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Senior Hunger and Food Insecurity in Indian Country:

Community-Based Solutions to Improve the
Health and Well-Being of Tribal Elders



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I. Introduction

For 35 years, First Nations Development Institute (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, thereby ensuring the long-term vitality of Native communities. Tribal elders are crucial to the preservation and enhancement of these assets. They possess the experience, knowledge and wisdom to strengthen and sustain our communities.

Unfortunately, our most valuable cultural asset is also our most vulnerable: the Native senior population. The Native American population age 65 and older is now more than 492,000, a number expected to double by 2050.¹ Research indicates that 60 percent of Native seniors live below the poverty line and that one in seven will face the threat of hunger.² Put another way: **every year, more than 68,000 tribal elders in reservation communities are food insecure and unsure about their next meal.**

Research indicates that food insecurity is potentially dangerous because it tends to exacerbate chronic health conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure and congestive heart failure. Additionally, senior citizens who are food insecure are twice as likely to report fair/poor general health and three times more likely to suffer depression.³

In light of these staggering statistics, First Nations, with generous support from AARP Foundation, launched the Native American Food Security Project to find sustainable solutions to senior hunger and food insecurity in rural and reservation-based Native communities. Since 2012, we have awarded eight \$25,000 grants to tribes and/or Native organizations dedicated to eliminating senior hunger and food insecurity in their communities. To date, the Native American Food Security Project has resulted in numerous gardens, farms and other community-based food solutions that have yielded **more than 12,000 pounds** of fresh fruits, vegetables and meat for Native seniors!

The success of these eight projects demonstrates that Indian Country is filled with innovation, ingenuity and resiliency when it comes to food-system control and food sovereignty. We hope the contents and recommendations included in this report will serve as a resource in Indian Country that will encourage other tribes and Native organizations to begin looking to one another to share ideas, models and best practices to eliminate senior hunger and food insecurity in their communities.

First Nations believes that sharing information and models is an effective, yet underutilized tool in Indian Country. The information shared in this report builds upon the ideas brainstormed at First Nations' 2014 Special Convening: "Informing Strategies to End Senior Hunger in Native Communities." At this convening, tribal leaders identified six challenges and solutions to eliminating Native senior hunger and food insecurity. This report examines how 2014 AARP Foundation grantees applied these suggestions to programs and projects in their own communities.

1 First Nations Development Institute. (2013). Reclaiming Native Food Systems, Part II." Longmont, CO: First Nations Development Institute. The definition of elder and senior varies by Native community. We use this statistic because it gives us an idea of a very specific age demographic, though we acknowledge that other age cohorts fit into how other Native communities define Native elders/seniors.

2 Ziliak, J., and Craig Gundersen. "The State of Senior Hunger in America 2011: An Annual Report." Alexandria, VA: National Foundation to End Senior Hunger (2013).

3 Jean L. Lloyd MS, RD & Nancy S. Wellman Ph.D., RD, FAND (2015) Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs: A Community-Based Nutrition Program Helping Older Adults Remain at Home, Journal of Nutrition in Gerontology and Geriatrics, 34:2, 90-109.



II. AARP Foundation

[AARP Foundation](#) is AARP's charitable affiliate, focused on helping win back opportunity for struggling 50+ individuals and their families. Drive to End Hunger is AARP Foundation's nationwide initiative to raise awareness and develop long-term, sustainable solutions to hunger among nearly nine million older adults.

In 2012, First Nations and AARP joined forces to find sustainable solutions to senior hunger in rural- and reservation-based Native communities. To fulfill this goal, they launched the Native American Food Security Project, a grant initiative to support tribes and Native organizations dedicated to eliminating senior hunger and food insecurity in their communities. First Nations and AARP Foundation developed this unique opportunity to meet the diverse needs of the more than 560 different tribes nationwide. Each tribal community is unique, with varying cultures, languages and homelands. Therefore, a solution that addresses Native senior hunger in one community may not work in another community.

The Native American Food Security Project encourages tribes to develop innovative solutions that meet the needs of their specific communities. Through this grant initiative, from 2012-2015, First Nations awarded eight \$25,000 grants totaling \$200,000 to tribes and Native organizations that have produced more than 12,000 pounds of fresh fruits, vegetables and meat for countless senior citizens in their communities.

The eight grantees and grant projects funded through the Native American Food Security Project are described below:

Grantee	Award	Grant Description
Pueblo of Nambé	\$25,000 (2012)	The Pueblo of Nambé established a community farm that has helped revitalize traditional farming methods and produced more than 4,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables to help eliminate senior hunger on the reservation.
Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma	\$25,000 (2012)	The Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma processed and distributed 2,000 pounds of healthy, chemical-free pork to improve the diet, nutrition and overall health of Native seniors.
Santo Domingo Pueblo	\$25,000 (2012)	The Santo Domingo Pueblo designed a tribal elder-youth mentorship program to help preserve traditional farming methods. Together, tribal elders and youth planted, harvested and prepared more than 800 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables for Native seniors.
Sipaulovi Development Corporation	\$25,000 (2012)	The Sipaulovi Development Corporation (Hopi Nation) established a community garden to help eliminate senior hunger. Despite severe winter weather conditions, the community garden produced enough food to feed 75 Native seniors.
College of Menominee Nation	\$25,000 (2014)	The College of Menominee Nation expanded its existing senior health and wellness program, helping nearly a dozen Native seniors grow more than 160 pounds of healthy, fresh foods in their own yards with help from Native youth.
Painted Desert Demonstration Project/ The STAR School	\$25,000 (2014)	The STAR School helped link community-based farms with local schools and senior centers to distribute 2,500 pounds of traditional blue corn and host 10 community feasts for Native youth and elders.
Pueblo of Tesuque	\$25,000 (2014)	The Pueblo of Tesuque established a mentorship program that connected Native youth and elders with the goal of reclaiming and revitalizing traditional food systems. This program produced nearly 3,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables.
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe	\$25,000 (2014)	The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe expanded its existing senior nutrition program to include eight farmers' markets and multiple community gardens. This initiative produced fresh fruits and vegetables for 253 Native seniors.



III. Special Convening: Informing Strategies to End Senior Hunger in Native Communities

The research and data available on Native senior hunger and insecurity is limited. To better understand this pressing issue, First Nations and AARP Foundation hosted “Informing Strategies to End Senior Hunger in Native Communities,” a special convening that marked an important first step toward solving the complexities of Native senior hunger and food insecurity.

Nearly 40 tribal leaders and practitioners from across Indian Country came together at this meeting to discuss emerging strategies for eliminating senior hunger in rural and reservation-based Native communities. At this special convening, participants identified six barriers and challenges to ending senior hunger and food insecurity in Native communities, including: 1.) Transportation, 2.) Communication, 3.) Awareness, 4.) Senior Engagement, 5.) Accountability, and 6.) Evaluation.

In addition to identifying these six barriers, participants also brainstormed possible solutions to these challenges. Many participants – including the four grantees highlighted in this report – took these suggestions to heart. As indicated below, the College of Menominee Nation, the Pueblo of Tesuque, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the STAR School adapted and modified the solutions proposed at the special convening to fit the needs of their individual communities:

1.) Transportation barriers impede Native seniors’ access to critical food and health services.

- *Proposed Solution:* Develop transportation programs that make it easier for seniors to access these important services.
- *Community-Specific Solution:* The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe conducted a community assessment to determine the health and wellness of tribal members. Their assessment revealed that 38 percent of their senior citizens lacked adequate transportation to essential medical appointments, to shop and/or to participate in community activities. To address this need in their community, tribal leaders established a transportation service for tribal elders using both public and private vehicles. This simple solution helped make it easier for senior citizens to access services such as the tribe’s new diabetes clinic, nutrition center and farmers’ markets, thus increasing their knowledge of and access to fresh, healthy foods.

2.) Communication is key to coordinating effective food and health services for Native seniors.

- *Proposed Solution:* Many tribes already offer health and wellness programs for children and families. Increase communications between tribal departments and programs to extend these services to Native seniors as well.
- *Community-Specific Solution:* The College of Menominee Nation joined forces with six different tribal entities to launch an intergenerational, community-based project that paired tribal elders with tribal youth to plant and harvest fresh fruits and vegetables in their own backyards. In 2015, the college signed a memorandum of understanding with the Woodlands Boys and Girls Club to recruit youth to assist with the construction and

maintenance of 11 raised-bed gardens that yielded approximately 160 pounds of beets, carrots, cucumbers, potatoes and tomatoes. Both parties mutually benefitted from this partnership. For tribal elders, it increased their access to fresh fruits and vegetables that have the potential to improve their health and well-being. For tribal youth, it provided them with an opportunity to learn from their elders and give back to their community.

3.) Awareness is a large component of combating senior hunger in Indian Country. Senior hunger is often an invisible problem, especially in rural and reservation-based Native communities.

- *Proposed Solution:* Collect and publish more research to increase awareness and better understand the complexities of senior hunger so that we can start to develop sustainable solutions to this growing problem.
- *Community-Specific Solution:* The STAR School expanded its existing farm-to-school program so it could provide food to tribal elders as well as students.

On a monthly basis, the school prepared traditional dishes of mutton and blue corn for approximately 175 tribal elders. During these seven community gatherings, project organizers formally and informally interviewed tribal elders to better understand the complexities of senior hunger and examine the cultural and health benefits of growing and consuming traditional foods. These interviews resulted in a [video](#) and cookbook that are intended to increase awareness of hunger and food insecurity on the reservation and also provide community members with potential solutions to this expanding problem.⁴

4.) Senior Engagement is critical to developing solutions to senior hunger. Many tribal elders possess the knowledge, wisdom and experience needed to reclaim traditional food systems and promote healthier diets. It is important to protect and utilize this knowledge.

- *Proposed Solution:* Establish mentorship programs that allow tribal elders to share their knowledge and wisdom with younger generations.
- *Community-Specific Solution:* The Pueblo of Tesuque established a tribal elder-youth mentorship program to address Native senior hunger and insecurity. Over the summer, tribal elders and youth met regularly at Tesuque Farms to engage in several hands-on, experiential learning projects that emphasized traditional farming methods. Together, they grew and harvested 3,000 pounds of fresh fruits, vegetables and medicinal herbs that were donated to elders and sold to the rest of the community. This mentorship program allowed tribal elders to share their



⁴ Currently, the video is posted online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HY8IQDxXcK8> Meanwhile, the cookbook is not yet ready for publication.



traditional knowledge with the next generation, while also combating senior isolation and loneliness. It also helped teach tribal youth how to honor and respect their elders and showed them the value of hard work and giving back to their communities.

5.) Accountability of tribes and tribal governments to help honor and protect our tribal elders.

- *Proposed Solution:* Encourage more tribes and tribal governments to seek funding to establish programs that focus exclusively on Native senior hunger.
- *Community-Specific Solution:* Solutions to end senior hunger must be community-driven and thus include the input of tribal elders. Moreover, these solutions must be held accountable to various stakeholders including seniors, tribal governments and their funders. In many instances, these mechanisms of accountability must be developed and evolve over time. A prime example is the Pueblo of Santo Domingo’s Senior Center, which continuously provided mechanisms for senior input throughout the duration of its project. This input altered what the Senior Center grew in the greenhouse. For instance, at the request of tribal elders, project organizers decided to include flowers as well as fruits and vegetables in the greenhouse. Tribal elders had continuous input on all of the food grown throughout the season, and also determined how it would be used. As these changes occurred, project organizers made sure to keep their funder, First Nations, aware of changes and deviations from their original proposal. When these accountability mechanisms are not developed and maintained, programs run the risk of creating programs that do not best serve the needs, desires or wants of Native seniors – the very individuals the programs are designed to serve.

6.) Evaluate and analyze the effectiveness of current programs and projects that are intended to address the growing problem of senior hunger. Simply put, ask what does and does not work and what improvements can be made to more effectively meet the needs of Native seniors.

- *Proposed Solution:* Closely examine project outcomes and tailor future projects to be more effective.
- *Community-Specific Solution:* The STAR School demonstrates the importance of continuously evaluating and revising grant programs to better meet the needs of the community. In 2012, the STAR School launched a successful farm-to-school program that it adapted and modified to address senior hunger and food insecurity. The school decided to address this issue by purchasing 2,500 pounds of blue corn from a local farm to distribute to three local senior centers for food preparation. However, neither the farm nor the senior centers were able to accommodate the request. The farm did not have 2,500 pounds of blue corn available for purchase and the senior centers lacked the resources to cook traditional dishes on a regular basis. As a result, the STAR School revised the project to reflect the tools and resources available. The school supplemented blue corn with white and yellow corn, and juniper ash (a nutritional supplement). Additionally, it hosted monthly feasts for tribal elders off-site and coordinated with the local senior centers to provide transportation to these monthly events. This flexibility and innovation led to success with more and more elders attending each community gathering.

Although the research and data available on Native senior hunger is limited and often difficult to obtain, the findings cited in this report demonstrate that tribes are eager to access this information and use it to honor and protect the tribal elders in their communities. Indeed, this report demonstrates that Native American leaders and governments are taking problem-solving steps and using their tribal land and resources to develop home-grown solutions to pressing issues such as Native senior hunger and food insecurity. Over the past two grant cycles, these efforts have paid off tremendously with more than 12,000 pounds of fresh fruits, vegetables and meat for Native seniors and the rest of the community.



IV. Conclusion

Although senior hunger is a rapidly growing problem in Indian Country, the eight tribes funded through the Native America Food Security Project demonstrated that many tribes and Native organizations are committed to finding sustainable solutions to senior hunger in their communities. This report suggests that with access to the appropriate resources and the opportunity for development, tribes will succeed at these efforts. The eight grants distributed between 2012 and 2014 have yielded more than 12,000 pounds of fresh fruits, vegetables and meats for Native seniors. Without a doubt, increased access to all of these healthy and nutritious foods has helped dramatically reduce and even reverse health and economic issues related to food insecurity and hunger!

The pioneering programs in this report highlight innovative strategies and policies that are eliminating senior hunger, 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 eliminating Native senior hunger and food insecurity.

We would like to commend the four tribes and Native organizations highlighted in this report for their commitment and dedication to revitalizing traditional knowledge systems and eliminating senior hunger in rural and reservation-based Native communities. 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 serve as a resource that will encourage other tribes and Native organizations to begin looking to one another to share ideas, models and best practices for Native food-system control.



V. Appendix A: 2014 Grantee Backgrounds and Project Descriptions

College of Menominee Nation

\$25,000

Background:

The College of Menominee Nation's mission is to provide opportunities in higher education to its students. As an institution of higher education chartered by the Menominee people, the college infuses this education with American Indian culture, preparing students for careers and advanced studies in a multicultural world. As a land-grant institution, the college is committed to research, promoting, perpetuating and nurturing American Indian culture, and providing outreach workshops and community service.

Project Description:

In 2014, the College of Menominee Nation (CMN) launched "Garden for Elders," an intergenerational community-based project that pairs tribal elders with tribal youth who help them grow fresh, healthy foods in their own backyards. CMN developed this innovative program through partnerships with several key tribal and/or community-based agencies, including Menominee Tribal Enterprises, Menominee Job Training Program, Menominee Food Distribution, Menominee Aging Division, CMN's Sustainable Development Program, CMN's Youth Development Program, and the University of Wisconsin- Extension.

Additionally, CMN established informal partnerships with the Woodlands Boys and Girls Club and the Neopit Community Garden Project to recruit tribal youth to construct and maintain 11 raised-bed gardens for tribal elders. Nearly a dozen tribal youth helped their elders plant and harvest 160 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables, including beets, carrots, cucumbers, potatoes and tomatoes. Tribal youth also helped plan and organize the first farmers' market on



the Menominee Indian Reservation. The farmers' market was held once a week between the months of August and October. Approximately 75 tribal members attended the event each week. As a result of this success, the tribe and local growers have expressed an interest in hosting the farmers' market every summer.

Painted Desert Demonstration Project DBA/The STAR School

\$25,000

Background:

The STAR School is a charter elementary school located 30 miles east of Flagstaff, Arizona. The unique geological characteristics of the Little Colorado River Valley and the volcanic hills east of Flagstaff, Arizona, define the physical location. The area is populated by pronghorn herds, coyotes and eagles, as well as native plants and trees. The rich and natural beauty of the location provides students with the opportunity to gain close, hands-on experience in subjects such as science, geography and social studies.

The school serves students in preschool through grade 8 who live in the southwest corner of the Navajo Nation and the surrounding rural area. Their curriculum at the school is heavily impacted by Navajo traditions and history. For example, elders from both sides of the reservation fence have shared life stories, historical accounts, traditional knowledge and more. These presentations are intended to foster caring, understanding, and respect among the diverse body of students that includes both Hopi and Navajo children.

The STAR School is unique in being the first solar-powered charter school in the U.S. In other words, no power lines serve the school, which is located on a rural area of northern Arizona four



miles from the Navajo Nation boundary. All of the buildings on the campus are powered by an array of over 100 solar panels and two wind generators that create more than 37,000 watts. The power is then inverted to supply regular 120 volt power for the entire school.

Project Description:

In 2014, the STAR School established the “Navajo Farm to School to Elders” project, which builds upon the success of their existing farm-to-school program. The STAR School’s existing farm-to-school program links community-based farms to local schools to provide tribal youth with healthy, traditional foods. This grant allowed the STAR School to expand its program to include three local senior centers. To achieve this goal, the STAR School used this grant to construct a passive solar drying shed to dry and process 2,500 pounds of blue corn, which was ground into blue corn meal to prepare traditional dishes for tribal youth and elders.

Initially, the STAR School intended to host dinners at each of the local senior centers. However, the senior centers were unable to accommodate the size and complexity of the event. Instead, the STAR School hosted the monthly feasts off-site, distributed small bags of corn meal directly to elders, and delivered larger bags of corn meal to local senior centers. The STAR School planned and organized seven monthly feasts for seniors. The senior centers provided transportation to each feast, which included healthy, traditional meals such as roasted mutton with boiled potatoes, wild onions, fresh tortillas, fire-roasted chili, blue corn mush, and Navajo tea.

Approximately 40 tribal elders attended the first feast. However, this number increased steadily to 175 attendees. Project organizers speculate that this increase stems from word of mouth. “These numbers demonstrate success,” said Mark Sorensen, chief executive officer of the STAR School. “For the seniors in our community, we increased access to healthy, nutritious food and decreased social isolation. We repeatedly heard stories that seniors enjoyed the event, the food

and reminiscing about traditional foods they grew up with.” Project organizers documented these feasts to produce a video and cookbook that features traditional recipes and stories.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

\$25,000

Background:

The Standing Rock Indian Reservation is uniquely located in southern North Dakota and northern South Dakota. The land area is approximately 2,275,000 acres of which 850,000 acres are under federal and tribal jurisdiction. The Dakota people of Standing Rock include the Upper Yanktonai (in their language called Ihanktonwana which translates to “Little End Village”) and Lower Yanktonai (called Hunkpatina in their language, “Campers at the Horn” or “End of the Camping Circle”). When the Middle Sioux moved onto the prairie they had contact with the semi-sedentary riverine tribes such as the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara. Eventually, the Yanktonai displaced these tribes and forced them upstream.



However, periodically the Yanktonai did engage in trade with these tribes and eventually some bands adopted the earthlodge, bullboat and horticultural techniques of these people, though buffalo remained their primary food source. The Yanktonai also maintained aspects of their former Woodland lifestyle. Today, Yanktonai people of Standing Rock live primarily in communities on the North Dakota portion of the reservation.

Project Description:

In 2014, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe launched the Elderly Nutrition Program to encourage elders and their families to eat fresh fruits and vegetables and support local gardeners and farmers. They launched this initiative after conducting a needs assessment that revealed the following statistics about their elders:

- 381 live with their grandchildren

- 278 are primary caregivers
- 36% run out of food each month
- 28% of elders eat alone
- 53% have diabetes
- 60% have high blood pressure
- 38% require transportation services

Additionally, local healthcare providers also pointed out that their elderly patients are often malnourished and dehydrated. In response to these troubling statistics, the tribe decided to establish eight community gardens and increase its existing food voucher program for seniors. Additionally, the tribe hosted a series of nutrition workshops that emphasized traditional Native food cooking, preparation and storage.

Approximately 90 volunteers helped plant and harvest these eight community gardens. Although two gardens burned down, the remaining gardens produced traditional foods such as chokecherries, prairie turnips, wild plums, and squashes, as well as lettuce, carrots, tomatoes and cucumbers. These fruits and vegetable were sold at local farmers' markets, where seniors could "purchase" them with \$50 food vouchers. The tribe distributed 253 food vouchers (twice as many as previous years) to Native seniors.

The tribe also hosted several workshops including gathering indigenous plants and berries and preparing Native foods. Native seniors met with a dietician to learn how to incorporate fresh fruits and vegetables into their daily meals. Additionally, they met with healthcare practitioners to screen blood sugar, blood pressure and other vital signs. The tribe also hosted a harvest festival with many of the fruits and vegetables gathered from the community gardens.

Pueblo of Tesuque

\$25,000

Background:

Tesuque Pueblo, just north of the city of Santa Fe, lies just south of Camel Rock, a fascinating natural sandstone formation that wind and rain have eroded into the shape of a camel. There are many fine artists at Tesuque who create pottery, paintings and sculpture. The Tesuque are one of the most traditional of all New Mexico Pueblos in observing ceremonies and preserving culture. Today, the people of Tesuque speak their native Tewa, English and a few converse in Spanish. The reservation encompasses more than 17,000 acres, including Aspen Ranch and the Vigil Land Grant high in the Santa Fe National Forest.



Project Description:

In 2014, the Pueblo of Tesuque established "Connecting Native Youth and Elders Through Healthy and Traditional Foods." The purpose of the project was two-fold: 1.) increase the infrastructure and capacity of the existing farm, and 2.) launch a tribal elder-youth mentorship program that specifically addresses senior hunger. With this grant, the tribe built a new hoophouse and seedbank, and prepared value-added products for resale. Tribal elders and youth utilized these new resources in several different ways.

During the planting and harvesting season, tribal elders and youth participated in several hands-on projects that allowed elders to share their knowledge of ancient farming methods with youth. Together, they grew and harvested 3,000 pounds of fresh fruits, vegetables and medicinal herbs that were donated to elders and sold to the rest of the community.

In addition to this mentorship program, tribal elders and youth also attended 20 separate workshops that were tailored to their specific needs. For example, tribal elders participated

in workshops that focused on senior health and nutrition. They learned how to prepare traditional meals using healthy, inexpensive food options. Meanwhile, tribal youth attended workshops that ranged from organic farming to natural healing to leadership skills. These workshops, often led by tribal elders, taught tribal youth how to grow and prepare traditional foods, while also sharing with them traditional music, dance and exercises.

Without a doubt, these workshops helped

strengthen the relationship between tribal elders and youth. They allowed tribal elders to share their insights and wisdom, and taught tribal youth how to respect and honor their elders. An unexpected outcome of this mentorship program is a cookbook that project organizers have started to compile, using many of the same recipes that tribal elders shared with tribal youth in the workshops. They hope that this healthy, traditional cookbook will allow them to meet an even greater number of their tribal members.

IV. Appendix B: 2012 Grantee Backgrounds and Project Descriptions

Pueblo of Nambé

\$25,000

Background:

The Pueblo of Nambé, one of eight Tewa-speaking tribes in northern New Mexico, was settled in the early 14th century and has been historically known for its strong agriculture, traditional textiles, and pottery production. Of the 19 existing Pueblo tribes in New Mexico, Nambé is the smallest in terms of its population and land base. Situated 20 miles north of Santa Fe, the Pueblo is almost completely surrounded by non-Indian towns, and is home to approximately 400 members. The Pueblo encompasses nearly 20,000 acres consisting of towering cottonwood, juniper, scrub oak and sandstone trees. The Rio Nambé flows through the Pueblo and eventually feeds into the Rio Grande. While all signs point to this area being an agricultural paradise, the Pueblo is plagued by more barren agricultural fields than bountiful food forests, thereby resulting in food insecurity.

Project Description:

The Pueblo of Nambé Community Farm Project sought to address food insecurity, especially among the elderly population. In an effort to eliminate senior hunger, project organizers developed a surplus program that encourages



tribal members to donate excess food from their home gardens to tribal elders. Additionally, they planted additional fruits and vegetables in a community garden that were also donated to the local senior center and used to host a harvest party intended to honor tribal elders. The tremendous success of this program encouraged project organizers to expand their efforts and increase the size of their community garden. In 2013, they intended to continue donating fresh fruits and vegetables to tribal elders and also sell them to local stores and restaurants, consequently generating more revenue for the community.

Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma

\$25,000

Background:

There are two federally-recognized Ponca Tribes: the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska and the Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma. The tribe initially split in 1877 when Congress decided to move the Ponca from Nebraska to Oklahoma. The Ponca removal was grossly mishandled. The United States not only failed to obtain the consent of the Ponca chiefs, but also neglected to provide a reservation with adequate facilities. According to some estimates, nearly one-third of the tribe perished during the first years in Oklahoma. In their new location,



the Ponca struggled with disease, starvation and the hot climate. In 1881, Congress returned a portion of land to the Ponca. At that time, half of the tribe returned to Nebraska and the other half remained in Oklahoma. Today, 2,500 members of the tribe live in Niobrara, Nebraska, and 2,500 members live in White Eagle, Oklahoma. Removal, allotment and termination had a devastating impact on both tribes – culturally, physically and economically.

Project Description:

The Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma's Healthy Pork Project sought to establish and develop a natural animal farm as opposed to an industrial pig farm. Industrial pig farms now dominate the pork industry. However, these farms often produce unhealthy pork. Instead, the Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma planned to develop a natural pig farm that produces healthy, chemically-free pork. Once the pork has been raised and processed at the natural animal farm, the pork will be distributed to tribal elders at the local senior citizens center and to tribal youth at schools and the local food-distribution center. Through this program, the Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma has distributed nearly 2,000 pounds of fresh, healthy pork to approximately 1,200 families.

Santo Domingo Pueblo

\$25,000

Background:

Santo Domingo Pueblo is located near the ancient Cerrillos turquoise mines. Agriculture has long been a central part of Pueblo life. Farming shaped local culture. The indigenous religious system of Santo Domingo Pueblo stresses agricultural rhythms and products. The local belief system strives for balance not only between people, but also between people and nature. Group ritual knowledge and ceremonies are integral to achieving this balance. Santo Domingo people have closely guarded their ceremonies and



place great emphasis on their ancient religious structures and societies. Santo Domingo Pueblo would like to ensure that these ceremonies and traditions are passed down from tribal elders to tribal youth.

Project Description:

The Santo Domingo Senior Center Project sought to increase healthy food access for Santo Domingo elders by building a greenhouse and developing a business model to sell transplants to local community members at an affordable cost. Some of the seedlings will be transplanted to the community farm. The elders will work closely with the youth on planting, cultivating and harvesting the community farm. The farm will be used as a venue for the weekly classes for seniors and youth to teach traditional farming and associated cultural practices. Additionally, produce generated from the greenhouse and community farm will be sold at both the Santo Domingo Farmers' Market and local convenience stores that have agreed to provide shelving and refrigeration space. Revenue generated from the sales of the seedlings and produce will be carefully tracked and reinvested in the following year's program to expand and create other revenue-generating arms.

Sipaulovi Development Corporation

\$25,000

Background:

Sipaulovi is an autonomous, self-governing Hopi village founded in the early 1700s on Second Mesa, Arizona. It has approximately 1,200 enrolled members, of which 700 reside in the village year-round. Hopi farmers are best known for the drought-resistant strains of corn they have cultivated and developed over thousands of years. Additional crops include numerous varieties of beans, squash, melons and orchard fruits. Prayers, agriculture knowledge and use of local plants, herbs and minerals have enabled



them to survive and prosper in a harsh, desert environment. They have maintained their sacred covenant with Ma'asaw, the ancient caretaker of the earth, to live as peaceful and humble farmers respectful of the land and its resources. To this day they have managed to retain their culture, language and religion despite influences from the outside world.

Project Description:

The Sipaulovi Development Corporation's Wuwukmuy Natwan Tuvaavoum Project sought to expand an earlier tribal youth-elder mentorship program that resulted in a small community garden. The purpose of this project

was to increase the size of that garden and restore a local orchard. They accomplished this goal with the help of tribal elders who helped project organizers identify traditional seeds and revive community farming and gardening practices. In addition to helping project organizers initiate this project, tribal elders also benefitted from this program nutritionally as well. The community garden and orchard is a reliable source of healthy food that the elders enjoy. Hopi seeds, water and land are the source of food security for elders of this generation and those to come.



Supporting the hunger solutions
of AARP Foundation.
DrivetoEndHunger.org

AARP Foundation is AARP's affiliated charity. The Foundation is dedicated to serving vulnerable people 50 and older by creating solutions that help them secure the essentials and achieve their best life. AARP Foundation focuses on hunger, housing, income and isolation as key mission areas. The Foundation envisions "a country free of poverty where no older person feels vulnerable." Foundation programs are funded by grants, tax-deductible contributions and AARP. For more information about AARP Foundation, please log on to www.aarpfoundation.org.



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First Nations Development Institute's mission is to strengthen American Indian economies to support healthy Native communities. We invest in and create innovative institutions and models that strengthen asset control and support economic development for American Indian people and their communities. With the support of individuals, foundations, corporate and tribal donors, First Nations Development Institute improves economic conditions for Native Americans through technical assistance and training, advocacy and policy, and direct financial grants in the areas of Nourishing Native Foods & Health, Achieving Native Financial Empowerment, Investing in Native Youth, Strengthening Tribal & Community Institutions, and Advancing Household & Community Asset-Building Strategies. For more information, please visit www.firstnations.org.



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