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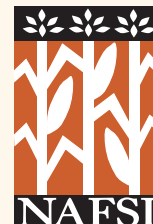
Nourishing Native Foods and Health

Grantmaking Trends from the Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative 2015-2017



Native Agriculture & Food Systems Initiative

A Program of First Nations Development Institute





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Acknowledgments

First Nations began its grantmaking program in 1994 and during its initial decade noted a high percentage of grant requests coming from Native communities focused specifically on Native agriculture and food systems. It was this reflection on grantmaking coupled with an initial investment from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation that allowed for the launch of the Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative (NAFSI) in the early 2000s. NAFSI is designed to support tribes and Native communities as they build sustainable food systems that improve health, strengthen food security, and increase the control over Native agriculture and food systems. Through year-end 2017, First Nations has awarded 307 grants through NAFSI, totaling more than \$7.58 million. NAFSI continues to be a grant program in high demand by Native communities as they seek to reclaim local food systems.

We would like to thank the following supporters of NAFSI: Aetna Foundation, Agua Fund, The Christensen Fund, NoVo Foundation, Northwest Area Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Walmart Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and other tribal, corporate and individual supporters. Work to support Native control of local food systems would not be possible without their generous support. We thank these organizations and individuals, but acknowledge that the content presented in this report is that of the authors alone, and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the funding entities mentioned. Most of all, we thank all the communities that have applied to NAFSI and continue to work to reclaim their local food systems and build healthy Native communities. Although financing has been generously provided by private and public philanthropy, the true onus and intellectual capital in this movement has come from the hearts of Native communities.

This report was written by the following First Nations Development Institute staff members: Kendall Tallmadge, Lead Grants Officer; A-dae Romero-Briones, Director of Programs – Native Agriculture and Food Systems; and Raymond Foxworth, Vice President of Grantmaking, Development and Communications. They also express their deepest thanks to all of the Native communities that have applied for our grant opportunities over the years, as they have made this report possible.

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Introduction/Background

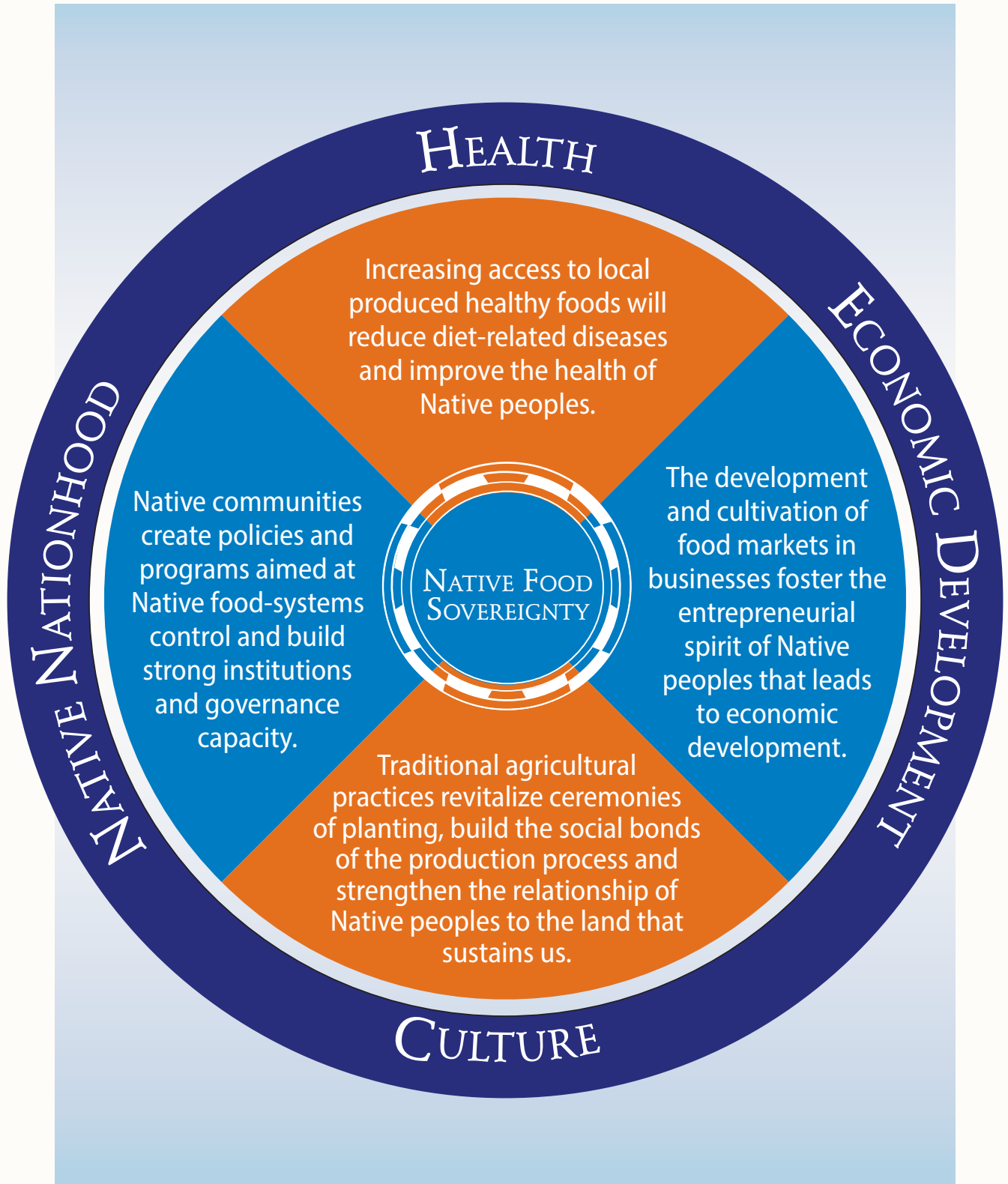
Three years have passed since First Nations Development Institute (First Nations) released its report titled “Grantmaking in Indian Country: Trends from the Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative.” That report analyzed four years of grantmaking activities under the Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative from 2011 to 2014.

The goal of NAFSI is to support tribes and Native communities as they develop strategies to reclaim local food systems and design a more sustainable food system for the benefit of their Native communities. This includes supporting Native community-led strategies to end hunger and food insecurity, support community gardens, ranches, food policy, business development, transference of traditional food knowledge and other projects related to increasing control of and growing local and traditional food systems. First Nations recognizes that accessing healthy food is a challenge for many Native American children and families due to a variety of reasons stemming from colonialism and the loss of resources and assets. Without access to healthy food, a nutritious diet and good health are out of reach. This is evidenced by high rates of obesity, diabetes and food insecurity plaguing Native communities today.¹ Healthy food as used here is broadly defined, but often defined by the communities seeking to increase access. Addressing access issues require Native-led and developed solutions to build strong and healthy Native communities.

Food sovereignty in Native communities intersects with issues of health, economy, traditional and cultural practices, overall Native governance and, ultimately, Native nationhood. Thus, the grant support that First Nations has provided to Native communities has crossover to all these areas of community development.



¹ American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) adults are 50% more likely to be obese than non-Hispanic whites. Furthermore, AI/AN adults are 2.4 times as likely as white adults to be diagnosed with diabetes. AI/AN households are also more likely to be food insecure. 23% of AI/AN households face food insecurity defined as “uncertain or limited access to enough food for an active healthy life because of a lack of money or resources.”





Native Agriculture & Food Systems Initiative

A Program of First Nations Development Institute



NAFSI was created in the early 2000s when First Nations recognized that a high percentage of grant requests were focused on Native agriculture and food systems work. Since then, First Nations has concentrated on promoting the Native American food sovereignty movement and addressing food insecurity issues in Indian Country. With the support of an initial investment from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, First Nations has been able to leverage funding from a wide array of private foundations, tribal investors and federal government programs to grow NAFSI over the years. In addition to grantmaking, NAFSI provides training and technical assistance to Native communities and supports policy/advocacy work related to food sovereignty. In 2013, First Nations began a partnership with the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin to provide an annual Food Sovereignty Summit for Native communities

and, in 2014, First Nations began a college scholarship program for Native American undergraduate and graduate students planning to use their degrees to assist their communities in increasing control of local and traditional food systems.

Since 2002, First Nations has awarded 307 grants totaling over \$7.58 million to Native organizations dedicated to increasing food access and improving the health and nutrition of Native children and families. This number dwindles in comparison to the more than 1,450 requests received totaling more than \$49.7 million. Therefore, the goal of this report is twofold: 1) to share NAFSI grantmaking trends over the past three years, and 2) to compare these trends with the original report and document any changes regarding the needs of food-systems funding in Indian Country.

INNOVATION AND IMPACT



Promoting Healthy Foods in Arctic Alaska

Iñisaġvik College is located in the northernmost point of Alaska. It is a two-year tribal college offering quality post-secondary academic, vocational and technical education aimed at matching workforce needs. It is “dedicated to perpetuating and strengthening Iñupiat culture, language, values and traditions.”

Iñisaġvik College received \$30,000 for the “Healthy Futures Program,” which was established in 2014 and delivers quality, hands-on instruction in nutrition, basic cooking and household budgeting to the Iñupiat people in seven remote villages of the North Slope Borough. Instructors traveled to the villages over the period of March 1, 2016, to February 28, 2017, and provided instruction specifically for Iñupiat youth ages five to 25, and included cultural instruction from village elders. The youth engaged in workshops that integrate traditional foods and knowledge, with the aim of addressing high rates of diabetes and obesity in arctic Alaska.

Amon Barry is the current Healthy Futures Program Coordinator, and he has seen the impact of the program on the seven North Slope villages over the many months since the grant concluded.

“The healthy futures program is imperative for the villages here in the North Slope,” Barry said. “I’ve seen many light bulbs light up when the participants are

shown how to make some of their favorite foods or things they’ve always wanted to try. Some like the smell and taste of the food and that keeps them engaged, while others are fascinated by the science of why certain illnesses are spreading and the solution of how to prevent them through a change of diet. Some of these things are taught in school, but only for a day or so. This program is a great way to bring the youth closer to a healthier future through interactive cooking activities and fun-based instruction methods.”

The Healthy Futures Program also focused on increasing awareness of what food choices are available, and introduced hybrid meal planning to the participants.



“We were successful with introducing hybrid meals and partnered with the school to promote and add more fruits and vegetables into the student’s daily diets. Adding subsistence foods was definitely something new for the program here and it was received well by the community as a whole.”

Barry says the impact of incorporating traditional foods into the student’s diets made a big impression when it was held in an outdoor setting.

“My first workshop featured tuttou, which is Iñupiat for caribou. There was a day-camping trip in the mountains where we prepared caribou kabobs over an open fire with onions and peppers. The students really enjoyed themselves, and the elders and instructors had a good time as well. Many asked why we didn’t do programs like this all the time. If we can continue to create new and exciting ways to bring healthy alternatives into the kids’ lives, we will be able to help prevent diet based illnesses in the children and the adults,” said Barry.

Along with incorporating traditional foods such as salmon, caribou and tundra plants, some participants requested the use of a traditional knife known as an ulu, instead of a kitchen knife. Other traditional foods and traditional-cooking tools were incorporated into the program.

“Salmon berries were a big hit for our summer programming here. It’s very sweet, full of nutrition, and part of the traditional diet. We also used various plants indigenous in the area to make salves and lip balms that can help with various lip and skin

problems. Ulu were used in our classes, especially for our outside activities such a preparing seal skins to make clothing, and butchering a caribou to make soup for the evening meal.”

Barry says they were most successful at the hybrid meals when the elders were along to help navigate the program, as they offered wisdom and knowledge and were often the first to try new foods.

“The elder involvement was essential for me to make any meaningful impact in the community. They are your eyes, ears and library of the town. We depend heavily on the elders to guide us to the right plants to cook and which plants to dry for later use. They have shown us the proper way to clean a fish and what kind of rock you can use to sharpen your knives when you are out camping. The elders, for me, made things a lot easier and prevented us from doing things incorrectly or irresponsibly. As long as you were prepared to listen, you were going to receive something priceless from them,” said Barry.

“The support from First Nations has propelled the program to reach for new and exciting ways to catch the attention of the youth and introduce to them an alternative way to look at food and how it affects their bodies in the long run. In my time running the program here, I’ve seen a lot of change in the way some of my class participants approach food. I see some of them in the store reading the back of everything (labels). We might not be able to reach everyone with our message, but we are planting seeds that we will see grow strong.”





Major Findings

This report provides a snapshot of grantmaking activities from 2015 through 2017 that fall under the Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative. The data highlight the following:

- ***The food sovereignty movement is healthy and growing.*** Despite increased levels of funding over the years, a large percentage of food-systems work in Indian Country remains underfunded.
- ***There are noticeable regional areas of growth in food-systems work.*** First Nations data reveal that requests from the Northwest region of the country nearly doubled over the past three years. This suggests that there is a significant, vibrant food sovereignty movement in the region.
- ***Projects are community-based and have an intersectional focus on community outreach and education, food access and economic development.*** The top areas of food and agricultural work in Native communities have focused on Community Food Systems, Community Gardens, Community-Supported Agriculture, and Farmers' Markets. These funding areas showcase the commitment Native groups have to their own local communities and the desire to implement community-driven and supported projects. To complement this, communities are developing education and outreach strategies to keep community members informed and engage them in improving health and other community outcomes locally.
- ***There is a strong need for programmatic grants to support both new and existing local and traditional food work.*** There is a need to support existing and growing programs as well as new start-up food-systems work in Native communities. Communities are at different strategies of development in terms of planning and executing their food-systems strategy. As communities develop new programs, there needs to be consistent funding for these new program efforts. At the same time, communities that have been engaged in food-systems control over a longer period of time also need support as they continue to grow and develop their work.

The Data and Trends 2015-2017

From 2015 to 2017, First Nations had 18 funding opportunities under NAFSI. This funding pool included both competitive and discretionary (or invitation-only) requests for proposals. Eight of the 18 funding opportunities were competitive, and these accounted for the majority of requests received, totaling approximately 96% of total proposals. Discretionary funding pools were much smaller and accounted for approximately 4% of requests received. The main competitive programs during this period were:

- Ending Senior Hunger
- Food Sovereignty Assessments
- NAFSI Programmatic Grants
- Nourishing Native Children
- Seeds of Native Health

From 2015 to 2017, First Nations received a total of 713 proposals, totaling more than \$19.5 million, to support Native food-systems work. But from 2015 to 2017, First Nations was only able to provide \$4 million in funding to Native communities.

In 2015, First Nations received 196 proposals totaling \$5,991,601.64. In 2016, First Nations received 306 proposals totaling \$7,629,069.90 and, in 2017, First Nations received 211 proposals totaling \$5,955,910.71. This brings the total requests received during this three-year period to 713 grants totaling \$19,576,582.25.



Similar to previous years, First Nations was unable to meet the full funding demand. First Nations funded approximately 1 in 6 requests, or 16.9% of total funds requested in 2015. In 2016, First Nations was able to fund approximately 1 in 4 requests, or 23.4% of total requested funding. In 2017, First Nations was able to fund approximately 1 in 5 requests, or 20.3% of total funding requests.

On average, First Nations has been able to meet 20.5% of total funding requests for Native agriculture and food systems work during this three-year period. Thanks to the financial support of our funders, First Nations was able to increase our support of Native community food systems work when compared to the 2011 to 2014 time period. From 2011 to 2014, First Nations was only able to meet 7.18% of total funding requests. First Nations' ability to support more Native communities is associated with the increase in First Nations' financial supporters. For example, from 2011 to 2014, only six grant funding cycles were available. First Nations was able to increase the amount of granting dollars available from \$1.73 million from 2011 to 2014 to \$4.01 million granted from 2015 to 2017. The two most popular grant opportunities from 2015 to 2017 were the NAFSI Programmatic Grants (generously supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation) and Seeds of Native Health (generously supported by the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community), which accounted for almost three-quarters, or 531, of requests received.

Figure 1: Total Requests 2015-2017

# of Grant Requests	713
\$ Amount Requested	\$19,576,582
Total Grants Provided	176
Unmet Need	\$15,566,387

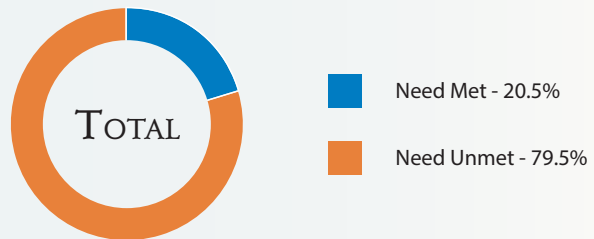
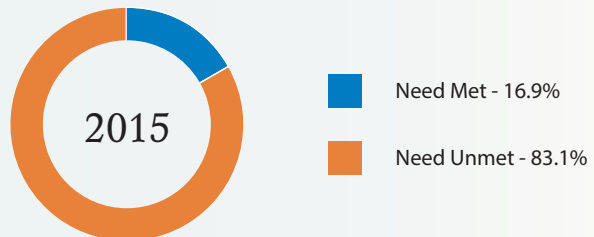
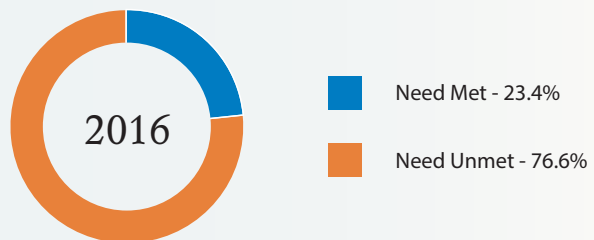


Figure 2: Grant Requests by Year (Requests and Unmet Need)

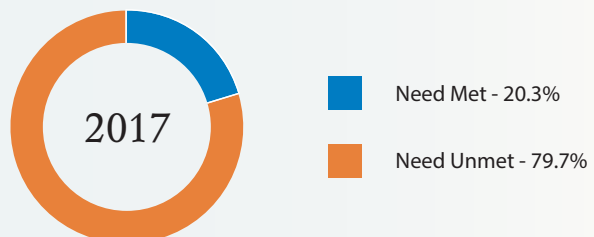
# of Grant Requests	196
\$ Amount Requested	\$5,991,602
Total Grants Provided	35
Unmet Need	\$4,979,812



# of Grant Requests	306
\$ Amount Requested	\$7,629,070
Total Grants Provided	92
Unmet Need	\$5,840,272



# of Grant Requests	211
\$ Amount Requested	\$5,955,911
Total Grants Provided	49
Unmet Need	\$4,746,303



INNOVATION AND IMPACT

Food Sovereignty on the Blackfeet Reservation

“Food is very cultural. There is the different use of food in ceremonies ... Historically we went through feast and famine. It is a struggle which continues today. There are those who can’t feed their families on a daily basis,” said Sharon Silvas, a health educator with the Blackfeet Community Hospital, and a Blackfeet tribal member.

Silvas is a part of the FAST Blackfeet (Food Access and Sustainability) team. According to its Facebook page, “FAST Blackfeet is a group of community leaders, health professionals, educators and citizens on the Blackfeet Reservation who are dedicated to food security and food sovereignty.” Silvas and other team members have been gathering and meeting voluntarily since September 2015 to discuss the growing food insecurity in Blackfeet.

The FAST Blackfeet team understands the need to address food insecurity within the reservation communities. Whether they are working to combat hunger in the schools, meeting the growing demand of the area food banks, or ensuring the Blackfeet reservation communities have access to nutritious foods, the team is committed to finding solutions.

Wilma Mad Plume and Christy Calf Boss Ribs, both Blackfeet tribal members and members of FAST Blackfeet, were sent by their employers to attend a community food sovereignty assessment training provided by First Nations Development Institute (First Nations) at The Center Pole, a nonprofit organization on the Crow Nation reservation in early 2016. The training focused on the tools needed to address food sovereignty and food security, and how to get started with a food sovereignty assessment. FAST Blackfeet had a meeting soon after, and shared information from the training with



the rest of the team. They knew immediately that they wanted – and needed – to bring the assessment training to Blackfeet.

FAST Blackfeet next took the initiative and contacted First Nations directly and asked about holding a food sovereignty assessment training in Blackfeet. They also utilized the Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool that is available in First Nations’ Knowledge Center. The group has a strong network, with many working in related fields, and they were able to secure a meeting space, arrange for materials support, and provide lunch for the two days of the training.



“The training helped us to define what the concepts were — food security and food sovereignty. Also, the examples of other groups, tribes’ and organizations’ work sparked where we could head,” said Scott Brant, another member of FAST Blackfeet. “The training validated what we wanted to do,” echoed Silvas.

However, the team knew they would need outside support to get the research conducted and the assessment report completed. One of the FAST Blackfeet members, Kirsten Krane, is based in East Glacier, Montana, within the Blackfeet reservation. She is the project manager for the American Indian/Alaska Native CHAMPS program affiliated with Boston University. Krane recalls the day she got the call from her alma mater, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, about a graduate student who was interested in working on a public health nutrition project in a Native American community. The FAST Blackfeet team were overjoyed that Marissa McElrone, a Ph.D. student in the Community Nutrition program in the Department of Nutrition at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, would be available to live in Montana for the summer of 2016. McElrone would work with the team to conduct the surveys to extract the data needed for the report.

McElrone immersed herself in the project, and lived with Nonie Woolf, a Yakama/Choctaw retired nutritionist with the Indian Health Service, and her husband, a Blackfeet tribal member, during her stay. They took the time to talk with her so she’d learn and understand the cultural protocol when working with a tribal community. She also lived with Kirsten Krane, who is a lifelong Montanan and has many years of experience working on the Blackfeet reservation. It was making the connections to the community that McElrone said was necessary to getting the surveys and the report completed. “Being able to travel with people, having them introduce you to the community, and build relationships ... the CHR or community health representatives were vital to getting the surveys out and gathering data.”

Sharon Silvas said the whole experience, from the assessment training to completing the report, brought together “a great group of people who are destined for great things. We’re looking forward to the next year, to what we can accomplish. We’re there. We’re good.”

The Blackfeet Reservation Community Food Security & Food Sovereignty Assessment can be accessed in the First Nations’ Knowledge Center at this link: <http://www.firstnations.org/knowledge-center/foods-health>.





Geographic Concentration of Funding Requests²

From 2011 to 2014, the majority of funding requests came from the Southwest region, followed by the Northern Plains and Midwest regions, respectively. The breakdown of regional requests for the period of 2011 through 2014 were as follows.

Region	Number of requests
Southwest	166
Northern Plains	106
Midwest	75
Pacific	65
Southern Plains	54
Northwest	52
Alaska	48
Hawaii	22
Northeast	15
Southeast	11

These rankings changed slightly from 2015 to 2017, with the percentage of funding requests decreasing in the Southwest, Pacific, Midwest and Alaska regions (see **Figure 3** for regional funding breakdown) and increasing in the Northwest, Hawaii, Northeast, and Southeast regions. The percentage of funding requests received stayed relatively the same for the Northern Plains and Southern Plains regions.

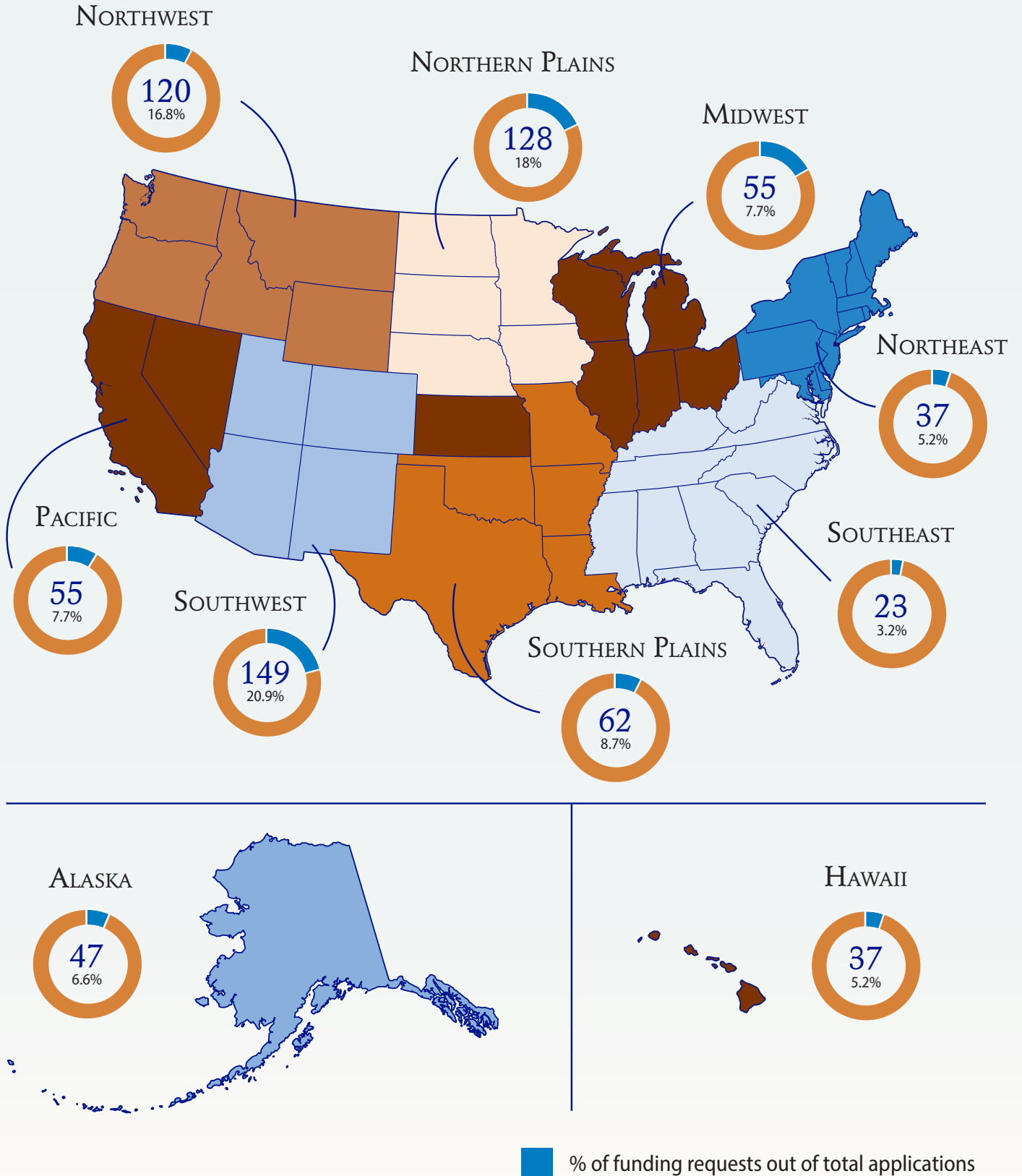
Region	2015-2017 Percentage	2011-2014 Percentage
Southwest	20.9%	27.0%
Northern Plains	18.0%	17.3%
Northwest	16.8%	8.5%
Southern Plains	8.7%	8.8%
Pacific	7.7%	10.6%
Midwest	7.7%	12.2%
Alaska	6.6%	7.8%
Hawaii	5.2%	3.6%
Northeast	5.2%	2.4%
Southeast	3.2%	1.8%

From 2015-2017, First Nations received requests from communities in 37 states. Of particular interest is the huge increase in the number of proposals coming from the Northwest region, which nearly doubled in its overall share of requests. This indicates a strong and growing food sovereignty movement in this region. In general, the geographic trends of funding requests received by First Nations tend to correlate with Native community concentrations.

² The geographic regions for this report are divided as follows: Northwest (WA, OR, ID, MT, WY); Southwest (AZ, UT, CO, NM); Northern Plains (ND, SD, NE, MN); Pacific (CA, NV); Southern Plains (TX, OK, AR, LA, MO); Midwest (IA, IL, KS, WI, MI, OH, IN); Northeast (MD, DE, PA, NY, VT, NH, ME, NJ, CT, MA, RI, DC); Southeast (WV, VA, KY, MS, AL, TN, GA, FL, NC, SC).



Figure 3: Funding Requests By Region



INNOVATION AND IMPACT

Campaigning for Ancestral Beverages at Muckleshoot

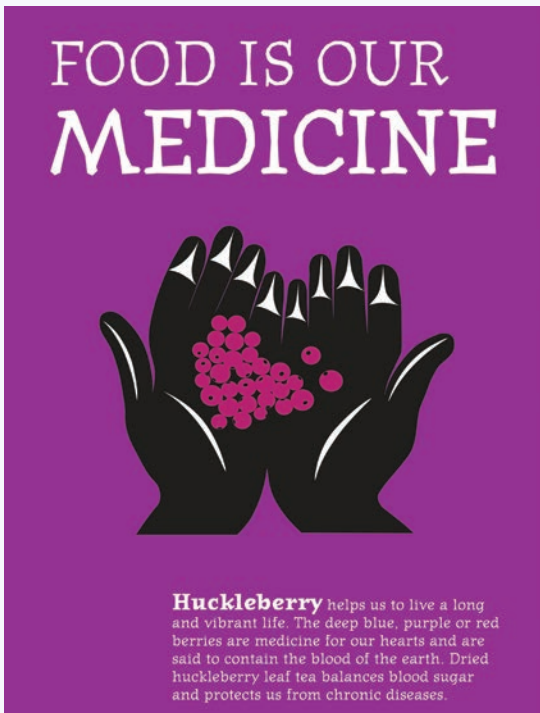


The Muckleshoot Indian Tribe’s Traditional Foods and Medicines Program encourages tribal youth to incorporate and increase traditional, ancestral beverages, fruits and vegetables – healthy foods – into their diets. By focusing on traditional, ancestral beverages and foods, the tribe hopes to reduce the consumption of sugary drinks and improve the health of the younger tribal members to combat diabetes, obesity and tooth decay later in life.



Valerie Segrest, a tribal member, was the Traditional Foods and Medicines Program manager. Segrest said the implementation of the “Rethink Your Drink Campaign” has been an important part of creating change in the eating habits of the tribe’s youth and their community. “The discussion is focused on the facts and information ... our communities have been disempowered for so long that we need to start with culture in the discussion. To let them (the community) be the driving force, so they feel more empowered to take their health into their own hands.”

A curriculum guide was created and made available to educators to increase the number of people who can teach the youth about traditional diets and how to make healthy beverage choices. Segrest and her colleague, Elise Krohn, M.Ed., co-authored *Native Infusion: Rethink Your Drink – A Guide to Ancestral Beverages*, which is included in the toolkit. The guide is extensive and provides information on how to “Navigate the Beverage Aisle” to avoid the sugary drinks; information on six posters created for the campaign and how the images connect to the ancestral drinks and cultural teachings; how to make infused waters, herbal teas, sodas, bone broths and smoothies; how to set up a beverage station; and where to find further information and resources.



The Muckleshoot Tribe offered a one-day nutrition education summit in May 2017 with 40 educators, tribal community members and youth leaders trained on using the healthy beverage toolkit. Youth representatives, mostly middle-schoolers from the Muckleshoot Tribal School, attended, along with youth from the after-school program. There were guest speakers who addressed the health impacts of sugary drinks, the healthy beverage movement in British Columbia, and how to set up beverage stations. The summit was more than handing out information. It strived to engage the attendees and to encourage dialog to reinforce that the return to creating and drinking traditional healthy beverages is an act of tribal sovereignty.

At the one-day nutrition education summit, Segrest and Krohn demonstrated how to make bone broth, and teas out of leaves and flowers versus bark, roots and hard berries. Attendees also learned how to harvest, dry and store the teas correctly. There were beverage stations set up so people could sample the various teas, which reinforced the accessibility and taste of the teas. Infused waters were made with fruits and vegetables to encourage the drinking of water.

Segrest reminded the participants that “sovereignty isn’t an end goal, it’s something we do every day. Drinking ancestral beverages is a political act.”

The participants went home with their toolkits made up of the six posters to display around their communities, along with the guide and a tribal recipe book, which included a section on beverages. The recipe book is another Muckleshoot project supported by the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board and the Centers for Disease Control’s Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country (GHWIC) program.

Segrest and her colleagues continued to provide trainings over the next several months and presented an extremely well-attended First Nations’ webinar titled “Native Infusion: A Guide to Honoring Ancestral Beverages to Upload Our Health.” Segrest is thankful to the Shakopee Seeds of Native Health campaign, the Muckleshoot Tribe’s Traditional Foods Program, and to First Nations for supporting this work.



Who Applies?

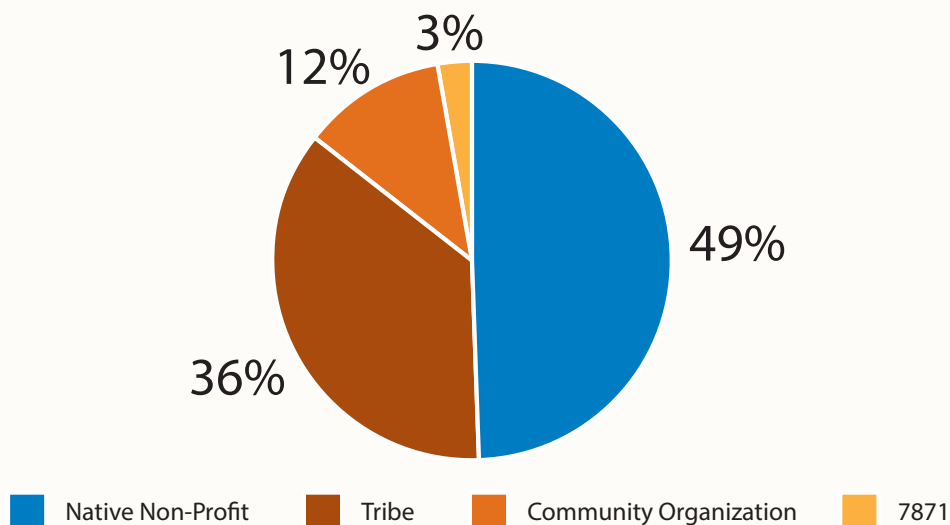
First Nations funds four main types of Native-controlled entities. These are:

- Federal- and state-recognized tribal governments, programs and departments;
- Native-controlled 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations;
- Tribal entities identifying as 7871 organizations³; and
- Fiscally-sponsored Native-controlled community organizations.

For purposes of eligibility, First Nations defines “Native-controlled” as an organization in which a majority of the Board of Directors self-identify as Native American and the mission is focused on serving Native American communities or people. For purposes of clarification, in the 2011-2014 report, Native nonprofits and community organizations were combined into one category and tribes/tribal programs and 7871s were combined into a second category. Furthermore, the previous report also broke out tribal colleges and universities as a separate category since approximately 5.5% of funding requests came from this specific group.

Similar to the previous report, Native nonprofits make up the majority of funding requests received, accounting for nearly half of all requests. This is followed by tribes and tribal programs, Native community organizations, and 7871 organizations, respectively. **Figure 4** provides the overall breakdown in requests by entity type for the three-year span of 2015 to 2017, and **Figure 5** provides a breakdown by year of requests by entity type.

Figure 4: Grant Requests by Organization Type, 2015-2017

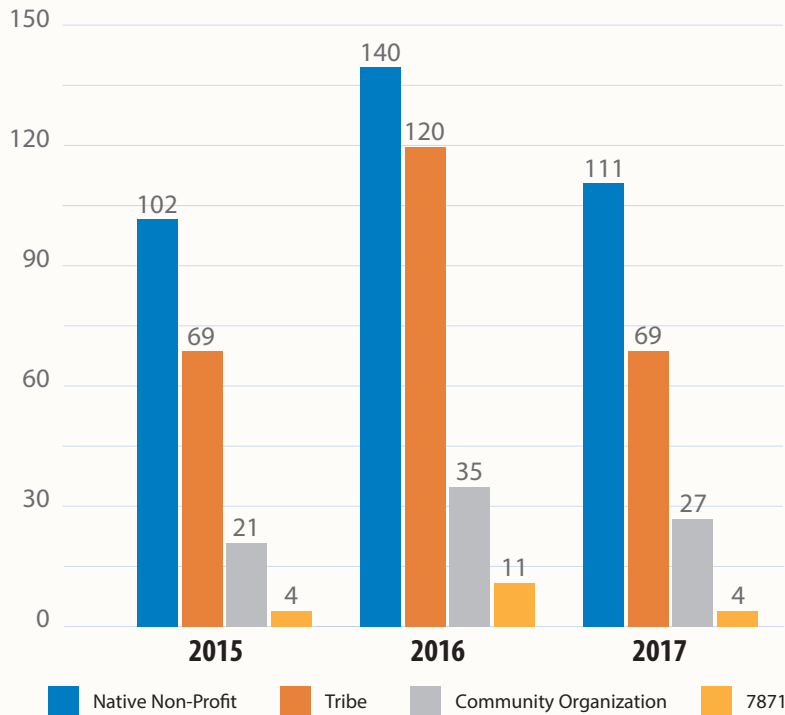


Tribal colleges and universities are not included as a separate category, though this specific group submitted 27 requests equating to 3.8% of those received.

³ Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 7871 treats tribal governments as state governments for certain tax purposes. It allows tribal governments, their political subdivisions, or any tribal governmental fund, entity or program that is an integral part of a tribal government to receive tax-deductible donations. From a federal government standpoint, 7871s are part of the tribe. However, some tribes may have different governing structures or other distinctions for their 7871s that distinguish them from tribal government departments. For more information on Section 7871 organizations, see First Nations’ 2009 Publication *Charitable and Sovereign: Understanding Tribal 7871 Organizations* (https://firstnations.org/system/files/2009_Charitable_and_Sovereign_7871_Report.pdf).



Figure 5: Grant Requests by Org Type, by Year



What Program Areas Do Native Communities Need Funded?

The majority of First Nations' applications contain a section for applicants to select different focus areas for their programs. Applicants may select multiple focus areas in their proposal, allowing them to showcase the breadth and depth of the areas their project touches.⁴

From 2011-2014, the top 10 focus areas for funding were as follows:

1. Health and Nutrition Education/Cooking
2. Traditional Food Systems
3. Community Food Systems
4. Creating Opportunities in Food Systems and Agriculture
5. Community Garden
6. Economic, Financial and/or Entrepreneurial
7. Ceremonial, Spiritual and/or Traditional
8. Farmers' Market
9. Innovative Marketing and Outreach Approaches
10. Green House

⁴ The project focus areas vary between the different funding applications but primarily focused on the following: Agricultural/Ranching, Agricultural Systems Renewal, Ceremonial, Spiritual and/or Traditional Community Food Systems, Cannery, Commercial Kitchen Operations, Community Garden, Community-Supported Agriculture, Creating Opportunities in Food Systems and Agriculture, Economic, Financial and/or Entrepreneurial, Education/Outreach, Ecological/Environment, Employment, Farm-to-School, Farm-to-Table, Farmers' Market, Food Bank, Food Processing and Distribution, Green House, Innovative Marketing and Outreach Approaches, Introducing Youth to Agriculture and Traditional Food Systems, Nutritious Cooking/Nutrition Education, Permaculture, Recreation/Athletics, Technology in Agriculture and Food Systems, Traditional Food Systems, Other.

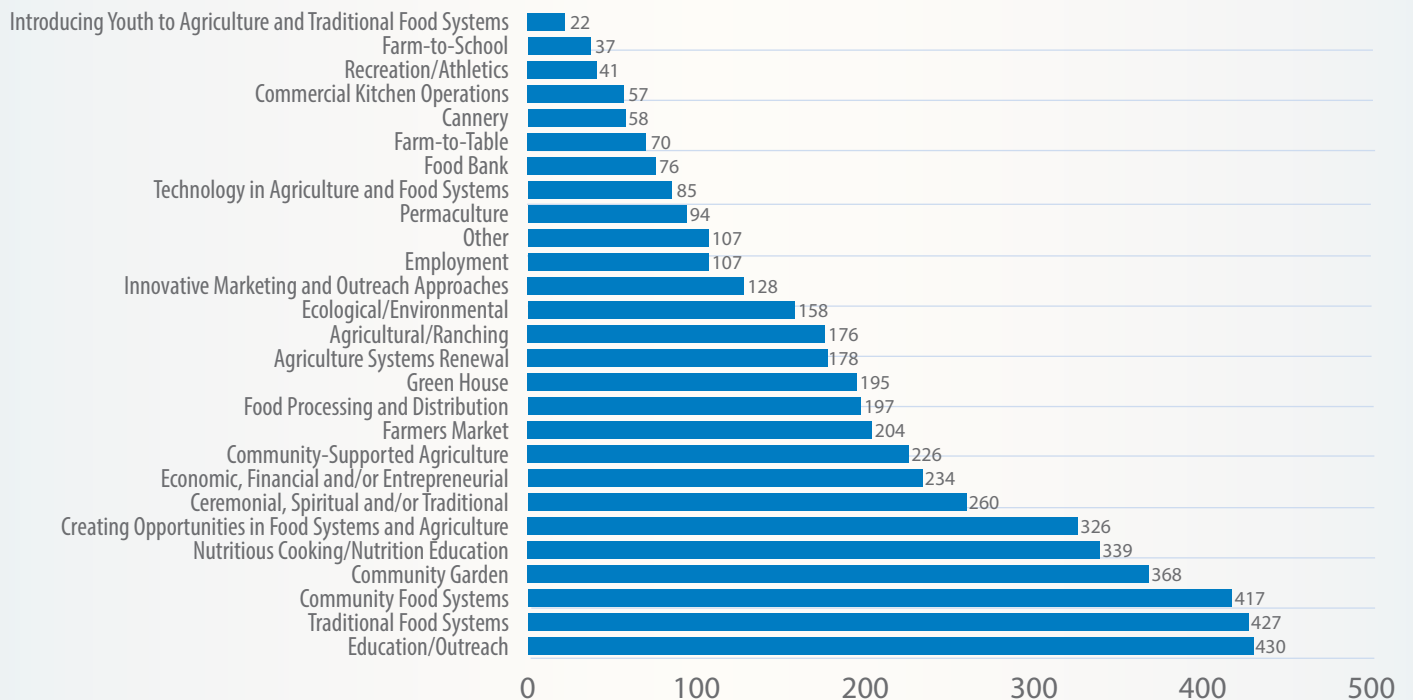


From 2015 to 2017, the top 10 priority areas for NAFSI requests during the 2015-2017 period are:

1. Education/Outreach
2. Traditional Food Systems
3. Community Food Systems
4. Community Garden
5. Nutritious Cooking/Nutrition Education
6. Creating Opportunities in Food Systems and Agriculture
7. Ceremonial, Spiritual and/or Traditional
8. Economic, Financial and/or Entrepreneurial
9. Community-Supported Agriculture
10. Farmers' Market

Education, Traditional Food Systems, and Community Food Systems continue to remain top ranking priorities in the 2015-2017 data set for applicants selecting their own project focus areas. In fact, the majority of the 2011-2014 high-ranking project focus areas continue to remain top priorities in the 2015-2017 data set. Of interest is that "Community-Supported Agriculture" moved up from its 11th-place position in the previous report to being ranked the ninth priority area. This may be one positive indication that the food sovereignty movement is maturing and moving beyond specific project support to include objectives that support the community at large (be it community education, community engagement, community planning, etc).

Figure 6: NAFSI Requests by Project Focus Area, 2015-2017





Conclusions

The food sovereignty movement in Indian Country has continued to grow and gain momentum since the release of the 2014 report *Grantmaking in Indian Country: Trends from the Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative*. The data presented in this report not only highlight this strong and healthy movement but also provide a grounding point for funders and donors looking to invest in this arena and in Native communities.

Nationwide “local food movements” have been rising in both rural and urban areas and in Native and non-Native communities. Individuals from all backgrounds are looking to reconnect with their food and address issues of food insecurity and diet-related illnesses. Native communities must not be forgotten in this movement. Native communities are also investing in food sovereignty and reincorporating traditional pre-colonial foods back into their diets, implementing community-driven projects, and strengthening ageless food systems. Investing in Native food sovereignty also supports economic development in those communities, from producers to auxiliary business owners. This in turn provides more jobs in Native communities and keeps money local rather than exporting those dollars off-reservation.

Both Native nonprofits and tribes are key players when it comes to investing in their communities’ local food systems. In Native communities, food issues continue to be fundamental and foundational to the overall health and well-being of Native peoples. By investing in local and traditional food systems, Native peoples can address and overcome health and nutrition issues, food insecurity, and also see continued economic growth within their communities. The Native food sovereignty movement will only continue to grow.

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