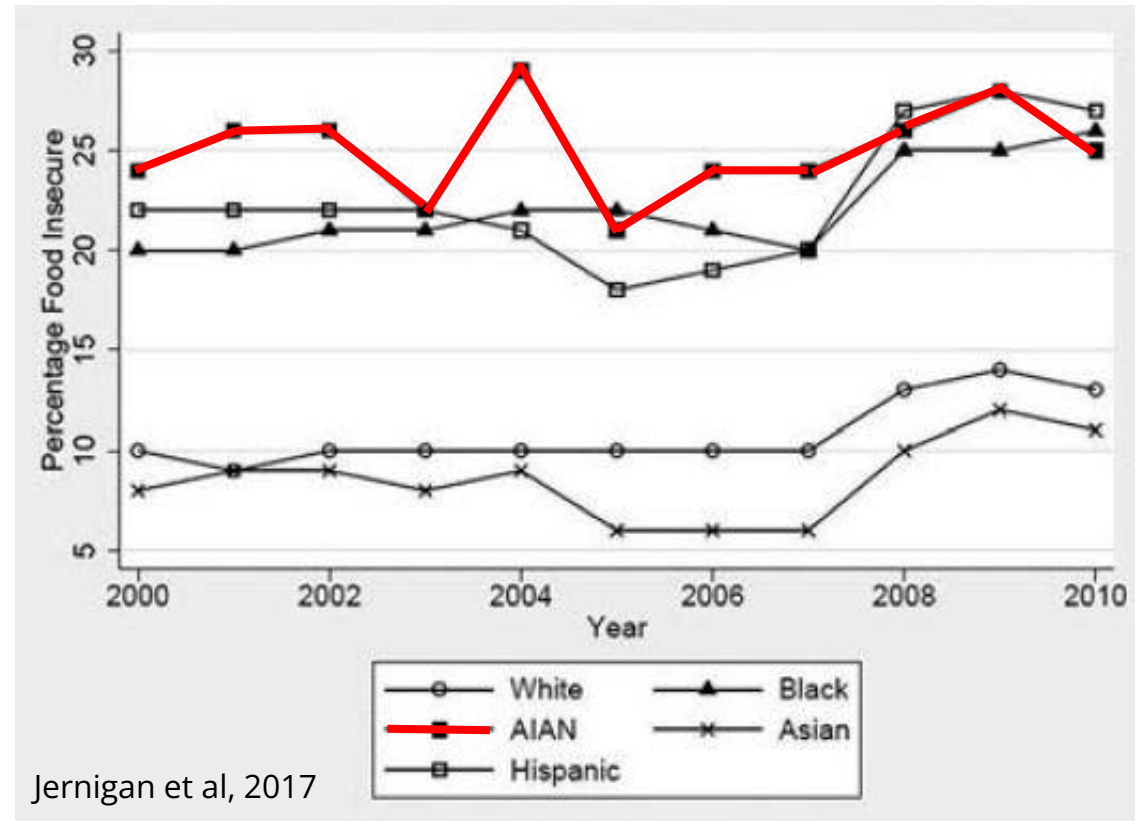


# LEGACY OF SETTLER COLONIALISM

Denied access to traditional foods - starvation to government rations before dependence on commodity food assistance.

**Food insecurity** - increased risk of chronic disease obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and cancer.

Bringing traditional foods that are healthy and culturally relevant into schools involves reclaiming health and cultural practice.



**Increased access to traditional foods improves food security and self-determination.**

Present:

# RECLAIMING AND REVITALIZING NATIVE FOODWAYS

---



# FISH WARS, TREATY RIGHTS, SELF-GOVERNANCE

Indian Civil Rights Act

1968

Fish Wars  
PNW

Termination

Indian Self-Determination and  
Education Assistance Act

1975

Boldt Decision  
(1974)

Self-Determination

Indian Child  
Welfare Act  
(1978)  
FDPIR (1977)

2018 Farm Bill  
63 Tribal Specific  
Provisions

COVID (2020)

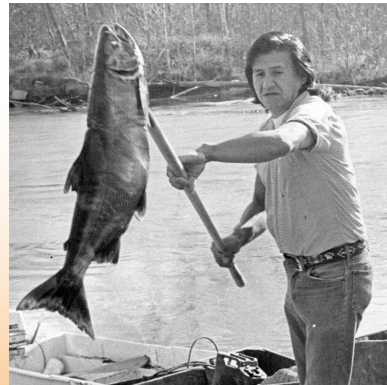
Self-Governance

Federal Apology:  
Indian Boarding  
Schools (2024)

LFS & LFPA  
(2022)



Pat Lelle, of Dallesport, Klickitat County, demonstrates in 1982 outside the Federal Courthouse in Tacoma. (Vic Condiotty / The Seattle Times, 1982)





**We are still here!**



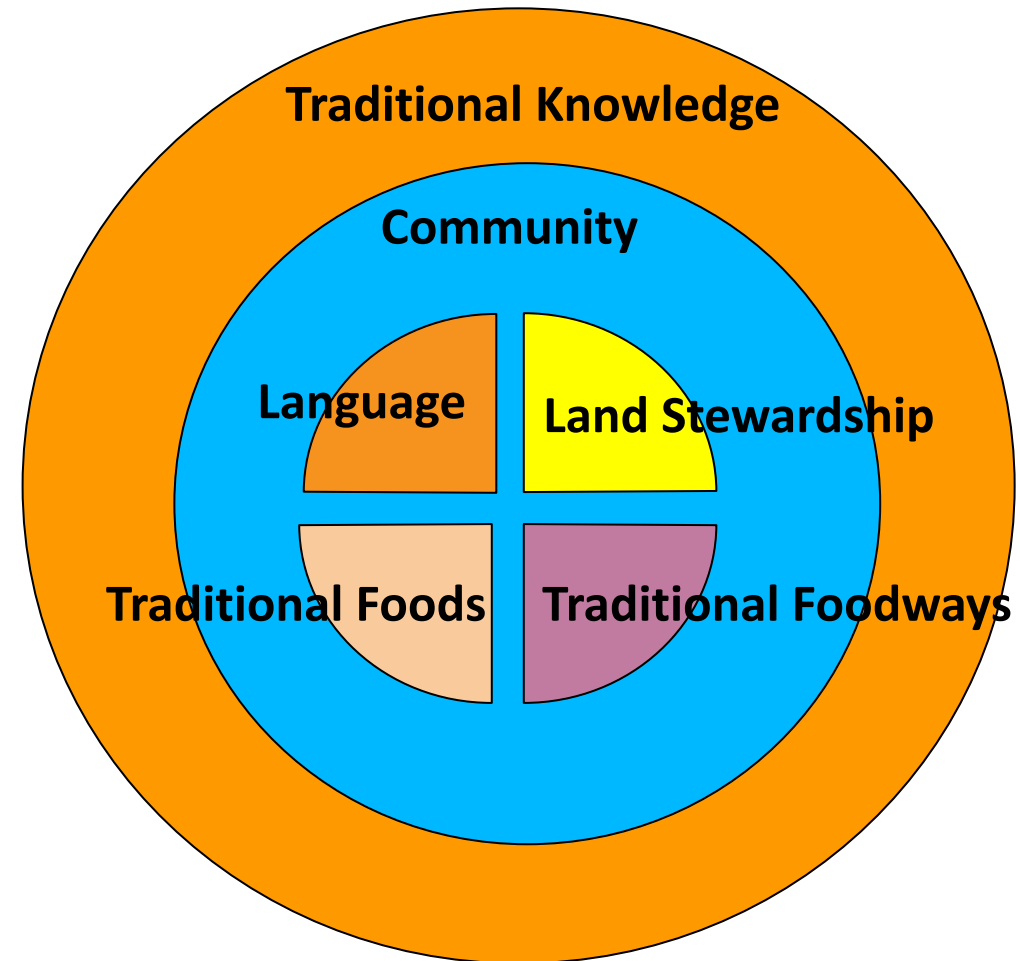
# NF2S PROGRAM PLANNER

---

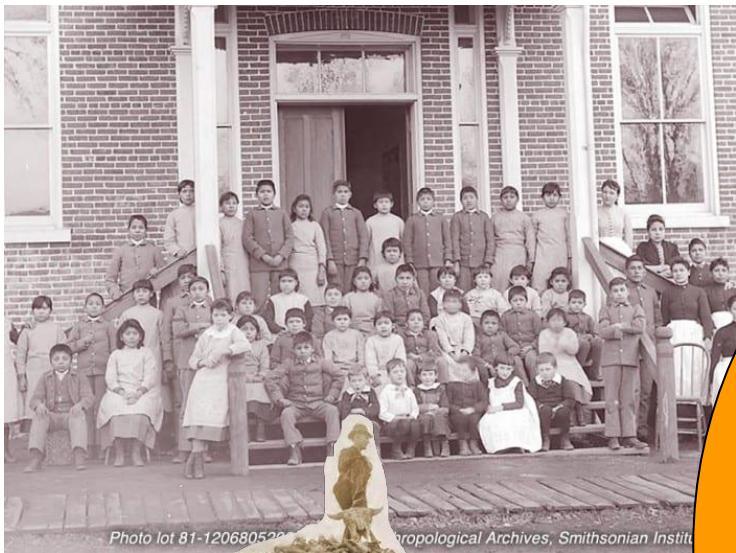
Visual and adaptive framework for Food Sovereignty-focused Native Farm to School programs.

Impacts extend well beyond nutrition and health statistics.

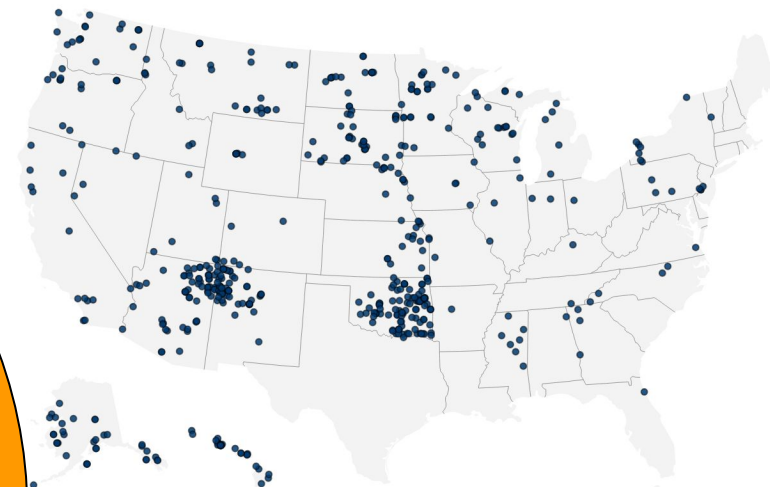
Policies and solutions must be community-led, driven by those with deep understanding of the issues.



# Interrelated Focus Areas

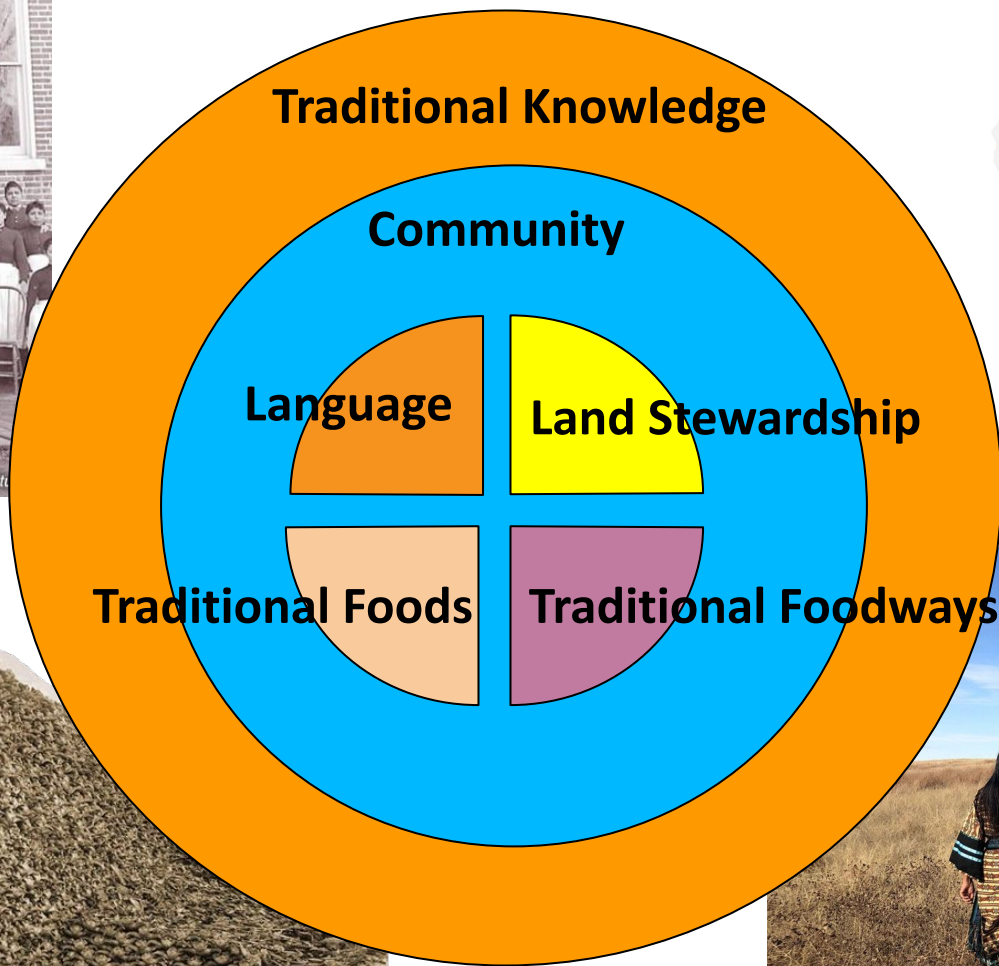


Map of federal Indian boarding schools, 1871-1969



Source: National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition

B | Brookings Metro



# Native Farm to School Focus Areas

## TRADITIONAL FOODS

**Bringing available local or regional Indigenous foods into program.**

Examples: Blue corn, wild rice, chokecherries, salmon, camas, squash, bison, amaranth, acorn, seaweed, heirloom seeds

## TRADITIONAL FOODWAYS

**Incorporating cultural methods in traditional food cultivation, harvests, preparation, processing.**

Examples: Nixtamalization, pit cooking, clay pot, birch bark boiling; use of traditional tools/traps; traditional techniques for preserving foods; seasonal harvest celebrations.

## TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

**Encouraging intergenerational, intertribal, or cross-cultural knowledge sharing.**

Examples: Knowledge of seasonal rounds, moon cycles, foraging calendars; origin stories of foods; food practices; Intergenerational learning and knowledge transfer.

## LAND STEWARDSHIP

**Ways to bring traditional land stewardship and agricultural practices into the program.**

Examples: Controlled burns; rotational grazing; restoration projects for food sources; sustainable harvesting, reciprocal planting.

## LANGUAGE

**Incorporating Indigenous languages.**

Examples: Food words, plant names in language curriculum; Language nests teaching terms for seeds, tools, weather; Traditional songs and prayers used during planting and harvesting; Native language food-labeling.

## COMMUNITY

**Bringing the community together.**

Examples: Feasts, intertribal seed exchanges; Tribal food sovereignty laws, school board resolutions; Youth mentorships; Tribal elder councils advising gardens, curriculum; Work with Native producers.

Future:

---

# Native Food Sovereignty Policy Pathways


---



# Levels of Policy Influence


<u>Policy Levels</u>	<u>Primary Influence</u>	<u>Example in Indigenous Food Work</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
<b>Tribal</b>	Sovereign tribal nation policy and governance of food, land, education, and healthcare systems.	Food codes, seed sovereignty; land and water management; supporting Native producers, traditional practices, and values; investment and infrastructure.	To exercise sovereignty and self-determination in how food is grown, gathered, distributed, and consumed on Native lands.
<b>Intertribal / Regional</b>	Ecological alignment and coordination around resource management; food sourcing and aggregation; collaboration around policy priorities and strategy.	Regional Native food hubs, seed networks; intertribal food councils, commissions, and forums (i.e. CRITFC, Intertribal Agriculture Council; conferences and summits)	To coordinate efforts across communities with shared geographies and goals; share resources and insights; can fill federal, local, tribal gaps and blind spots.
<b>Federal</b> <i>*Funds and regulates school food</i>	National funding, programs, legislation, treaties, and regulatory frameworks.	USDA programs (FDPIR, NSLP); Farm Bill tribal provisions, treaty rights; environmental conservation; restoration of traditional foods.	To regulate and resource the food system nationally—where funding, access, and regulation converge.
<b>State</b> <i>*Administers, monitors, supplements school food</i>	State-level administration of federal programs; state-led and funded food initiatives; technical assistance and support for local producers and procurement.	State farm-to-school programs, school nutrition policies, health and food safety codes, ag extension services; supplemental funding for Native food programs.	To administer federal programs and shape statewide agriculture, nutrition, and education policies that influence food access, land use, and support for Indigenous food systems.
<b>Local / Municipal</b> <i>*Implements customized school food programs</i>	Food procurement and permitting; municipal and county-level zoning, land use, water access.	Establish school district food procurement rules that prioritize traditional foods and Native producers in vendor selection; local zoning	To implement and enforce policy in real time; can impact tribal producers through land use, sales, food safety, or distribution access.
<b>Schools / Organizations</b>	Internal policies, school board resolutions, menu planning, staffing, procurement, cultural revitalization, education, food access.	Partner with Native food producers; Native plants in school gardens; traditional and land-based knowledge curriculum, experiential learning (field trips, cultural harvests, gathering, etc)	To align internal practices with broader food sovereignty values and create immediate, actionable change.

# NF2S COMMUNITY PARTNERS



**Suquamish Indian Tribe**  
Suquamish, WA

Azure Boure  
aboure@suquamish.nsn.us



**Yakama Nation Head Start**  
Wapato, WA

Christina Talley  
christina\_palka@yakama.com



**Kids Co-op**  
Polson, MT

Jason Moore  
jjasonmoore@gmail.com



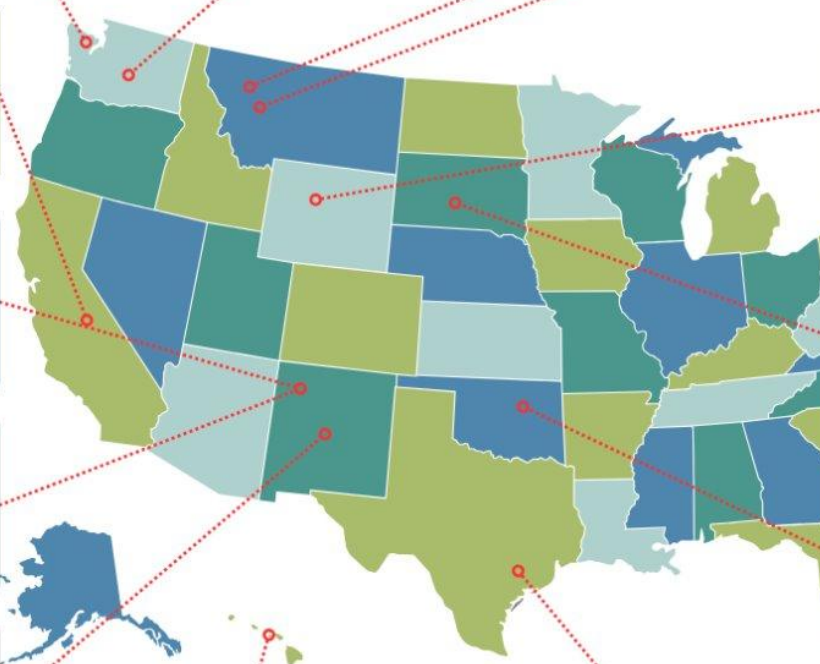
**Helena Indian Alliance**  
Helena, MT

Linda Kinsey  
lkinsey@hia-mt.org



**Cold Springs Rancheria of Mono Indians**  
Tollhouse, CA

Timothy Lee  
timothy.lee@coldspringsrancheria.gov




**Center for Popular Research, Education and Policy**  
Wind River Reservation, WY


WIND RIVER FOOD SOVEREIGNTY PROJECT

Kelly Pingree  
yellowhead62@gmail.com



**Bidii Baby Foods**  
Shiprock, NM

Zachariah Ben  
bidiibabyfoods@gmail.com




**Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Buffalo Authority Corporation**  
Cheyenne River Reservation, SD

Irona Howe  
irona.howe@gmail.com



**ToohBAA**  
Shiprock, NM

Duane "Chilli" Yazzie  
chill\_yazzie@hotmail.com



**Pawnee Seed Preservation Society**

Cory DeRoin  
corylderoin@gmail.com



**Pueblo Resurgents**  
Isleta Pueblo, NM

Daryl Lucero  
puebloresurgents@gmail.com



**Tagata Moana Hui Foundation**  
Honolulu, HI

Chantelle Matagi  
admin@tagatamoanahui.org



**Texas Tribal Buffalo Project**  
Waelder, TX

Lucille Contreras  
lucille@texastribalbuffaloproject.org



**Farm to School First Nation Grantees**



**FIRST NATIONS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE**

# INSIGHTS FROM PARTNERS

## INTERTRIBAL

- Engage Native dietitians in creating a database of traditional foods with nutritional contents to easily develop and standardize recipes that are recognized and reimbursed by school lunch programs.

## TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

- Invest in infrastructure to save producers time/energy traveling off reservations for processing. Facilities could support alignment with the various safety standards of the state regulations they serve.

## STATES

- Work with states and parks to streamline regulations and ease restrictions around cultural practices (i.e. controlled burns) to facilitate land stewardship and access to U&A grounds.



# Policy Trends, Themes, & Recommendations



Policy must be grounded in cultural values and respect the integrity of traditional foods.

Bridging worlds: Make space of interpreters!

- Native dietitians in NSLP; *representation* in government agencies and offices; traditional knowledge holders writing laws; Data sovereignty.

## **BLOCK**

- Protect knowledge, seeds, animals, plants against Monsanto, GE, commercialization, and exploitation.

## **BUILD**

- Aggregate small-scale operations; support for Native producers; circular economies; decentralized procurement and distribution, shift control over administration of federal feeding programs.

## **BE**

- Remove policy barriers & regulations that restrict cultural practice; remove unnecessary requirements that keep community out.



# POLL 2

---

**What is your sense of policy in terms of Native foodways?**

- 1. Positive**
- 2. Negative**
- 3. Unsure**
- 4. Hopeful**
- 5. Distrustful**
- 6. Neutral**





# Time for Q&A!

---



**FIRST NATIONS**  
DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

# MAHALO! THANK YOU

---






## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

First Nations Development Institute 2432  
Main Street  
Longmont, CO 80501

## CONTACT

Tel: 303.774.7836  
Fax: 303.774.7841  
[info@firstnations.org](mailto:info@firstnations.org)

## CONNECT

 [firstnations.org](http://firstnations.org)  
 [fndi303](https://www.instagram.com/fndi303)  
 First Nations Development Institute  
 FirstNationsDevelopmentInstitute  
 @FNDI303