



Statement of

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Introduction

Chairman Hoeven, Vice Chairman Udall, and esteemed members of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, my name is Jeannie Hovland and I am the Commissioner of the Administration for Native Americans (ANA). ANA is an office within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). It is an honor to address this Committee again, this time with a focus on ANA's efforts to promote social and economic development in Native American communities. I appreciate your interest in ANA and the long-standing support of this Committee.

Forty-five years ago, Congress passed the Native American Programs Act of 1974 (NAPA), which established the Administration for Native Americans. ANA is unusual among many federal offices because our statute defines Native Americans broadly, not just to include federally recognized tribes, but also to include state recognized tribes, Native American nonprofits, and Native Hawaiian and Native Pacific Islander communities.

NAPA Authorized Grant Programs

The mission of HHS is to enhance and protect the health and well-being of all Americans. Within those broad parameters, ANA's mission and underlying goal is to improve self-sufficiency and promote cultural preservation for Native Americans. We provide competitive discretionary grants, training, and technical assistance to tribes, tribal organizations, non-profits, and Native American communities, including American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and Native Pacific Islanders. We support three program areas authorized under NAPA: Native American Languages, Environmental Regulatory Enhancement, and Social and Economic Development Strategies (SEDS).

Our grant funding opportunities are very popular and highly competitive within Native American communities. In fiscal year (FY) 2018, ANA received 266 applications and made 63 new awards in our six project areas. Our current grant portfolio includes 187 projects across the United States and the Pacific territories. Among those 187 projects are programs that target environmental regulatory enhancement projects, asset building, social and economic development strategies, language preservation and maintenance efforts, and youth leadership education and development initiatives.

Language

In my August testimony, I spoke to the importance of language preservation. HHS believes that language revitalization is essential for continuing Native American culture and strengthening self-determination. Native American values and traditions are embedded in Native languages. These values and traditions are a source of resilience and cultural cohesion that connects us with past and future generations.

The Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act of 2006 amended NAPA to specifically target grants for language immersion and restoration programs. These two methods

show promise in creating fluent speakers who, in turn, continue to revitalize, preserve, and maintain native languages.

For just over a decade, we have funded a wide variety of three-year Esther Martinez Initiative (EMI) projects. We continually refine our application and project reporting processes to elicit stronger applications and better ways to document grantees' progress in meeting their project objectives.

Of particular note, the Keres Children's Learning Center on the Cochiti Pueblo, New Mexico has established the Indigenous Montessori Institute, which brings together the Montessori Method and Indigenous community values, resources, and systems to redefine educational systems. This project's goal is to strengthen the community's daily use of Keres across historical, traditional, contemporary, household, and formal contexts and stimulate cross-generational Keres fluency.

As I have witnessed first-hand in my travels, successful efforts to advance the social and economic conditions of Native Americans are grounded in a unifying sense of culture and belonging.

Social and Economic Development Strategies

While there have been modifications to the NAPA statute over the years, the core grant program remains and is implemented through the SEDS program. SEDS also represents the core mission of ACF, which is to promote the economic and social well-being of children, families, individuals, and communities. SEDS projects represent two-thirds of our grant portfolio. I would like to share a variety of project examples that are funded within this broad category and are a remarkable testament to the program's support of Native communities' self-identified needs and initiatives.

In Arizona, the Navajo Nation is one of the largest food deserts¹ in the United States with only 13 grocery stores on a land area the size of the State of South Carolina. ANA's grantee, the Tolani Lake Enterprises, Inc., uses grant funding to empower and educate community members to revitalize their traditional food systems, improve food security, and create a community-based program that could be replicated by other tribes. At the end of their first year, they exceeded their workshop participation goal with 812 community members attending. Also, the project has twenty-four youth working with Navajo elders to translate the program's curriculum into their Navajo language. They have leveraged partnerships with neighboring farms, community member's gardens, and the Diné College to enhance the funds provided by ANA.

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe in Massachusetts recently completed a project that demonstrates how tribes are able to use ANA funding to build their legal infrastructure. Specifically, they incorporated a traditional peacemaking dispute-resolution process into their

¹ According to HHS' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), food deserts are areas that lack access to affordable fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat milk, and other foods that make up a full and healthy diet. Many Americans living in rural, minority, or low-income areas are subjected to food deserts and may be unable to access affordable, healthy foods, leaving their diets lacking essential nutrients. The CDC definition can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/toolstemplates/entertainmented/tips/FoodDesert.html>.

existing court system. Through their SEDS grant, 18 peacemakers were trained, and the Tribal Council added peacemaking to the Tribe's human resources policies to provide an alternative to automatic employee termination. Peacemaking was also added to the juvenile codes as an alternative to court proceedings. Peacemakers have remarked that it was empowering to develop and implement this project, as it allowed them to reincorporate traditional adjudication methods into tribal law. As a result, the Mashpee Wampanoag have expanded opportunities for conflict resolution that are firmly rooted in their cultural values.

Lack of physical infrastructure continues to be a challenge in many tribal communities. Because of the flexibility of SEDS, ANA is able to fund projects for planning, designing, and securing staff and equipment for projects that address infrastructure needs. One such funded project is the Pathway to Enhanced and Secured Information Technology (IT) - Fiber Optic Infrastructure for the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town in Oklahoma. This project successfully installed a communications tower and fiber backbone infrastructure with connections to two tribal buildings, and increased internet speeds for the community. The project saves the tribe at least \$1,500 per month on internet service provider's fees. Ultimately, Thlopthlocco Tribal Town will implement a fully equipped and operational IT infrastructure to ensure the efficient administration of the tribal government, which is made up of 15 tribal programs staffed by over 100 employees and serves 957 tribal members.

In Alaska, the Native Village of Ekwok determined that its most pressing issue was collection of its solid waste and prevention of illegal trash dumpsites. Using ANA funding, the Native Village has been able to provide 35 residents in Ekwok with garbage collection services and 31 households are paying garbage collection fees. The number of illegal dumpsites is now zero. In addition, two Village ordinances were developed to regulate and enforce solid waste management.

Another area that our grantees focus on is workforce development. Not only does economic development promote tribal empowerment and strengthen tribal self-governance, there is a strong desire in native communities to "grow our own" professionals to help raise the socio-economic status of the community and solve staffing shortages and employee retention problems. This approach also builds continuity and infuses cultural awareness in the services provided to community members.

For example, Aaniiih Nakoda College in Harlem, Montana, focuses on education in the health care professions. The college provides a holistic, culturally based approach to education, which distinguishes it from other programs and directly contributes to their students' success. They uphold the highest standards of quality and equity, while providing programs at an affordable cost. Through an ANA grant, 33 participants received their nurse's aide certificate and one received a registered nursing degree. Currently, 28 participants work in the health-care field, with more students graduating in May.

The Waianae Coast of Hawai'i has the highest rates of teacher turnover, new teacher and non-resident placements, and unqualified teachers in the State of Hawaii. These are factors that negatively affect student learning and academic development in the state. To address these issues, the Institute of Native Pacific Education and Culture plans to utilize their ANA funding to

pilot and evaluate a "grow our own" teacher model. This program will recruit, educate, place, and retain 100 Native Hawaiian community members who are seeking a teaching degree focused on early childhood education or kindergarten through 12th grade, and are dedicated to teaching and contributing to the educational and economic growth of the Native Hawaiian population on the Waianae Coast.

Grant Program Outcomes

To know how effective ANA projects are, each year ANA visits two-thirds of the projects that are nearing completion in order to capture the outcomes achieved. In FY 2016, ANA looked back on five years of impact visit reports to conduct a data review of 295 grantees funded between FY 2011 and 2015. During this period, 122 federally recognized tribes were awarded at least one ANA grant. One hundred and two Native American organizations, Native nonprofits, and Pacific Islander groups and 25 schools and education centers also received funding.

Through our review, we found that:

- SEDS-visited projects generated \$1,183,480 in revenue;
- 129 new businesses were created;
- 2,326 Native Americans were employed;
- 89 percent of all revenue generated from all project types came from SEDS projects;
- 85 percent of all new businesses created by all project types were from SEDS projects;
- 69 percent of the SEDS projects focused on social topics, with cultural preservation activities being the most popular subcategory;
- 31 percent of SEDS projects focused on economic development; and
- 54,189 youth and 17,169 elders were involved in SEDS activities.

We take pride in the fact that so many projects reach our elders and youth. These two populations are held in such high esteem in Native traditional ways, and it is through intergenerational connections that Native cultures, traditions, and languages can continue to be passed on.

Vital to the positive outcome and success of ANA projects is the training and technical assistance offered. ANA has four regional training and technical assistance (TA) centers offering, at no cost, project and planning development training, pre-application training, and post award training. The centers can also review applications that are 75 percent complete and offer guidance to help improve the proposal. Trainings are provided in-person and virtually throughout our service area. In order to help increase the chance for success, technical assistance remains available throughout the life of the grant.

I am committed to reaching out to communities that have never received ANA funding, or have not received ANA funding in many years. Our TA centers are conducting extensive outreach and finding innovative ways to help communities that cannot afford to travel to our training sessions. ANA has been offering more trainings in rural locations, including through virtual, web-enabled settings. This helps to level the playing field for lower-capacity applicants.

Since ANA funding only augments a small portion of Native communities' needed resources, I have been working with my federal counterparts and nongovernment partners to help projects remain sustainable after their grant sunsets.

My highest priorities for collaboration are in economic development and serving vulnerable populations such as elders, youth, veterans, and potential victims or survivors of human trafficking. I have met with the Department of the Interior, the Small Business Administration, the Department of Agriculture's Rural Development, the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, and the Center for Indian Country Development at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. I have met several times with the Department of Veterans Affairs and with Native veterans groups in New Mexico and South Dakota to identify needs and opportunities to partner. I am working closely with HHS' Administration for Community Living. Finally, I am working with ACF's Office on Trafficking in Persons to increase their outreach to Native communities.

Conclusion

As we look to the future of NAPA, this Administration is eager to partner with this Committee and Congress as a whole on reauthorization. With the important work being done by our Native language preservation program, we are seeking an opportunity to transmit grant products to the National Museum of the American Indian in order to increase the practical availability of products such as curricula, training materials, and dictionaries to other Native communities.

Forty-five years after Congress passed NAPA, we have experienced great success in helping Native Americans achieve healthier outcomes with higher standards of living. I look forward to continuing our partnership in advancing these shared goals. Thank you for inviting me to speak with you again. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.