



Highlighting Outcomes
under the
Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative
2012-2014



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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

First Nations Development Institute (First Nations) has become a leader in the Native Food Sovereignty Movement. Since 2011, First Nations has become the largest private grantmaker in Indian Country that supports programmatic efforts to reclaim control of Native food systems. Between 2010 and 2014, First Nations has invested more than \$4 million in funding toward reclaiming Native food systems through grantmaking, training and technical assistance, convenings, advocacy and public education.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan, has been a major supporter of these efforts. In 2011, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation awarded First Nations \$2.88 million over three years to support the NAFSI grant program and help improve the physical health and well-being of Native American children, families and communities.

Grantees

Over the past three years, First Nations has awarded 47 grants to 30 tribes and organizations dedicated to eliminating food insecurity and hunger in Indian Country. These 30 tribes and organizations are highlighted in Table 1. Moreover, the map below highlights the geographic spread of all our supported grantees .

Grant Programs and Projects

The programs and projects funded through the NAFSI grant program are designed to address food insecurity in Indian Country by providing resources that will increase access to traditional and fresh, healthy foods; increase community awareness and involvement with where food comes from; expand knowledge about the linkages between Native culture and family income; and finally, to support entrepreneurially-related food ventures. At First Nations, we believe that there is great opportunity to support existing efforts in Native communities to develop homegrown solutions to food insecurity and hunger in rural and reservation-based Native communities.

Grant Outcomes

The 30 tribes and Native organizations awarded funding through the NAFSI grant program over the past three years have already started to experience tremendous success. Between 2012 and 2014, NAFSI farmers and gardeners planted, grew and harvested approximately 16,830 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables. That is equivalent to eight tons of healthy, nutritious food!

Meanwhile, Native fishers supported through the NAFSI grant program harvested 400,000 pounds of fresh salmon. Additionally, Native ranchers processed 600 pounds of bison meat and raised 1,250 chickens that have produced more than 5,000 dozen eggs.¹

¹ These figures have been tallied using self-evaluations submitted by grantees between 2011 and 2014. In fact, these figures might even be higher as some grantees neglected to fully record their data, especially during the first year of the three-year grant cycle.



Additionally, these programs and projects have had a number of other positive impacts on these communities as well. For example, these projects have resulted in **22 new jobs** at both the administrative and operational levels.

These outcomes are but a snapshot of the tremendous success that NAFSI grantees have achieved in the past three years. Additional outcomes are captured below in Table 2.

Table 2: 2012-2014 NAFSI Grantee Outcomes

- Plant, grew and harvested approximately 16, 830 pounds or eight tons of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Harvested 400,000 pounds of salmon.
- Processed 600 pounds of bison meat.
- Raised 1,250 chicken that produced more than 5,000 dozen eggs.
- Established more than 100 new gardens, greenhouses and small farms, as well as an orchard.
- Hosted 62 food and agricultural workshops.
- Created 22 new jobs.
- Launched 13 new farmers' markets.
- Developed six tribal youth programs related to food and culture
- Implemented three new food policies.
- Conducted two community assessments surveying nearly 300 community members.
- Established two seed-saving banks.

Without a doubt, increased access to all of these healthy and nutritious foods has helped dramatically reduce and even reverse negative health issues in Indian Country related to food insecurity and hunger.

From 2012-2014, First Nations received more than 500 requests for program support from Native communities around the country, requesting nearly \$20 million in support. First Nations has only been able to meet roughly seven percent of the total need. This sheer unmet need points to the fact that we are only meeting a fraction of the overall need for food, diet and health funding needed in Indian Country.² Though First Nations is proud of the impact made over the last three years, there is still much work to be done.

II. INTRODUCTION

For more than 30 years, First Nations has worked with Native nations and Native organizations to restore Native American control and culturally compatible stewardship of the assets they own – be they land, human potential, cultural heritage or natural resources – and also to establish new assets for ensuring the long-term vitality of Native communities. Native food systems are an important asset of Native nations. However, like most Native assets, Native foods systems have been altered, colonized and, in some cases, destroyed. At First Nations, we strongly believe that reclaiming control over local foods systems is an important step toward ensuring the long-lasting health of Native people and communities. Therefore, much of our work in the arena of Native food systems has been aimed at assisting Native nations with reclaiming control of traditional food systems to eliminate food insecurity, build the health of communities and community members, and as a mechanism for entrepreneurship and economic development of Native nations. In brief, reclaiming control of Native food systems has the potential to promote healthy Native nations, economies and people.

² First Nations Development Institute. *Food-Systems Grantmaking in Indian Country: Trends from the Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative*. Longmont, Colorado: First Nations Development Institute, (2014).



Historically, Native nations have had their own systems for food generation in place that relied upon traditional knowledge for harvesting, planting and consumption of locally-harvested foods. Additionally, their food systems provided the backbone of trade and exchange between nations. In the past 200 years, however, federal Indian policy has disrupted and, in some cases, destroyed these traditional practices – either through deliberate policies to remove Indians from territories known for their rich agricultural land and natural resources, or else through deliberate attempts to starve Indians into submission. These policies and practices were deliberate, calculated, and meant to disrupt traditional Native food systems and related agricultural land practices. George Washington, for example, torched hundreds of thousands of bushels of Iroquois corn to deliberately starve Iroquois men, women and children during the American Revolution. Similarly, the Navajo, Apache and Pueblo were also subjected to the willful destruction of their orchards and fields.³ These incidences emphasize that altering Native food systems was – and continues to be – a part of Native colonization.



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Today, accessing healthy food remains a challenge for many Native American children, families and communities. Without access to healthy food, a nutritious diet and good health are out of reach. Currently, a significant number of Native Americans face economic and geographic barriers that prevent them from accessing healthy and culturally appropriate foods. As a result of this food insecurity, Native Americans now suffer from high rates of diabetes, heart disease and other diet-related chronic illnesses.⁴ Approximately, 16.1 percent of Native Americans age 20 and over suffer from diabetes. This statistic is substantially higher in some communities where rates have reached as high as 33 percent. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for Native people with diabetes – roughly two out of three people with diabetes will die of heart disease or stroke.⁵ In fact, heart disease is the first and stroke is the sixth leading cause of death among Native Americans.⁶ In light of these dire statistics, First Nations implemented the Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative (NAFSI) grant program to reduce disparities in access to healthy food. Since 2011, First Nations has (outside of the federal government) been the largest grantmaker in Indian Country that supports programmatic efforts to reclaim control of Native food systems. Between

3 For example, see Colin G. Calloway. *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Iverson, Peter, *Diné: A History of the Navajos*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2002.

4 Story, Mary, et al. "The Epidemic of Obesity in American Indian Communities and the Need for Childhood Obesity-Prevention Programs." *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 69.4 (1999): 747S-754S. Source: Anderson, S. E. (1990). Core indicators of nutritional state for difficult-to-sample populations. *Journal of Nutrition*, 120, 1559-1599.

5 National Diabetes Education Program. *The Diabetes Epidemic among Americans Indian and Alaska Natives*. Retrieved March 1, 2013 from http://ndep.nih.gov/media/fs_amindian.pdf

6 Center for Disease Control. *American Indian and Alaska Native Heart Disease and Stroke Fact Sheet*. Retrieved March 1, 2013 from http://www.cdc.gov/dhbsp/data_statistics/fact_sheets/docs/fs_aian.pdf



2010 and 2014, First Nations has invested more than \$4 million in funding toward reclaiming Native food systems through grantmaking, training and technical assistance, convenings, advocacy and public education. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan, has been a major supporter of these efforts. In 2011, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation awarded First Nations \$2.88 million over three years to support the NAFSI grant program and help improve the physical health and well-being of Native American children, families and communities. During this three-year grant cycle, First Nations awarded grants to 30 tribes and Native organizations with the goal of building local and systemic infrastructure in Native communities. The purpose of these projects is to address food insecurity by providing resources that will increase access to traditional and fresh, healthy foods; increase community awareness and involvement with where food comes from; expand knowledge about the linkages between Native culture and family income; and finally, to support entrepreneurially-related food ventures. At First Nations, we believe that there is great opportunity to support existing efforts in Native communities to develop homegrown solutions to food insecurity. We are grateful to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for their continued commitment to support these efforts and eliminate food insecurity and hunger in Indian Country.

The 30 tribes and organizations awarded funding through the NAFSI grant program over the past three years have already started to experience tremendous success. Between 2012 and 2014, NAFSI grantees planted, grew, and harvested approximately **16,830 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables**. Meanwhile, Native fishers supported through the NAFSI grant program harvested **400,000 pounds of fresh salmon**. Additionally, Native ranchers processed **600 pounds of bison meat** and raised **1,250 chickens** that have produced more than **5,000 dozen eggs**.⁷

Without a doubt, increased access to all of these healthy and nutritious foods has helped dramatically reduce and even reverse negative health issues in Indian Country related to food insecurity and hunger. Additionally, these projects have had a number of other positive impacts on these communities as well. For example, these projects have resulted in 22 new jobs at both the administrative and operational levels. This accomplishment is especially impressive given that Native Americans endure very high levels of unemployment and poverty. Furthermore, it suggests that these small homegrown solutions have the potential to improve not only physical health and well-being but also economic development.

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III. BUILDING LOCAL AND SYSTEMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The colonization of Native American land and knowledge systems has also had a negative impact on Native food and food-system control. It is only recently, through the Native Food Sovereignty Movement, that tribes and Native organizations have started to reclaim control of their local and/or traditional food systems by developing innovative programs and projects related to food, health and nutrition.

An important first step toward reclaiming Native food-system control is to reverse the devastating effects of colonization by building local and systemic infrastructure in rural and reservation-based communities. During the first cycle of the NAFSI grant program, many tribes and Native organizations requested funding to build agricultural infrastructure.

Between 2012 and 2014, NAFSI grantees established 65 home gardens, 24 family farms, 16 greenhouses, two community gardens, and two demonstration sites that helped produced 16,830 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables or approximately eight tons of healthy and nutritious food!

⁷ These figures have been tallied using self-evaluations submitted by grantees between 2011 and 2014. In fact, these figures might even be higher as some grantees neglected to fully record their data, especially during the first year of the program.



Community Kitchens

Community kitchens are also known as commercial community kitchens. A commercial community kitchen is a shared space or building equipped with kitchen equipment and implements used for the processing of raw products or the creation of raw product into value-added commercial food products for sale. Commercial kitchens are found in agricultural communities with many local, individual or small producers. A commercial community kitchen provides a pathway for small producers and entrepreneurs to develop value-added products for market in a manner that meets all food-safety regulations and food health requirements.

In 2013, Northwest Indian College received a \$37,500 grant to build infrastructure and increase capacity of their seven tribally-owned commercial kitchens. The college's seven commercial kitchens serve approximately 1,200 meals per day to 3,844 tribal members living on the Muckleshoot Indian reservation.

This grant allowed the tribe to organize purchasing. The seven kitchens, by organizing and purchasing their food together, have more buying power to influence vendors to provide healthier and more culturally appropriate food.

Additionally, project organizers used this grant to promote healthy and traditional cooking through various workshops and trainings that focused on cooking with healthy, locally-sourced, organic ingredients.

Community Gardens and Farms

Community gardens and farms provide access to nutritionally-rich food that may otherwise be unavailable to low-income families and individuals, especially those living in rural and reservation-based communities that, because of their remote locations, often have less access to healthy and affordable foods. Furthermore, community gardens and farms foster a sense of community ownership and stewardship among both adults and youth.

In 2013 and 2014, the Pueblo of Nambe received two grants totaling \$65,625 to launch and later expand the Nambe Community Farm by entering into contracts with tribal landowners who were not using their land for agricultural purposes.

Initially, the community farm was created to combat food insecurity by providing free, nutritious, and local options for the community. During the first year, the community farm produced nearly 4,000 pounds of food. This number jumped to nearly 5,000 pounds during the second year of the program.

After the success of this first year, program organizers decided to start selling surplus fruits and vegetable outside the local market thus turning the community farm into a business enterprise that help promotes tribal economic growth and development.

Food and Food Safety Workshops

Sharing knowledge and skills is an important part of reclaiming Native food systems. Workshops are a great way to build capacity throughout the community, and to raise awareness about Native food systems control. Between 2012 and 2014, NAFSI grantees hosted more than **60 workshops** ranging from basic cooking and nutrition courses to workshops and educational trainings that focused on food preparation, preservation and storage, as well as topics related to agriculture.



In 2013, the Big Pine Paiute Tribe of Owens Valley received a \$37,500 grant to expand their permaculture garden into an educational community garden site. At the site, project organizers conducted more than a dozen classes and workshops related to Native food sovereignty and food policy.

Workshop topics included water application, greenhouse maintenance, plant sustainability and composting, to name a few. These workshops have been well-attended. Attendee have requested several more workshops in the future. Through these workshops and classes, project organizers grew and harvested more than 100 pounds of squash, cucumbers, tomatoes, green beans and bell peppers.

Seed Saving

Seed saving is the process of saving seeds from one harvest for the subsequent harvest. In the past, the process of seed saving was a necessity, especially for tribes that relied upon certain crops for consumption as well as for cultural and social purposes. Many tribes developed highly evolved systems of seed saving that often included optimal season times for seed saving, seed saving rotations, containers and storage units that lasted for hundreds of years, processes that considered pollination patterns and systems, and associated cultural meaning to the different stages of the seed-saving process. Seed savings is still a vibrant and important tradition in many Native communities today. Some seed varieties have existed in Native communities since time immemorial. Between 2012 and 2014, two NAFSI grantees have established seed banks to preserve heirloom, non-genetically-modified seeds.

In 2013, the Big Pine Paiute Tribe of Owens Valley received a \$37,500 grant to not only expand their permaculture garden site, but to also establish an organic seed bank. The tribe determined what fruits and vegetables to plant in the permaculture garden by conducting a community survey. This survey also helped the tribe determine which seeds to collect and store for their seed bank. The purpose of the seed bank is to gather the seeds of plants originally grown in the region and preserve them for future generations. The seed bank is a continuing process that will grow as the tribe becomes more and more aware of its needs and learns proper seed-saving techniques.

IV. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Collecting and analyzing data is not an easy task. Indeed, the process of data collection and analysis can be very costly and time intensive. Moreover, the inaccuracies and inconsistencies in available datasets (e.g., USDA food desert indicators) make it hard to establish baseline indicators. Data collection and analysis, however, is crucial to building a sustainable food system.

Community Food Assessments

A community food assessment is a set of data -ollection tools – including interviews, telephone surveys, mail surveys, email surveys, web surveys – that attempts to measure food production and consumption trends. It also can provide important information about money families and communities spend on food, how many food dollars leave the reservation, and opportunities to create programs or other business/entrepreneurial enterprises in Native communities. This data is then used to create an action plan to develop a local, healthy community-based food system.



In 2004, First Nations, with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, developed the Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool (FSAT) to help measure, assess and alleviate food insecurity in rural and reservation-based Native communities. The FSAT provides tips, guidelines and data-collection tools for conducting a food security assessment in Native communities. We have used the FSAT to provide numerous trainings to hundreds of individuals working to develop food assessments in Native communities.

Recently, First Nations published a new and updated version of the FSAT as well as a report entitled “Conducting Food Sovereignty Assessments in Native Communities: On the Ground Perspectives” that focuses on the community perspective of Native food growers.

All three publications are free and available for download at First Nations’ Knowledge Center.

Food Database

Can tradition and technology co-exist? More and more tribes are using databases, websites and spreadsheet applications that suggest the answer to this question is yes. These databases allow tribes to record food-related data that they collect and analyze data from community food assessments and other food-evaluation tools. In addition to collecting information about traditional foods, these databases are also being used to help preserve and share traditional recipes.

In 2013, the San Carlos Apache Tribe received a \$37,500 grant to launch a first-of-its-kind traditional food database system. With this grant, the tribe hired a fluent Apache speaker to conduct 100 interviews with tribal elders who helped identify more than 200 traditional Apache edible plants and nearly as many traditional Apache recipes.

A nutritionist has analyzed more than half of these recipes and modernized them so that they are more accessible to home cooks. For example, some recipes call for wild plants that are not typically sold in the grocery store or sown in the garden. The nutritionist, by finding a modern equivalent to these traditional ingredients, will help tribal members revive their pre-reservation diet.

Apache elders firmly believe that a return to a healthy pre-reservation diet will help reverse negative health trends and enhance the lives of tribal members – culturally, physically, socially and politically.

V. INCREASING ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS

Native food systems – like all food systems – are complex, varied and influenced by a number of cultural, political, geographic and economic factors. The long-term effects of colonization and destructive federal policies, however, have reduced Native control over land, agriculture and food production/distribution systems even further than in other communities. Several NAFSI grantees have developed innovative projects to help overcome some of these barriers and increase access to more traditional, healthy foods.



Farmers' Markets

Farmers' markets are an effective strategy to increase access to healthier, more nutritious foods. A farmers' market is a public marketplace that allows farmers and growers to sell fresh fruits and vegetables (at times they also sell meat and dairy products) at a central or fixed location. Over the past three years, NAFSI grantees have launched 13 new farmers' markets including two mobile farmers' markets. Through these farmers' markets, NAFSI grantees have sold nearly **10,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables.**

In 2014, Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College received a \$37,500 NAFSI grant to launch a mobile farmers' market that will help reach even more tribal members on the nearly 40-square-mile reservation. In order to launch this project, organizers purchased a mobile trailer, kiosk and EBT machine.

The mobile farmers' market is on the road seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Project organizers estimate that 50 to 75 people visit the mobile farmers' market each week to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables as well as honey, eggs, breads and jams.

Community Supported Agriculture

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a food production and distribution system that connects farmers with consumers. Essentially, consumers purchase shares of a farmer's harvest in advance. Throughout the harvesting season, members receive boxes of seasonal produce. CSAs are an emerging trend in Native Food Systems work. Choctaw Fresh Produce, a 2014 NAFSI grantee, is one of the first tribally-owned business to explore this new and exciting approach.

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In 2012, Choctaw Fresh Foods established a CSA program that sells farmers' harvest shares at \$250/per year for 14 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables. During fall harvest, a 10-week period, consumers pick up their produce. Last year, farmers participating in the CSA program primarily grew vegetables such as lettuce, carrots, cucumbers and 13 varieties of tomatoes.

CSA programs allows consumers to have more input in the food grown by farmers, For example, feedback received from last year's consumers has encouraged local farmers to expand their selection from simply vegetables to more fruits, including apples, pears, plums and wild elderberry.

In 2014, Choctaw Fresh Produce received a \$37,500 grant to increase these efforts by creating a mentorship program to encourage more farmers to participate in the CSA and also develop a mobile farmers market and kiosk to help provide fresh fruits and vegetables to every tribal member, regardless of their remote location.

According to Choctaw Fresh Produce, they are fiercely committed to making fresh produce available to tribal members living in all eight of their communities and to providing them with information regarding the benefits of a local food system.



Food Hubs

Food hubs are another new and exciting trend in Native food systems work. Food hubs are businesses or organizations that serve as a drop-off point for farmers and a pick-up point for consumers. The purpose of a food hub is to actively manage the aggregation, distribution and marketing of local foods. In effect, they seek to increase the viability of local farms and food businesses.

In 2014, First Nations awarded Sust'ainable Molokai \$37,500 to establish a food hub that functions as a distribution center that helps connect Native Hawaiian farmers to consumers on the main island. These on-island markets are often difficult to access due to their large scale and remote location.

In Hawaii, farmers are often responsible for transporting their own products via truck, plane or barge. The Molokai Food Hub coordinates these efforts and also offers technical assistance training. These trainings are intended to help Native Hawaiian farmers manage growing and marketing cycles more effectively.

During their grant cycle, Sus'tainable Molokai hired a food coordinator to manage aggregation, distribution and marketing of 20+ farmers. The food coordinator is currently in the process of recruiting and training five more new farmers.

VI. ENGAGING TRIBAL YOUTH

Tribal youth have the potential to play a significant role in building strong, sustainable tribal communities. Unfortunately, there is a decreasing interest among tribal youth – and in fact, among most youth – regarding agriculture and food. Often, careers in agriculture and food are perceived as outdated and irrelevant. Tribal youth do not always seem to recognize the important linkages between culture, language, food systems and economies. As a result of this indifference, many farmers, ranchers, herders, etc. are now retiring without qualified replacements trained to take their place. This potentially dangerous situation has compelled several tribes and Native organization to design innovative programs that teach tribal youth valuable lessons about their culture, language, food systems and economies, and also encourages them to enter into fields related to food and agriculture.

Farm-to-School Programs

Establishing healthy eating habits during early childhood can reap benefits that last a lifetime. Native youth, unfortunately, “have approximately twice the levels of food insecurity, obesity and Type II diabetes relative to the averages of all U.S. children of similar ages.”⁸ As a result, they are vulnerable to higher incidence of infection and weaker immune systems, leading to increased school absences and overall poorer academic performance – all of which tends to have a long-term impact on their quality of life.⁹ In an effort to address food insecurity and eliminate child hunger, many tribes and Native organizations have implemented farm-to-school programs. These programs connect schools with local food producers to increase the supply of fresh,

⁸ Gordon, Child Hunger in Indian Country, vi.

⁹ National Relief Charities. Hunger Among American Indians, 2009. (PDF version of document downloaded May 23, 2012). Retrieved from: http://www.nrcprograms.org/site/DocServer/Hunger_Among_American_Indians.pdf?docID=1261



nutritious, locally-produced foods in school cafeterias. In addition to providing students with healthy food, farm-to-school programs have expanded to include agriculture and nutrition-based classes, workshops and activities that encourage healthy eating habits at home as well as school.

In 2012, the STAR School received a \$44,334 grant to launch the first farm-to-school program in northern Arizona. The STAR School is a charter elementary school located 25 miles east of Flagstaff, Arizona. The school serves students from pre-school through grade 8 who live in the southwest corner of the Navajo Nation and the surrounding rural area.

Specifically, grant funding was used to produce a greenhouse that produced a number of fruits and vegetables, including watermelons, tomatoes, potatoes, onions and chili. Additionally, project organizers planted and harvested one acre of yellow and blue corn and a half acre of winter squashes.

These fruits and vegetable were planted and harvested by tribal youth and elders. The cafeteria staff then turned these fresh fruits and vegetable into nearly 1,300 healthy and nutritious lunches. Additionally, many of these fresh fruits and vegetables, especially the blue corn, were used for traditional ceremonies during Harvest Week.

Youth Leadership Programs

Leadership and mentorship programs are a great way to engage tribal youth in agriculture and food-related activities. Many young people in rural and reservation-based Native communities often complain of inactivity that may lead to deviant behaviors. After-school programs, weekend activities and summer camps have the potential to decrease deviant behavior, connect tribal elders and youth, increase employment on the reservation, and increase productivity of the community. Over the past three years, NAFSI grantees have developed six youth programs geared toward teaching tribal youth how to grow, harvest and process food, while also learning leadership skills and the value of hard work and perseverance.

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In 2012, Hunkpati Investments received two grants totaling \$82,500 to launch and later expand the Crow Creek Fresh Food Initiative. The heart of the Crow Creek Fresh Food Initiative is a community garden, centrally located next to the elementary school on the Crow Creek Reservation. The community garden is tended by both volunteers and paid workers.

In 2012, Hunkpati Investments partnered with the Boys and Girls Club-Crow Creek Unit to launch a new leadership program for tribal youth. More than 50 tribal youth participated in the leadership program. They helped plant, grow and harvest more than 350 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables from nearly 30 individual/community garden plots.

As a result of these efforts, the initiative donated approximately \$600 of food from these gardens to children, families, and elders across the Crow Creek Sioux Reservation. Additionally, they sold another \$400 worth of produce at their farmers market. Undoubtedly, this initiative has helped promote healthy eating and active living in this community.



VII. FOOD POLICY

Food policy is the area of public policy concerning how food is produced, processed, distributed and purchased. Policy, in general, is meant to influence the behavior of individuals or entities within a given society. Food policymakers tend to engage in activities related to food safety and regulations. Additionally, they establish standards for food labeling and packaging as well as food-assistance programs.

Tribal food policies have been in existence for centuries, often promulgated through cultural and social behaviors. Only recently have tribal food policies taken a written form that mimics the legal policies established by the federal government. Many tribes have adopted this new format for a number of different reasons, such as staking claim on important cultural/agricultural knowledge or as a response to health disparities.

In 2013 and 2014, First Nations awarded the Diné Community Advocacy Alliance (DCAA) two grants totaling \$22,800 to support their efforts to advocate for the Navajo Nation “junk food tax.” DCAA is a grassroots organization formed by 70 healthcare professionals and community leaders across the Navajo Nation to combat chronic diet-related diseases, including obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

DCAA estimates that between 55 and 85 percent of all food available in grocery and convenience stores on the reservation can be considered junk food. They used these two grants to launch a major campaign known as the Healthy Diné Nation Act of 2014. This legislation had two main components: 1) remove the tribal tax on fresh fruits, vegetables and water sold on the reservation, and 2) impose a 2 percent sales tax on sugar-sweetened beverages and junk foods sold on the reservation. The revenue generated from the junk food tax would be used to help fund various health and wellness projects within Navajo communities.

In the summer of 2014, the Navajo Nation became the first to remove taxation on fresh fruits, vegetables and water sold on the reservation. Moreover, in November 2014, the Navajo Nation Council approved a 2 percent sales tax on junk food sold on the reservation, becoming the first tribe in the country to pass a junk food tax.

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VIII. COMMUNITY GIVING

Consistent with Native American values of sharing, many grantees funded through the NAFSI grant program have donated fresh fruits, vegetables and meats to the elderly and other vulnerable populations on the reservation. In many cases, tribes and Native organizations donated nearly half their food to senior centers, women’s shelters and children’s programs. Additionally, many grantees also donated food for community gatherings and traditional ceremonies.



In 2012 and 2013, the Pueblo of Nambe received two NASI grants totaling \$62,500 to launch and later expand their community farm. During these two years, the farm produced nearly 9,000 pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables. Project organizers sold half of their produce at the local farmers' market and donated the other half to the local senior center. The tribe donates half their produce to the local senior center to demonstrate their respect and appreciation for their tribal elders' lifelong contributions to the tribe.

Additionally, in the fall, the tribe hosted a harvest party to honor their elders with a traditional feast that included fresh bison and fruits and vegetables from the community garden. Many of the fruits and vegetables planted in the community garden were grown and harvested by tribal youth under the guidance and supervision of their elders who wished to pass on their cultural knowledge and wisdom to the next generation.

IX. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Native food sovereignty is about strengthening Native control over local food systems. However, strengthening Native control over local food systems remains a challenging task for many Native communities. The innovative, tribally-based efforts highlighted in this report, however, indicate that success is possible. Indeed, this report demonstrates that Native American leaders and governments are taking problem-solving steps, and using their tribal land and resources, to develop homegrown solutions to food insecurity, hunger and poverty in rural and reservation-based communities – and these efforts have paid off. Over the past three years, NAFSI grantees funded through the W.K. Kellogg Foundation distributed and consumed approximately 16,830 pounds – **more than eight tons** – of fruits and vegetables, as well as various organic meats that will improve the health and nutrition of their communities.

The pioneering programs in this report reveal innovative strategies and policies that are increasing access to healthy foods, creating jobs and income opportunities, and sparking community pride and revitalization. Their work reveals that local food systems can be enhanced, redeveloped and sustained for community empowerment and development. At First Nations, we are encouraged by the many findings concerning Native food sovereignty contained in this report. They show that Indian Country is filled with innovation, ingenuity and resiliency when it comes to food-system control and food sovereignty.

We would like to commend the 30 tribes and Native organizations highlighted in this report for their commitment and dedication to food sovereignty and eliminating food insecurity and hunger in Indian Country. However, we know that they are just a snapshot of the larger food sovereignty movement that is growing in Indian country. We hope the contents and recommendations included in this report will inspire more grantmakers to support these homegrown solutions.



GRANTS AWARDED UNDER THE NATIVE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS INITIATIVE, 2012-2014

Tribe/Native Organization Name	Grant Year	Grant Awarded
Cochiti Youth Experience	2012	\$6,000.00
The Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin	2012	\$5,000.00
Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission	2012	\$5,080.00
Hunkpati Investments, Inc.	2012	\$6,000.00
Inupiat Community of Arctic Slope (ICAS)	2012	\$9,947.09
Oglala Sioux Parks and Recreation Authority	2012	\$25,000.00
The Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin	2012	\$34,861.00
Northwest Indian College	2012	\$43,703.00
Painted Desert Demonstration Project DBA The STAR School	2012	\$44,334.00
Hunkpati Investments, Inc.	2012	\$45,000.00
Taos County Economic Development Corporation (TCEDC)	2012	\$45,000.00
Waimea Hawaiian Homesteaders' Association Inc.	2012	\$45,000.00
Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission	2012	\$45,403.00
Diné College	2012	\$45,959.00
Agricultural Safety & Health Council of America	2013	\$500.00
Institute of American Indian Arts	2013	\$1,000.00
Santo Domingo Pueblo	2013	\$1,000.00
Community Area Resource Enterprises, Inc.	2013	\$ 7,143.00
Community Area Resource Enterprises, Inc.	2013	\$7,500.00
Painted Desert Demonstration Project DBA The STAR School	2013	\$36,970.00
Big Pine Paiute Tribe of Owens Valley	2013	\$37,500.00
Hunkpati Investments, Inc.	2013	\$37,500.00

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Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College	2013	\$37,500.00
Northwest Indian College	2013	\$37,500.00
Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma	2013	\$37,500.00
Pueblo of Nambe	2013	\$37,500.00
San Carlos Apache Tribe	2013	\$37,500.00
The Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin	2013	\$37,500.00
Waimea Hawaiian Homesteaders' Association Inc.	2013	\$37,500.00
Taos County Economic Development Corporation (TCEDC)	2013	\$40,500.00
Dream of Wild Health	2014	\$2,000.00
American Indian Center of Chicago	2014	\$2,000.00
Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center, Inc.	2014	\$2,000.00
North Leupp Family Farms	2014	\$5,000.00
Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma	2014	\$10,000.00
Hawaiian Pig Farmers	2014	\$12,539.00
Community Area Resource Enterprises, Inc.	2014	\$18,492.00
Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission	2014	\$28,125.00
Pueblo of Nambe	2014	\$28,125.00
Waimea Hawaiian Homesteaders' Association Inc.	2014	\$32,825.00
Bay Mills Community College	2014	\$37,500.00
Choctaw Fresh Produce	2014	\$37,500.00
Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College	2014	\$37,500.00
Lakota Ranch Beginning Farmer/Rancher program	2014	\$37,500.00
Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa	2014	\$37,500.00
Sust' aina ble Molokai	2014	\$37,500.00
Taos County Economic Development Corporation (TCEDC)	2014	\$37,500.00
Grand Total Grant Support		\$1,242,006.09





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