

FIRST NATIONS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

NATIVE PRODUCERS: INVESTING IN COMMUNITY

SEPTEMBER 29, 2026

ABOUT FIRST NATIONS

Founded in 1980, First Nations began our national grantmaking program in 1993. Through 2025, we have successfully managed grants totaling $110.6 million to Native American projects and organizations.

Our mission is to uplift and sustain the lifeways and economies of Native communities through advocacy, financial support, and knowledge sharing.

We envision a world in which Tribal Sovereignty is upheld, and Native ingenuity and knowledge are honored and respected.



OUR CORE PROGRAMS

We provide grants, technical assistance, and research and policy advocacy across five program areas



NATIVE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS INVESTMENTS
Advancing Native food sovereignty and security, strengthening Tribal food economies, and supporting the living relationship between community, place, and foods.



STEWARDING NATIVE LANDS
Financial resources, training, technical assistance, and research and advocacy to help Tribes and Native communities regain and restore their lands.



CALIFORNIA TRIBAL FUND
Support for California-based, California Native-led nonprofits and tribal programs for controlling and protecting their land, water, food systems, and culture.



NATIVE ARTS, LANGUAGE, AND KNOWLEDGE
Strengthening and sustaining Native communities and knowledge-holders through intergenerational connections and the transference of arts, languages, and knowledge.



RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY FOR NATIVE ECONOMIC JUSTICE
Research, tools, resources, and opportunities for Native communities, policy makers, and funders to invest in and advance Native economic justice.

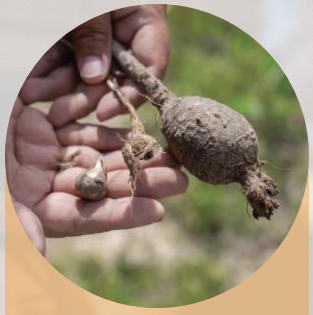
NATIVE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS INVESTMENTS – IMPACT AREAS

The Native Agriculture and Food Systems Investments program advances food sovereignty and security, strengthens Tribal food economies, and supports the living relationship between community, place, and foods.

The Native Agriculture and Food Systems Investments program includes these strategic focuses:



NATIVE FOOD SOVEREIGNTY
Projects support the inherent right of Tribal communities to exercise self-determination and self-governance in all aspects of their food systems



NATIVE FOOD SECURITY
Projects support the consistent access and abundance of culturally relevant foods to meet the community's needs and preferences to ensure a healthy Tribal community food system



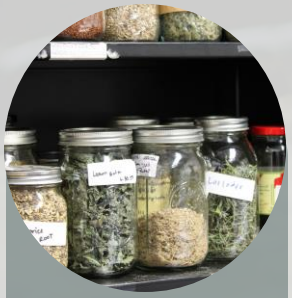
NATIVE FOOD ECONOMIES
Projects are dedicated to fostering the cultivation, relationship, and management of a Native food economy



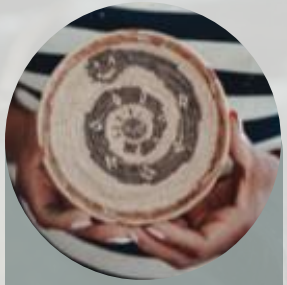
NATIVE FOOD NETWORKS
Projects create communities of learning and knowledge exchange, encouraging Native communities to grow and advocate for their Indigenous food systems

NAFSI Program Values

The Native Agriculture and Food Systems Investments (NAFSI) program is a cornerstone of First Nations' efforts to advance food sovereignty and security, strengthen tribal food economies, and support the relationship between community, place, and food by focusing on the following priorities:



NATIVE CONTROL
Recognize and respect the inherent right of Native communities to exercise control over their food systems, ensuring decisions align with their unique needs and values.



CULTURALLY ROOTED
Prioritize initiatives deeply grounded in and reflective of the diverse cultural heritage of Native communities, fostering a strong connection to traditional foodways.



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT
Develop programs and initiatives that empower Native communities economically, socially, and culturally, promoting a sense of ownership and pride in their food systems.



INTERTRIBAL COLLABORATION
Foster efforts that encourage knowledge exchange, shared resources, and collective solutions among Native communities to address common challenges and amplify impact.



INTER-GENERATIONAL WISDOM
Emphasize the importance of preserving and passing down and up traditional knowledge and practices related to food, ensuring the transmission of wisdom and practice across generations.



EQUITY & JUSTICE
Commit to achieving equity and justice in all aspects of the food system, addressing historical inequities and advocating for policies that promote fairness and inclusivity

USDA LOCAL FOOD PROMOTION PROGRAM GRANT (LFPP)



Direct Investment: Flexible, self-directed contract with Native food producers to catalyze community leaders, build Native economies, and grow best practices



Food Sovereignty Summit: In-person gathering for peer sharing, relationship building, cultural exchange, and personal reflection



Technical Assistance: Direct support from First Nations and Native expert consultants on marketing, business planning & development, connecting to resources, etc.

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INVESTING IN NATIVE FOOD PRODUCERS: KEEPING FOOD AND COMMUNITY AT THE CENTER

An Evaluation Report of USDA Local Food Promotion Program Grant Project 2023 to 2026

LFPP COMMUNITY PARTNERS

ORGANIZATION, LOCATION	TRIBAL AFFILIATION(S)
4 Canyons Land & Cattle Company — Holbrook, Arizona	Diné (Navajo)
The Cottonwood Apple Tree — Chinle, Arizona	Diné (Navajo)
Dynamite Hill Farms — L'Anse, Michigan	Lake Superior Ojibwe (Keweenaw Bay Indian Community)
JP Ranch — Window Rock, Arizona	Diné (Navajo)
Makoce Agriculture Development — Porcupine, South Dakota	Ogalala Lakota
Native Wise LLC — Sawyer, Minnesota	Lake Superior Ojibwe (Fond du Lac Band)
Kahulahele Farmstead — Oneida, Wisconsin	Oneida Nation of Wisconsin
Oyate Teca Project — Kyle, South Dakota	Oglala Lakota
Red Point Farms — Ganado, Arizona	Diné (Navajo)
Rising Thunder Ranch & Juneberry Co-op — Dunseith, North Dakota	Ojibwe (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa)
Siċaŋġu Co — Mission, South Dakota	Siċaŋġu Lakota (Rosebud Sioux Tribe)
Texas Tribal Buffalo Project — Texas	Lipan Apache
Wildbill Market — Umatilla Indian Reservation, Oregon	Klamath



FINDINGS

MORE THAN PROFIT, IT'S COMMUNITY

"We sell products so that we can **do education and community events.** That's our favorite thing. Targeting native youth, we love that."
- David and Patra Wise *(Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa)* Native Wise

MORE THAN PROFIT, IT'S BUILDING INDIGENOUS FOOD SYSTEMS

"Another thing that I'm working on is creating this larger food economy on a high level. We're doing meat processing facilities. We're looking at logistics, like all of those things to **create an economy where a business like ours can make money.** So we basically have to build the whole dang infrastructure."
- Erin Thomas (*Diné*), 4 Canyons Land & Cattle Company

RELATIONSHIPS & TRUST: INVESTING IN LEADERS

“Having [First Nations] just be like, ‘We believe in you enough that you can do this. Here's the money to get started...’ **This was startup money to actually be able to do it,** which is not something that has ever happened to us. First Nations and Richard trusted us enough to do this."
- Erin Thomas (*Diné*), 4 Canyons Land & Cattle Company

REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN, INCREASE FLEXIBILITY

“I think one of the reasons I like working with First Nations so much is the flexibility. A lot of us are doing new things, **things that haven't been done before.** [It’s important to have] the flexibility to change course if something didn't turn out."
- Jennifer Falck *(Oneida)* Kahulahele Farmstead

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RISING THUNDER



WILDBILL MARKET


ZIINZIBAAKWAD
ANISHINAABE MAPLE SUGAR
DYNAMITE HILL FARMS
16848 DYNAMITE HILL RD
L'ANSE, MI 49946
(906) 235-6177
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DYNAMITE HILL FARMS


THE COTTONWOOD APPLE TREE

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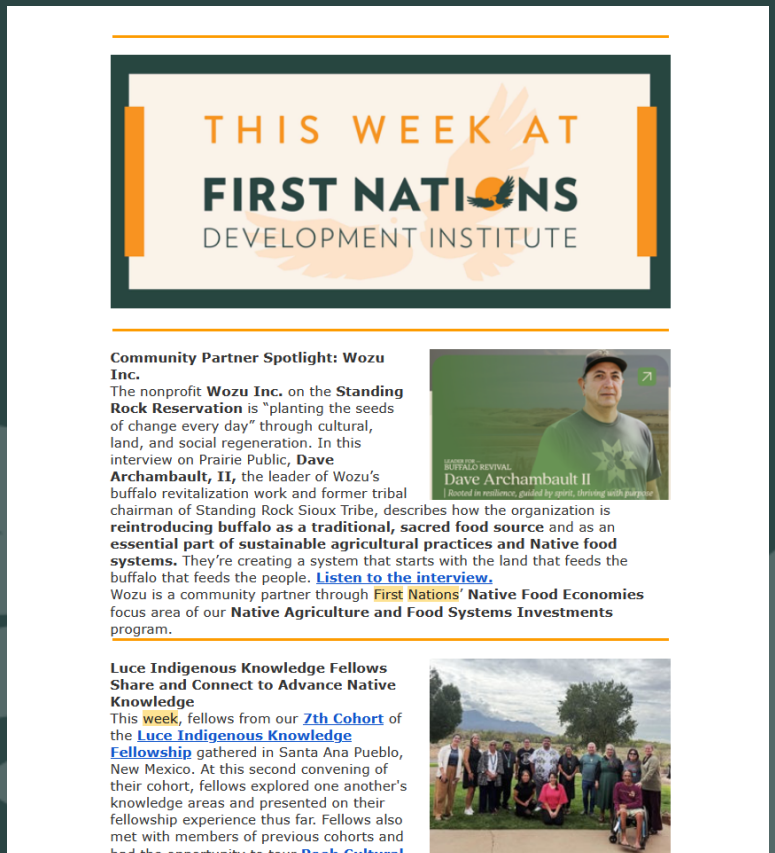
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STAY IN TOUCH!

Stay tuned for the report this winter!

“This Week at First Nations” e-newsletter subscribe at: www.firstnations.org/email-signup/



THIS WEEK AT
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Community Partner Spotlight: Wozu Inc.

The nonprofit **Wozu Inc.** on the **Standing Rock Reservation** is “planting the seeds of change every day” through cultural, land, and social regeneration. In this interview on Prairie Public, **Dave Archambault, II,** the leader of Wozu’s buffalo revitalization work and former tribal chairman of Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, describes how the organization is **reintroducing buffalo as a traditional, sacred food source** and as an **essential part of sustainable agricultural practices and Native food systems.** They’re creating a system that starts with the land that feeds the buffalo that feeds the people. **Listen to the interview.**

Wozu is a community partner through First Nations’ **Native Food Economies** focus area of our **Native Agriculture and Food Systems Investments** program.

Luce Indigenous Knowledge Fellows Share and Connect to Advance Native Knowledge

This week, fellows from our **7th Cohort** of the **Luce Indigenous Knowledge Fellowship** gathered in Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico. At this second convening of their cohort, fellows explored one another's knowledge areas and presented on their fellowship experience thus far. Fellows also met with members of previous cohorts and

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THANK YOU

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