

Semi-annual report | April-September 2016

Seeds *of* Native Health  
A Campaign for Indigenous Nutrition



[SeedsOfNativeHealth.org](http://SeedsOfNativeHealth.org)



*SMSC Business Council*

*Our tribe* has been energized by the important work that has been accomplished since we began our Seeds of Native Health campaign to improve the nutritional health of Native Americans.

The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC) is grateful to be collaborating with the foremost experts in this area to create a healthier Indian Country.

Through our re-granting partners, First Nations Development Institute and the Notah Begay III Foundation, we have provided \$2.5 million in grants to 51 tribal and nonprofit projects for local capacity-building, food sovereignty, dietary education, and much more.

We have deepened our existing partnership with the American Heart Association (AHA). Most recently, we convened nearly 200 Native leaders, youth advocates, practitioners, and philanthropic organizations to encourage Native-led advocacy efforts for better food access and health outcomes.

In fact, tribal leaders and health practitioners have expressed such a strong interest in the potential of nutrition-related policy work that we have expanded the purpose of Seeds of Native Health to include it. New projects are currently in development to support positive change within and for Native communities.

"A grave food and health crisis exists across Indian Country. Without dramatic and sustained investments in changing the underlying causes of health disparities, the future well-being of Native peoples and tribal nations is in jeopardy."

- Chairman Charles R. Vig (SMSC)



Through our new membership in the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders and our ongoing collaboration with AHA, we continue to encourage more funders to invest in Indian Country food systems and nutrition projects.

We understand that one tribe or organization cannot effect large-scale change on its own. We invite you to join us in helping solve the food crisis afflicting so much of Indian Country. We encourage you to learn more about Seeds of Native Health in this report and at [SeedsOfNativeHealth.org](http://SeedsOfNativeHealth.org).

*Charles Vig Keith B. Anderson Freedom Brewer*

SMSC Business Council  
Chairman Charles R. Vig  
Vice-Chairman Keith B. Anderson  
Secretary/Treasurer Freedom Brewer



*U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum met with the SMSC Business Council to learn about the work of Seeds of Native Health. McCollum is co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional Native American Caucus and the ranking member of the House Appropriations Interior-Environment Subcommittee.*

## Grant-making: Investing in capacity building and local impact

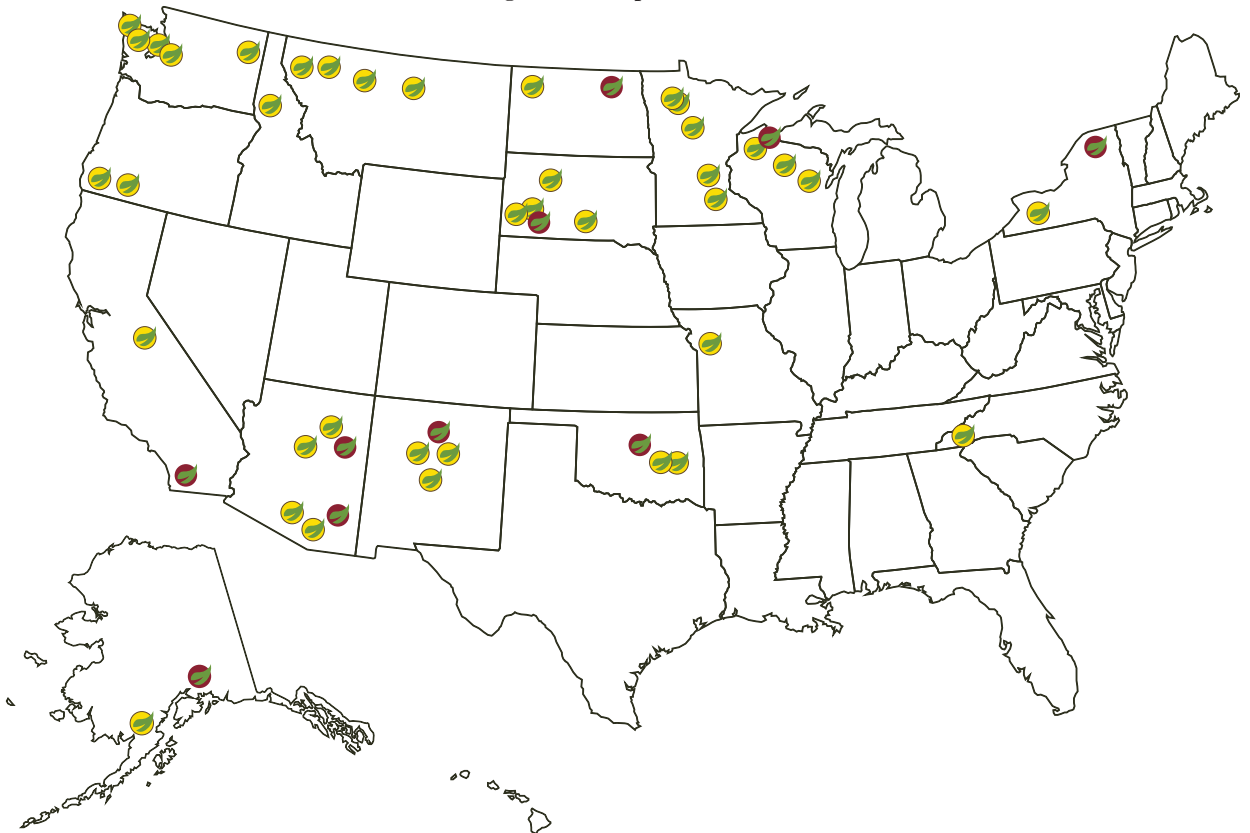
Grant-making is a major function of Seeds of Native Health's work to support localized nutrition and food access projects in both reservation and urban settings. Seeds of Native Health has partnered with First Nations Development Institute and the Notah Begay III Foundation to award \$2.5 million in grants and provide vital technical assistance.



New grantees



Previous grantees



"Our Native communities need resources to support culturally appropriate methods and meaningful data to tell their stories. These grants are doing this by supporting culturally rich nutrition programming and increasing access to healthy, traditional and affordable foods for their children and their communities."

- Olivia Roanhorse (Diné), Director of the Native Strong program, Notah Begay III Foundation

## NEW GRANT RECIPIENTS (SINCE MARCH 2016)



**Akwesasne Boys & Girls Club**  
(Akwesasne, New York)  
*Healthy eating curriculum*  
\$39,000

**Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Inc.**  
(Anchorage, Alaska)  
*Healthy eating curriculum*  
\$40,000

**Bad River Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians**  
(Odanah, Wisconsin)  
*Community health assessment*  
\$19,000  
  
*Healthy after-school programming*  
\$39,000

**Ndee Bikiyaa, The People's Farm**  
(Whiteriver, Arizona)  
*Farm-to-school project*  
\$40,000

**Oklahoma City Indian Clinic**  
(Oklahoma City, Oklahoma)  
*Research*  
\$40,000

**Oyate Teca Project**  
(Kyle, South Dakota)  
*Healthy eating curriculum*  
\$30,000

**San Diego American Indian Health Center**  
(San Diego, California)  
*Healthy eating curriculum*  
\$40,000

**Santa Fe Indian School**  
(Santa Fe, New Mexico)  
*Student health assessment*  
\$20,000

**Tolani Lake Enterprises**  
(Winslow, Arizona)  
*Healthy after-school programming*  
\$40,000

**Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians**  
(Belcourt, North Dakota)  
*Healthy eating curriculum*  
\$40,000

To learn more about all of our grant recipients, visit [SeedsOfNativeHealth.org/grant-recipients](https://SeedsOfNativeHealth.org/grant-recipients).

"The biggest assets we have are the Native communities themselves. They should be the architects of change in our communities."

- Nick Tilsen (Oglala Lakota), Executive Director, Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation

## Supporting tribal food sovereignty

Through Seeds of Native Health, the SMSC has supported 51 projects across the country to increase access to fresh, healthy foods and improve health, diet and nutrition among Native people.



*The Bishop Paiute Tribe (California) is improving its success at the community market after developing a strategic food sovereignty program.*



*The Red Lake Band of Ojibwe (Minnesota) used a Seeds of Native Health grant to build a high-tunnel greenhouse, which extends the growing season. SMSC Wozupi staff helped build the greenhouse.*



*Members from the Igiugig Village (Alaska) prepare salmon, a traditional food of their tribe.*



*Oglala Lakota Nation (South Dakota) youth in the Porcupine District plant seedlings in their community garden.*

*Children of the Pueblo of Nambé (New Mexico) tend their family gardens.*



## Landmark conference pursues health and food policy in Native communities

"We already have so many wonderful examples to rely on as we prepare more policy and advocacy work around health, nutrition and food. The bold ideas we discussed at Fertile Ground II have a real opportunity to make change throughout Native Country."

- Lori K. Watso (SMSC), Chair,  
Seeds of Native Health

### Fertile Ground II: Growing the Seeds for Native American Health May 2-4, 2016

AHA and the SMSC joined together in 2015 in pursuit of the common goal to develop new ways to advance and expand grassroots nutritional health efforts already underway in Indian Country.

In May 2016, the two organizations convened nearly 200 Native leaders, practitioners, activists, youth advocates, and national funders to discuss opportunities for advocacy work around food and health.

The conference included a simultaneous track where 20 Native youth learned from tribal leaders and community activists, and shared their own innovative visions for a healthier future.

The AHA and SMSC have issued a conference report, which includes the actionable strategies for future policy efforts that were developed at the conference. The report was funded by a generous grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. (View the report online at [SeedsofNativeHealth.org/FertileGroundII.](http://SeedsofNativeHealth.org/FertileGroundII.))

"Achieving healthy Native communities is only possible with these Native-led strategies and the collaborative support to achieve them."

- Jill Birnbaum, Vice President of Advocacy, American Heart Association



Judith LeBlanc (Caddo Tribe of Oklahoma), Director, Native Organizers Alliance



SMSC Chairman  
Charles R. Vig



Mariah Gladstone (Blackfeet), Fertile Ground II Youth Leadership Fellow



Ernie Stevens (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin), Chairman, National Indian Gaming Association



SMSC Community members  
Melinda Stade Agundis, Lori Watso,  
and Justin Hoy

“There is so much great advocacy work being done at the local level to make our communities healthier, but until now, there has been no dedicated funding source for these initiatives. The Policy Innovation Fund is a critical way to empower our people and support advocacy efforts that will bring positive change in Native Country.”

- **Lori K. Watso** (SMSC), Chair,  
Seeds of Native Health

## Advancing Native-led health and nutrition policy efforts

Due to strong interest from tribal leaders and participants at the Fertile Ground I convening in October 2015, Seeds of Native Health expanded its focus to include policy-related initiatives.



### Policy Innovation Fund

At Fertile Ground II, the SMSC and AHA announced their intention to create a Policy Innovation Fund for Native nutrition and health. The fund will provide the only dedicated, reliable, multi-year pool of resources for Native-led advocacy, implementation and evaluation. The two organizations are in the planning stages of developing this fund with the involvement of other funders.



### Healthy Diné Nation Act

In 2014, the Navajo Nation passed the Healthy Diné Nation Act, creating the first-ever junk food tax in the United States. As a result, more than \$1 million of new revenue is being collected annually to support community wellness programs in the Navajo Nation and discourage consumption of unhealthy food. Seeds of Native Health is supporting education and implementation activities in support of this groundbreaking policy on the largest reservation in the country.



### Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations

Seeds of Native Health and the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative are planning a multi-tribal advocacy effort to seek landmark reforms to the USDA's Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR). The program supplies commodity foods to approximately 100,000 low-income Native Americans from 276 tribes each month, but could benefit from healthier foods and administrative improvements.

"The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community's visionary support of the model food code project has enabled self-determination and self-governance in food and agriculture – the foundation for improved health, community strength, and sustainability."

- Janie Hipp (Chickasaw Nation), Director, Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative

## Model food and agriculture code project enters second phase



*University of Arkansas Law School  
Dean Stacy Leeds (Cherokee)  
moderates a planning session for  
the model food and agriculture  
code project with Cris Stainbrook  
(Oglala Lakota), president of the  
Indian Land Tenure Foundation.*

The University of Arkansas School of Law's Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative (IFAI) recently completed the first of three phases of its model food and agriculture code project, which was funded by a leading gift from Seeds of Native Health. The project will help tribes establish legal frameworks to regulate and support their food and agricultural systems, and protect their sovereignty.

IFAI staff conducted a series of 20 roundtable discussions to discuss policy and legal challenges confronting tribes and determine the most pressing needs in Indian Country.

The project now moves into its second phase and will focus on drafting code sections, including provisions for food safety, land use, water, sustainability principles, organic production, and the protection of seeds and traditional foods.

"We have the ability to feed ourselves, but we're not taking that next step. Few youth are coming into the business."

- Ross Racine (Blackfeet), Executive Director, Intertribal Agriculture Council

## Nurturing the next generation of Native farmers

### Native Youth in Food and Agriculture Strategy Summit | May 9, 2016

In collaboration with IFAI and the Intertribal Agriculture Council, the SMSC convened a core group of national leaders in agriculture, youth engagement, and education to discuss increasing opportunities for Native youth to be exposed to agricultural education.

The future prosperity and health of Native communities depends on young men and women entering careers in food production, agronomy, lending, and related fields. Providing agricultural and food science education to Native youth is essential to reversing the declining numbers of Native producers.

A report will be published with the summit's findings and recommended next steps, and working groups will be formed to develop specific plans of action.



*IFAI Director Janie Hipp (Chickasaw)  
and Seeds of Native Health Chair  
Lori Watso (SMSC) open the Native  
Youth in Food and Agriculture  
Strategy Summit.*

### BY THE NUMBERS: NATIVE AGRICULTURE

- 70,000 individual Native producers
- \$3.4 billion in raw products
- 112 million acres owned by Native American and Alaska Native tribes
- 57.2 million acres of Native farms and ranches
- 15,000 Native high school students involved in Future Farmers of America programs

"Indian Country is a good investment... because there is the possibility of developing more tribal-led and Indian-led nutrition programs and supporting Native food production in ranching and agriculture."

- **Judith LeBlanc** (Caddo Tribe of Oklahoma), Director, Native Organizers Alliance



*Justin Huenemann (Diné), president and CEO of the Notah Begay III Foundation, one of the SMSC's strategic partners.*

## First-ever Native nutrition conference

### First Annual Conference on Native American Nutrition

September 26-27, 2016

The SMSC and the University of Minnesota's Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives Institute are co-sponsoring a first-ever series of conferences to discuss the current state of Indigenous and academic scientific knowledge about Native nutrition and food science, and learn from peers working to improve health outcomes in Indian Country.

The inaugural conference will feature more than 30 national and international experts in Indigenous food, nutrition and health. It will provide a unique occasion for researchers and practitioners to connect, share their work, and discuss new areas of inquiry.



HEALTHY FOODS,  
HEALTHY LIVES INSTITUTE  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



"People are living in communities without a lot of resources. Collaboration is the key to a healthier community. It takes community groups coming together to make meaningful change possible."

- Valory Wangler, MD, Co-Director, Zuni Youth Enrichment Project



*From left to right, SAFSF Executive Director Virginia Clarke, Seeds of Native Health Chair Lori Watso, and Crystal Echo Hawk, co-author of Feeding Ourselves, discuss Native nutrition efforts at the annual SAFSF Forum in June 2016.*

## SMSC leads discussions on Native nutrition efforts

Through Seeds of Native Health, the SMSC has collaborated with top philanthropic organizations to advance efforts to solve the nutrition crisis in Indian Country.

In spring 2016, the SMSC became the first tribe to join the **Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders (SAFSF)**. As a part of this philanthropic affinity group, the SMSC's work has been featured in webinars to provide insight on Native food systems and equity issues.

The SMSC met with the **AHA** in June 2016 to discuss the profound dietary health needs in Indian Country and deepen its partnership with the AHA.



*Seeds of Native Health Chair Lori Watso with AHA Board Chairman Alvin Royse (right) and Executive Vice President of Advocacy and Health Quality Mark Schoeberl (left).*



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[SeedsOfNativeHealth.org](http://SeedsOfNativeHealth.org)

[ShakopeeDakota.org](http://ShakopeeDakota.org)