



Celebrating Excellence in
Tribal Governance

HONORING NATIONS

2016 AWARDEES



The **HARVARD PROJECT** on American Indian Economic Development



HONORING NATIONS 2016

Celebrating Excellence in Tribal Governance

Honoring Contributions in the Governance of American Indian Nations (Honoring Nations) identifies, celebrates, and shares outstanding examples of tribal governance. Created in 1998, the program has awarded 130 Contributions that demonstrate excellence and innovation, while addressing critical concerns and challenges facing the 567 Indian nations and their citizens.

Shining a bright light on success, Honoring Nations helps expand the capacities of Native nation builders by enabling them to learn from each others' successes. Honorees serve as sources of knowledge and inspiration throughout Indian Country and far beyond. Honoring Nations is administered by the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (Harvard Project) at the Harvard Kennedy School, and is a proud member of a worldwide family of "governmental best practices programs."

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From the Board of Governors

From one generation to the next, the maintenance of our way of life as gifted to us by the Creator has endured. It was foretold that along our journey that we would encounter many challenges. The adherence to that gifted way of life is a testament to our deep love for our languages, our beliefs, our values, our governance, our families, our communities, our relatives who inhabit this universe with us and the places from where we draw our spirituality, places that define us and gift us our personalities.

The profound question today is, “what will future generations inherit from us?” It is our honor and privilege here at Honoring Nations to share the remarkable and resilient ways that indigenous peoples from across the same lands that our forefathers walked upon, prayed upon, and where they left behind their stories that we are connected to are responding. They are a testament of our collective perseverance that our way of life will continue to endure and flourish. They are planting the seeds of knowledge.

Will they inherit the “Original Instructions” gifted to us by our Creator at the time of our beginning? The prescribed pathway in those instructions, as we are taught, is the fulfillment of our sacred trust in the maintenance of balance of all living beings in the universe. We must ask, are the decisions we are making strengthening our core values or are they taking us further away from our core values? The maintenance of a healthy mind, body, spirit, and soul enables us to fulfill our sacred trust and purpose.

Regis Pecos, *Cochiti*

Chairman of the Board of Governors, Honoring Nations



**ALASKA RURAL UTILITY COLLABORATIVE
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium**

High Honors



Indoor plumbing is a basic amenity that most Americans take for granted. In parts of rural Alaska, however, providing water and sewer service is not an easy task. The harsh climate requires special adaptations, costs are high, and many small communities lack the expertise needed to manage complex systems. To address these challenges, the Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative facilitates cooperation among Alaska Native villages to assist them with the operations of their own water and sewer systems as effectively and inexpensively as possible.



UNRELIABLE INDOOR PLUMBING

The absence of water and sewer services has far-reaching consequences for Alaska Native villages. Without functioning systems, village residents have limited opportunities to wash their hands, take showers, or clean their clothes. They must rely on shared public facilities or nearby springs, streams, or rivers for drinking water. Families collect human waste in 5-gallon plastic buckets and dispose of the contents in pits, receptacles, or lagoons. Not only is this extremely inconvenient, but it facilitates the spread of skin infections and respiratory ailments. According to a study by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one-third of infants from western Alaskan villages without functioning water systems have been hospitalized with lung infections, a figure five times the US average.

Recognizing the need for clean drinking water and safe sewage disposal, both the US government and the state of Alaska made multi-million dollar investments in rural water and sewer infrastructure over the past fifty years. Once these systems are installed, however, villages face the challenge of operating them in the unique Alaskan context. Most Alaska Native communities are accessible

only by boat or plane, making it difficult to get replacement parts. Pipes must keep water flowing even when winter temperatures fall below minus forty degrees Fahrenheit. As climate change melts permafrost, pipes are at risk of shifting and rupturing. Local system operators must deal with maintenance or repair issues that they may not have the knowledge or experience to address. When a system breaks down, village residents can be left without service until repair funds are secured and an outside contractor is available to travel to the community.

Water and sewer infrastructure is also expensive for village governments to operate and maintain. Staff turnover among water system managers, clerks, and operators is a constant concern. Fuel costs are substantial, and many systems are energy inefficient. Given seasonal work patterns and high rates of poverty and unemployment, customers struggle to pay bills. When user fees do not cover the cost of operations, village governments must subsidize water and sewer services from their general funds, leaving fewer resources for other community needs.

KEEPING WATER FLOWING

In 2004, the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC) operated a pilot project in the Bethel area aimed at cost reduction through the bulk purchase of fuel and maintenance parts for village water and sewer systems. A few years later, the program—renamed the Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative (ARUC)—moved to its current administrative home within the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), a nonprofit tribal health organization, so that villages located throughout the state could participate. Today, the Collaborative serves 27 member communities, providing support, opportunities, and engineering expertise in partnership with each community’s leadership and water plant operators. Each village maintains full ownership of its water and sewer system and participates in the governance of the Collaborative through an advisory committee, which meets once a year in Anchorage and three times a year by teleconference.

Financial management is one key support service shared among the Collaborative’s members. Billing specialists based in Anchorage collect water and sewer fees from residential, governmental, and commercial customers on behalf of each village. In cases of nonpayment, billing specialists work with individual customers to establish a payment plan and give advice on sources of financial assistance. These revenues, minus a small billing service charge, flow directly into the villages’ individual water and sewer accounts to cover system operation and maintenance costs. Under this model, each village system is run as a stand-alone nonprofit business funded by user fees.

The Collaborative also assists with system management. Its staff partners with village governments on establishing appropriate water and sewer rates based on operational expenses. While village governments hire local system operators directly, the Collaborative arranges training and networking opportunities. The Collaborative employs a small professional team that, working with village operators, researches and trials system innovations to reduce costs and prolong the life of equipment in the communities. These engineers also provide technical guidance and help village operators troubleshoot problems. The Collaborative funds these technical services with outside grants, generating further cost savings.

Member villages of the Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative have realized significant benefits from cooperation. Centralized billing services increased collections and improved cost coverage. Collaborative support for local water and sewer system operators increased retention and decreased turnover. In 2015, for example, the turnover rate among system operators in member villages was just 6% compared to the 75% rate typical in other rural Alaska communities. Knowledge sharing among members has





improved village level problem-solving capacities and reduced system downtime. Alaska Native village governments have healthier budgets and fewer system management problems, and residents experience more reliable service at better prices.

CONTROL THROUGH COOPERATION

By partnering through the Collaborative, Alaskan villages have strengthened their authority over community water and sewer systems. When villages struggle with high operating costs and low user fee collections, they become reliant on government grants for repairs. Strikingly, before joining the Collaborative, not one village had a maintenance reserve to cover emergency repairs. Now more than half of the member communities boast a reserve account that is fully funded, and the remaining villages are making progress toward this goal. With the Collaborative's assistance, village governments are no longer at the mercy of other governments' timetables and priorities. In one noteworthy case, severe flooding and ice jams caused by a winter storm cut off water service to two public buildings and forty-five homes in Kotlik, Alaska. Without ANTHC and the Collaborative, the process of securing an emergency designation, applying for funding, hiring contractors to repair the damage and restore service would have taken at least two years. Instead, local Kotlik operators and laborers working with colleagues from eight other member communities, as well as ANTHC and YKHC staff, restored temporary service to the village in just two months until permanent fixes could be complete.

The Collaborative also supports villages by creating economies of scale. Previously, each village had to request consultants to address complex





financial matters or non-routine maintenance issues. Now, members can instead rely on the talents of shared specialist staff. By pooling their buying power, villages can purchase equipment and supplies at lower rates. Repair parts and ideas are shared throughout the network, and innovations made in one community can easily be transferred to another. For instance, in response to line and connector damage caused by melting permafrost, the Collaborative developed an innovative flexible connection that dramatically reduces blockage and breakage. The ARUC program also worked collaboratively with ANTHC's Energy Initiative program and local water plant operators to identify and install energy efficient upgrades reducing fuel use in member communities from 6,520 gallons of oil per year to 2,820 gallons over three years. Given the expense of transporting fuel to remote communities, these savings allowed member villages to offer substantially more affordable services.

Tribes with small populations and significant resource constraints must find ways to perform the basic functions of government without relinquishing their sovereignty. In this context, the Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative offers a useful model: villages retain control of their water systems but can access assistance to carry out tasks that might otherwise be challenging or impossible. For example, strong community ties made it politically difficult for village leaders to suspend service for nonpayment. The Collaborative's billing service, financial assistance programming, and cost-reduction measures address this problem. Several communities also requested that staff hold meetings in their villages to explain how shutoffs help keep prices down, which further strengthened residents' buy-in. By providing reliable plumbing, Alaska Native villages are improving their citizens' quality of life, reducing the temptation to move



in search of modern conveniences, and making it easier for families to stay on traditional lands and pass along their Alutiq, Dena'ina, Inupiaq, Yup'ik, or Siberian Yup'ik culture to the next generation.

BRINGING THE LESSONS HOME

No one should have to live with unhygienic water and substandard sewer systems. The Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative is leveraging talent across its member communities to keep budgets balanced and water flowing. Because of the Collaborative's successful partnership model, villages are no longer solely dependent on outside experts and funding to operate their systems. Through cooperation, member communities provide high quality water and sewer services that allow their citizens to thrive while living on their ancestral lands.



LESSONS

- 1 Safe drinking water and proper sewage disposal are crucial for human health and help ensure a better quality of life in every community.
- 2 Providing resources to train local water and sewer system operators supports capacity development and promotes self-governance.
- 3 Village utility programs can deliver potable water at affordable costs by joining forces and capitalizing on economies of scale.

**CALRICARAQ: INDIGENOUS YUP'IK WELLBEING
Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation**

Honors



Colonization dramatically altered the lives of Alaska Native peoples, and the intergenerational pain—the historical trauma—caused by these changes deeply affects Alaska Native communities today. Among the Yup'ik of the Yukon Kuskokwim delta region, for example, rates of mental and behavioral health problems are extremely high. Calricaraq, a program hosted by the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation, seeks to improve individual and community wellbeing using the traditional philosophies that have guided Yup'ik life for generations. This approach is succeeding where Western approaches have failed.



community relationships. Today, colonizing pressures have changed but not abated: community members experience constant conflict between their Yup'ik lifestyle and perceived mainstream values, including the idea that a person's worth is measured in terms of income and job status.

THE LEGACY OF COLONIZATION

The Yukon Kuskokwim delta region covers over 75,000 square miles north and west of Bethel, Alaska and is the homeland of 58 federally recognized tribes. Bethel is the regional hub, but most of the area's 29,000 residents live in villages that range in size from 200 to 1,200. On a proportional basis, it is one of the most Native American regions of the United States; the typical village population is more than 90% Yup'ik, and a majority of residents speak Yup'ik as their mother tongue. Many families lead subsistence lifestyles, and the poverty rate is high.

Unsurprisingly, Yup'ik communities struggle with severe health problems. Alcohol and substance abuse are widespread. Rates of sexually transmitted diseases and domestic violence are extremely high. Many lives are lost to depression and suicide. The Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation, the tribal health care organization that provides health services throughout the delta region, devotes a significant portion of its budget to intervention and recovery programs. Despite this prioritization, the agency made little headway against mental and behavioral health problems using conventional treatment approaches.

Contact and colonization created drastic changes in the Yukon Kuskokwim delta. Early explorers brought western disease epidemics which decimated tribal populations and destabilized village life. For decades, federal and state officials removed children from their families and placed them in boarding schools where they were taught to ignore cultural teachings. Many children also experienced physical and sexual abuse. These processes disrupted the transfer of parenting and other social skills across generations and constrained the development of healthy family and

GOOD HEALTH THROUGH TRADITIONS

In response, advocacy by the late elder Paniguaq Peter Jacobs and other Yup'ik leaders to bring traditional wisdom into healthcare activities, the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation established the Calricaraq program as its behavioral health prevention service in 2011. Calricaraq is a Yup'ik word that conveys the idea of living a balanced life through adherence to a set of ancestral principles.

The program's foundational idea is that traditional knowledge can guide individuals and communities as they deal with trauma and seek healing. The Calricaraq Elder's Council, consisting of more than 40 elders from throughout the delta region, provides leadership and advice on the program's activities.

Service provision begins when a tribe's leaders formally invite behavioral health prevention staff to visit a village and share Calricaraq. Staff members work with village elders and other community leaders to facilitate awareness of ancestral knowledge. This outreach prepares the ground for the flagship Calricaraq activity, a three-day community gathering that follows a set format. The first day explores the concept of historical trauma, the second day is devoted to discussing hurtful behavior and abuse, and the third day offers Yup'ik teachings about the path to wellness and healthy living. Individuals with a "heavy heart" or a "heavy mind" are encouraged to speak openly about their suffering and accept that others are present to give unconditional love and support. In accordance with Yup'ik teachings, individuals are reminded that every person has a contribution to make to the community at each stage of his or her life. In the words of one staff member, "Calricaraq assures Alaska Natives that their value is in who they are, not what they have."

In addition to three-day gatherings, the Calricaraq program offers a range of community services on an as-needed basis. These include tribal council orientations, talking circles, skill-building workshops, healing ceremonies, school presentations, and crisis intervention. The program also offers "train the trainers" workshops that teach community members to facilitate Calricaraq within their own villages. Working with the Elders' Council, behavioral health prevention employees have developed two curriculum manuals to guide

community activities. Community members use these tools to lead talking circles and workshops with their elders and to adapt Calricaraq activities for use in local schools, churches, health clinics, and tribal child welfare and justice programs.

Calricaraq has dramatically changed the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation's approach to behavioral health. Although western-based providers and treatments are still available, the Calricaraq program has become the health organization's most requested intervention service. In the Calricaraq program's first four years, staff members were invited to over 30 communities and they hosted 10-15 community gatherings annually. Because of the high demand for services, the department has grown rapidly, from three to fifteen full-time staff members. Three communities have requested their own village-based Calricaraq provider. Most importantly, Calricaraq teachings have helped numerous individuals and communities turn their lives around by finding balance and wellbeing in Yup'ik teachings. As one program participant put it, Calricaraq helped him live "the good ways our elders taught us, living life to the fullest. Beginning with me first. Working on myself first. Healing myself from the past."

A PHILOSOPHY FOR HEALING

Through its Calricaraq program, the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation has taken a stand on the importance of incorporating ancient knowledge in medical care for Alaska Natives. Yet because it is a holistic reintroduction of the Yup'ik philosophy of life, it is difficult to assess the impact of the Calricaraq program in the narrow, evidence-based terms of Western medicine. Even so, during its short existence, the program appears to have achieved significantly better outcomes than other piecemeal medical interventions. One





program staff member notes, “We have seen people stop drinking, substance abusing, and abusing others almost instantly after gatherings. Some take more time to internalize what they learn, but many participants equate Calricaraq to a life changing experience because it changes the way people see their world.” The teachings reconnect participants to their Native identity in order to counter the harms caused by the imposition of non-Yup’ik worldviews. Calricaraq aims to address the unhealthy behavior passed on through the generations by treating its underlying causes, including the loss of Yup’ik culture, language, identity, spirituality, parenting skills, autonomy, and self-control. Through the stories that are shared in gatherings, talking circles, and workshops, individuals learn where they came from, who they are, and the values that will guide them to a long and healthy life.

Another reason Calricaraq has a powerful effect on behavior is because it is community-driven. The Yukon Kuskokwin Health Corporation provides programming only if a tribe makes a formal request and is actively engaged in the process. Each village adapts Calricaraq to its own traditions, and its elders serve as facilitators and teachers. In the words of a program staff member, “The Calricaraq program teaches our people that their elders are their experts, and these elders and other knowledgeable tribal leaders have the solutions to their tribe’s issues, all within their community.” In all of its activities, Calricaraq respects tribal sovereignty while building community capacity and confidence to address pressing social problems with local resources and local knowledge. Guidance comes from the ancient wisdom transmitted by village elders, so tribes control their own healing rather than depending on federal or state programs. In three villages, this focus is also reflected in innovative staffing arrangements, in which tribes supervise community-based Calricaraq providers, but the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation pays their salaries.

Finally, Calricaraq is distinctive because it addresses mental and behavioral issues by involving the entire village. Rather than treating an individual's symptoms one-on-one, in isolation with a provider, Calricaraq ensures that healing takes place in a group. A visiting medical professional has little knowledge of the relationships in the community, and writing a prescription does little to restore balance. The Calricaraq program reestablishes the leadership role of elders, families, and the community in supporting individuals as they go through challenging times. In the village of Alakanuk, for example, several troubled teens were acting out and destroying property. A Calricaraq talking circle brought them together with their parents, police, elders, and community leaders. As a result, rather than being sent away for treatment, the youth were more deeply integrated into tribal life and ceased their harmful behavior. Calricaraq continuously emphasizes the message that each tribal citizen has a specific and valuable contribution to make to the community. This encourages individuals to take care of themselves so they can live in harmony with others. Participants are becoming better sons, daughters, fathers, mothers—and better tribal citizens.

CONCLUSION

The Calricaraq program of the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation is restoring the health of individuals and communities through traditional teachings. By reinforcing culturally appropriate ways of being, Calricaraq successfully provides preventative care where non-Indigenous approaches have failed. The journey to overcome generations of historical trauma is challenging and long, but the revival of traditional lifeways in the Yukon Kuskokwim delta region brings new optimism.



LESSONS

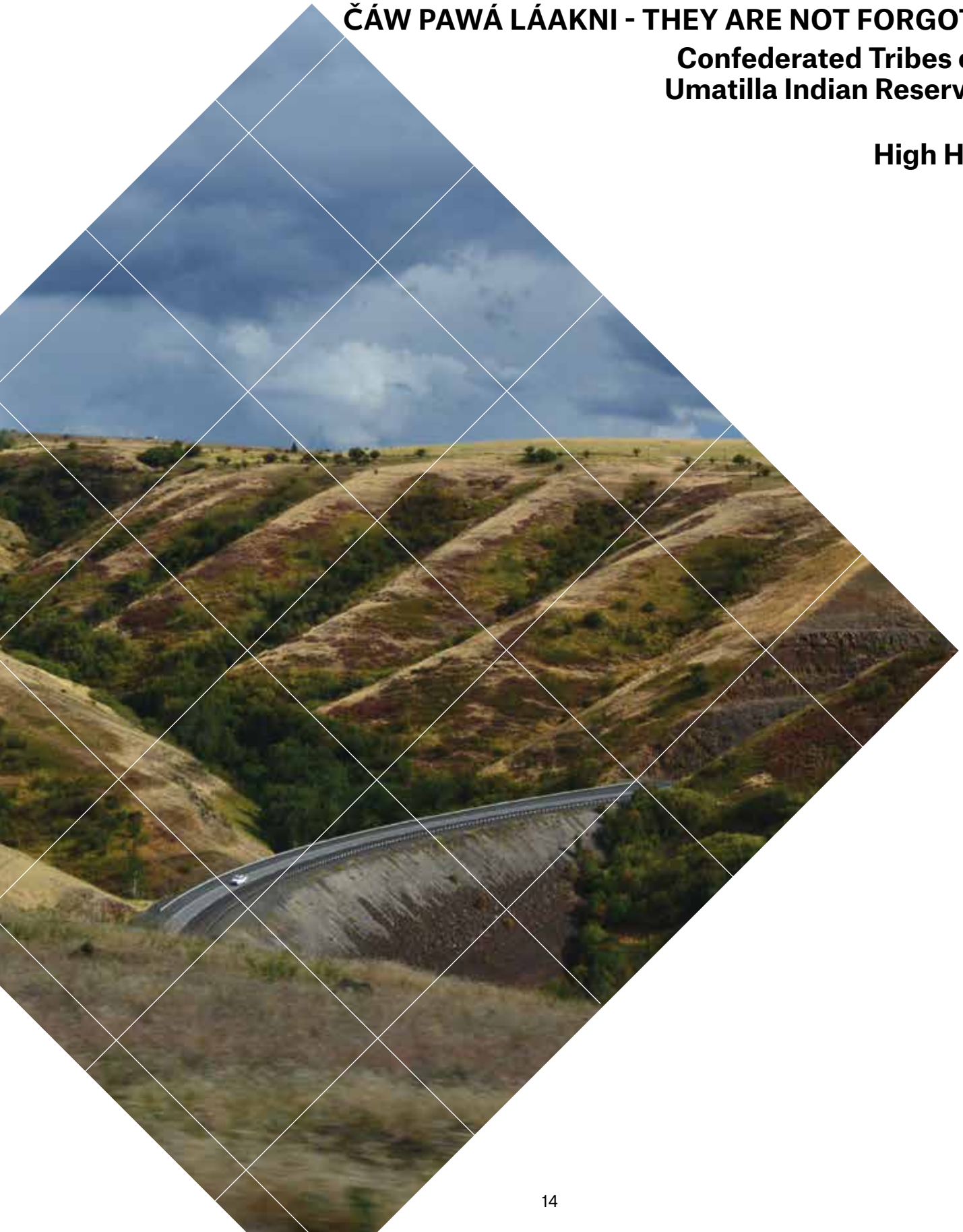
1 Given the opportunity to learn from elders' wisdom and traditional knowledge, tribal members can find balance, healing, and a way forward from historical trauma.

2 Through their grounding in tradition and culture, Indigenous prevention models can assist community members in ways that western behavioral health approaches cannot.

3 The cultural renewal that helps individuals heal also restores communities and leads to stronger tribal nations.

ČÁW PAWÁ LÁAKNI - THEY ARE NOT FORGOTTEN
Confederated Tribes of the
Umatilla Indian Reservation

High Honors





Contemporary place names throughout the United States reflect the history of colonization. The explorers and settlers who named mountains, rivers, and other natural features after themselves or their heroes were unaware or indifferent to the fact that waterways, features of the land, and places already had ancient names. The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation have undertaken an ambitious project to organize, give preeminence to, and systematically disseminate their knowledge of the land.

LOST KNOWLEDGE

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation are a union of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla nations. The Tribes share a reservation in the northeastern corner of Oregon which was created in 1855 through a treaty with the US government. The treaty also secured the Tribes' right to hunt, gather, graze, and fish in usual and accustomed areas of their ceded territory—6.4 million acres in the Columbia River and Blue Mountain region of Oregon and southeastern Washington State.

As the new peoples arrived in this territory, their “settling” behaviors—road, railroad and fence-building; non-indigenous plant introduction; irrigation; livestock grazing; and logging—transformed local ecosystems and damaged

important food and medicinal areas. Dam projects turned living rivers into reservoirs and commercial fishwheels decimated the salmon that formed the basis of the regional economy and culture. These changes unsettled the waterways and landscapes which altered the traditional ways in which knowledge of the land was passed down from generation to generation. Eventually, only a few of the Tribes' elders remembered place names and associated stories, and tribal citizens struggled to fulfill their sacred duties to the land.

And yet, there was hope. Many of the remaining tribal language speakers were engaged in helping the fledgling language program. Other elders were working at the Tribes' new museum on research projects. And there was a wealth of knowledge—some still to be captured but much already documented. Many aspects of tribal life in the Columbia River plateau and its surrounding tributaries had been recorded by explorers, traders, settlers, and researchers. As early as 1806, Lewis and Clark recorded what they were told by local “Indians” and wrote down words from the Sahaptin languages spoken in the area. Traders itemized purchases and sales or described trade routes. Settlers wrote letters and journals. Later, ethnographers and anthropologists made field notes and published academic articles. While geographically scattered and generally written from non-Native points of view, the information

was based on the wisdom of the Tribes' ancestors. Was there a way that this knowledge could be returned to tribal stewardship and made useful to current and future generations?

NEW TOOLS FOR ANCIENT STORIES

The Confederated Tribes took their first steps toward reinvigorating communal knowledge and reviving their languages in the 1990s. The Tribes' museum and research organization, the Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute, opened in 1998 in conjunction with the sesquicentennial of the Oregon Trail. Its permanent exhibits accurately depicted the history and culture of the Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla nations. In planning for this exhibit, Institute staff and community partners gathered substantial resources in their archives, some of which included Native place names.

Combining many very small grants, the Institute staff convened tribal elders, students, and scholars who had previously studied the Tribes to talk about early documentation of the language—like the words and names Lewis and Clark wrote down. One anthropologist in attendance had spent 30 years with elders researching the ethnobotany of



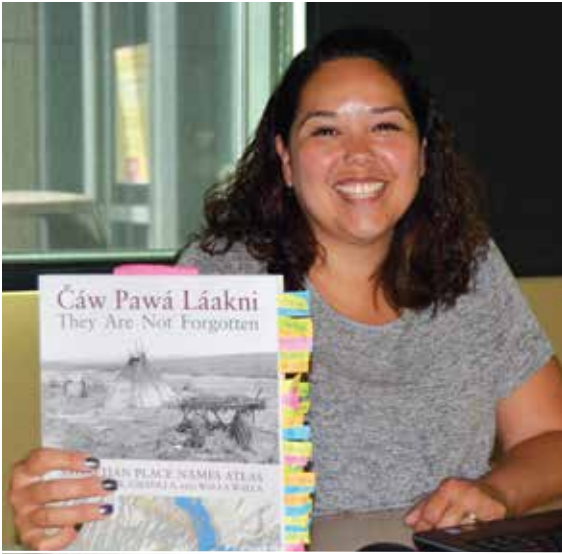
the region. The first-hand accounts he collected referenced more than 1,000 traditional place names—and the Čáv Pawá Láakni, They Are Not Forgotten project was born.

From this starting point, Tamástslíkt staff began a 12-year process to systematically record Native place names from historical documents and to interview elders about their homeland. Project principals also linked the information to coordinates in the Tribes' Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping database.

With core funding from the tribal government and the Administration for Native Americans, and supplemental grant support from the Indian Land Tenure Foundation, Ecotrust, Oregon Cultural Trust, and the Wildhorse Foundation, among others, Čáv Pawá Láakni aimed to collect thorough, precise, and credible Indigenous information about the Confederated Tribes' traditional lands. Its focus is on identifying Native place names in the Tribes' several languages and reclaiming the ancestral knowledge embedded in those names.

To share this important work with the public, the Confederated Tribes published an atlas, Čáv Pawá Láakni, They Are Not Forgotten: Sahaptian Place Names Atlas of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla in 2015. It presents more than 70 illustrated maps and identifies the names of more than 600 traditional places used by the Tribes. It also provides narrative descriptions of the history and cultural significance of the highlighted locations. The tribal government provided over 500 complimentary copies of the atlas to local schools, tribal programs, and language speakers, and it is available for purchase through the Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute, Amazon, and the University of Washington Press.

The Čáv Pawá Láakni atlas project has been transformative. Tribal citizens keep the book in



their cars and use it as a field guide for teaching themselves and their children about the Tribes' homelands. The local school board has included the atlas on the reading list for high school teachers. The project's additional legacy is the vast ethno-geographic database that the Confederated Tribes actively use and update. By helping the Tribes reclaim their knowledge of the land, the atlas project has educated the tribal government, tribal citizens, and their neighbors about the area's Native heritage.

DEFENDING SOVEREIGNTY

While the Čáw Pawá Láakni atlas project began as an information gathering exercise, it has become instrumental in protecting the Confederated Tribes' treaty rights. For example, data in the atlas helped the tribal government secure a right of way to a root gathering area that had been inaccessible to tribal citizens for over 50 years. When state game and fish officials cited a tribal citizen for fishing below the Bonneville Dam, the Tribes used the atlas to show that the location was a traditional fishing area, and the state dismissed the charge. In several cases, the Tribes have successfully advocated for geographical names containing the word "squaw" to be replaced with Native place names or an English translation of those names. At the Tribes' request and based on information in the atlas, the US Board of Geographic Names is also considering twenty additional tribal place name suggestions. Because it clearly and extensively documents traditional names and historical uses of natural resources, both the atlas and the robust database it generated allow the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation to negotiate with other governments from a position of strength.

The Confederated Tribes also rely on this information to set priorities, develop policy, and





manage resources. The Tribes' Natural Resources Department measures progress with fish habitat restoration using Čáv Pawá Láakni project data as a benchmark of pre-reservation ecological conditions. The Language Department has kindled greater interest in language revitalization by building a Sahaptin curriculum around stories in the atlas. By identifying traditional food and medicine harvesting areas throughout the ceded territory, the project encourages the return to still other cultural practices. Remarkably, the project achieves these results while also protecting tribal and individual data. The atlas is available to the broader public, but the map scales purposefully obscure the precise locations of some culturally important sites. And, as determined by the Tribes' Cultural Resource Protection Program, highly sensitive information in the database, such as burial and archaeological sites, is kept confidential.

The transmission of knowledge across generations is essential to cultural survival. The Čáv Pawá Láakni atlas project maintains the Confederated Tribes' longstanding tradition of storytelling through new methods. Elders insisted that the memories they shared should not stay "on the shelf" but be disseminated widely and continuously updated as a vital way of transmitting knowledge. While some citizens were initially uncomfortable sharing information that could be "taken" from the Tribes, a consensus emerged over the course of the project that the Tribes' own children and grandchildren would benefit most from it. As one tribal employee explained, the atlas has had a big impact because it "expanded the younger generation's comprehension of the aboriginal homeland, by teaching them that their land is not just the reservation." Gathered from sources as wide-ranging as ethnographers' field notes, federal government documents, and the stories elders told as they walked the land, the Tribes' ancestral wisdom concerning their lands





is now available to all tribal citizens. What's more, the information is paired with powerful modern mapping and database tools to better preserve this knowledge for later generations.

BRINGING THE LESSONS HOME

Land and language are a central part of the Confederated Tribes' identity. The Čáw Pawá Láakni atlas project has restored the knowledge of the ancestors and connected the stories of the Tribes' living elders to create a powerful statement about who the Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla peoples are today. The Tribes' careful documentation has created a resource for asserting their sovereignty and reclaiming their connection to their ancestral homeland. After centuries of being represented—and misrepresented—by others, the Tribes have repatriated their knowledge and are telling their own stories.

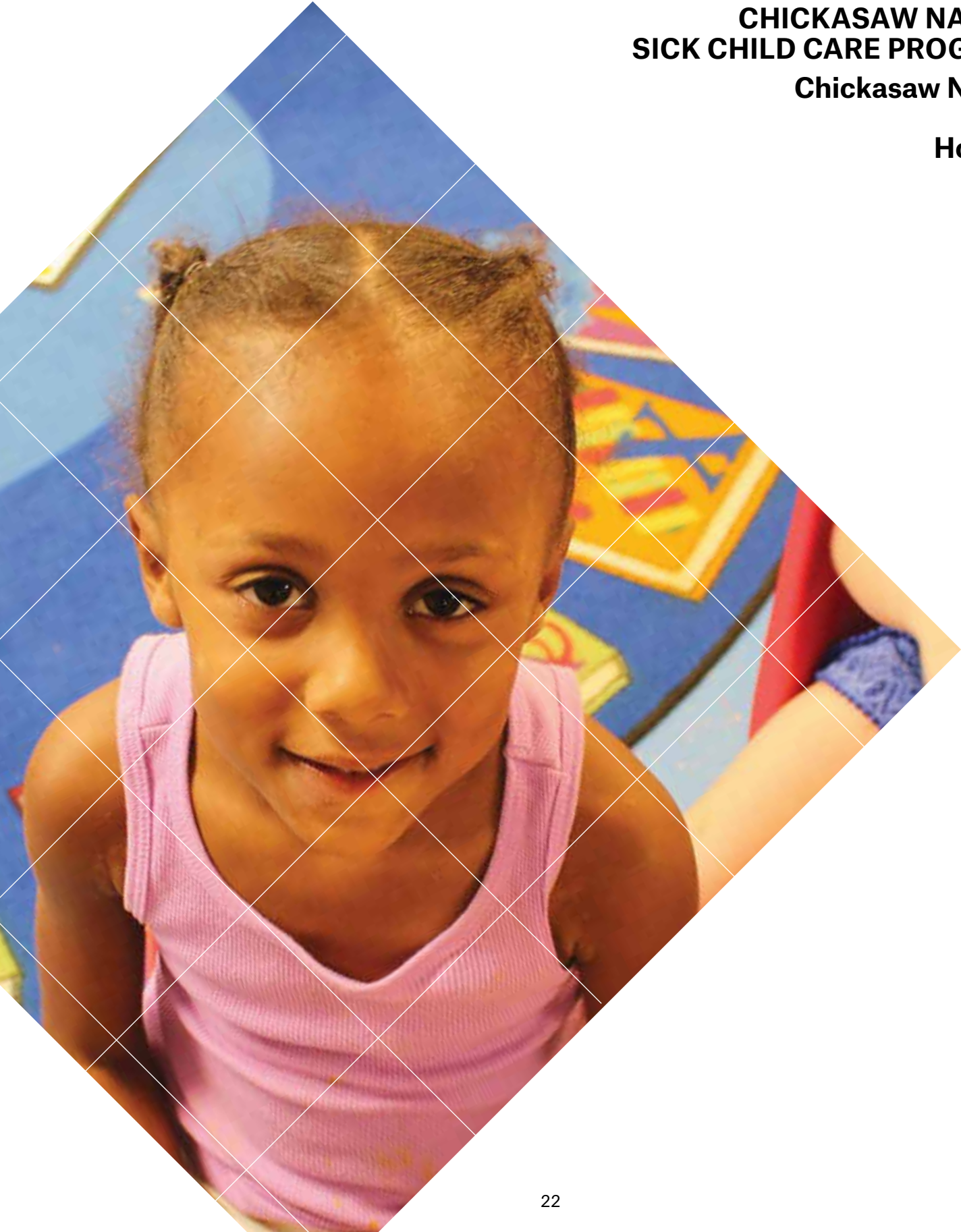


LESSONS

- 1 When a Native nation reclaims stories about its lands, culture, and history, it is undertaking a critical exercise of tribal self-determination.
- 2 The strategic compilation and use of a living ethno-geographic database can help a tribe defend its treaty rights, manage natural resources, and transmit traditional knowledge across generations.
- 3 When a tribe uses its own language to express and share traditional ecological knowledge, it makes a bold statement about the nation's sovereignty over its history, culture, and territory.

**CHICKASAW NATION
SICK CHILD CARE PROGRAM
Chickasaw Nation**

Honors



Working parents face a dilemma when a child falls ill. Staying home to provide care or finding a relative or friend to help can be a major challenge, especially for single parents, two-worker families, and employees whose jobs offer limited flexibility. The Chickasaw Nation Sick Child Care Program offers a safe and nurturing place for mildly ill children to spend the day and gives working parents the assurance that their children are receiving proper care.



FORCED TO TAKE TIME OFF WORK

The Chickasaw Nation is one of the largest tribes in Oklahoma, with 60% of its nearly 60,000 citizens living in the state. In the past twenty years, the Nation has experienced rapid economic growth and significant expansion of its governmental operations. Today, the Nation employs 13,000 people in government departments and tribal enterprises.

The smooth functioning of Chickasaw government and business operations depends on the effectiveness of this sizeable workforce. By the mid-2000s, however, employee absenteeism began to take a toll. Managers with absent staff were forced to reorder priorities or leave work undone, reducing productivity and making it more difficult to sustain the Nation's many programs, services, and business activities. A 2007 study by the Nation's Economic Development Department found that in many cases, employees took days off work not because they were sick themselves but because they needed to care for others. These caregiver days represented more than half of the sick days employees had submitted the prior year.

The evidence also suggested that economic and social factors were key drivers of caregiving-related absences. In the Chickasaw Nation,

as elsewhere in the US, many children live in single-parent families or in families with two working parents, and no adult is regularly available to be with children at home. Because families are smaller, the traditional practice of extended family caregiving is less common. If parents cannot find people they trust to look after their sick children, taking time off work is the only option.

Importantly, caregiving-related absenteeism isn't simply an employer issue—it has negative consequences for Chickasaw citizens as well. For parents who earn hourly wages or do not have paid sick leave, each missed day represents lost family income. Employees who are more frequently absent may have fewer opportunities for career advancement or may be ineligible for certain positions. Some parents worry that taking a day off sends the message that they are not serious about their work. And yet, the problem is inevitable: the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that elementary school-age children suffer from colds or the flu between eight and twelve times a year.

A SAFE PLACE FOR MILDLY ILL CHILDREN

In 2009, the Chickasaw Nation Economic Development Department, working in cooperation with the Chickasaw Child Development Center, proposed a novel approach to meeting the needs of working parents and their children—the Chickasaw Sick Child Care Program. The program, a non-profit service of the Chickasaw Nation, provides quality care for mildly ill children ages 3 months to 12 years.

The Sick Child Care Program is housed in its own building near the Chickasaw Nation Child Development Center and Chickasaw Nation government headquarters in Ada, Oklahoma. The facility can accommodate 35 children per day in six rooms equipped with separate ventilation systems. While the Sick Child Care Program primarily serves Chickasaw Nation employees, it is open to all local residents—Chickasaw and non-Chickasaw alike—regardless of their place of employment. Program services are free to Chickasaw Nation employees, discounted for tribal citizens, and available for a nominal fee (\$6 per day in 2016) to non-Chickasaw users.

When a child arrives at the center, a Registered Nurse conducts an initial assessment to rule out severe or highly contagious illness. If there are questions about a child's suitability for the program, the nurse consults with an on-call physician. Children with mild illnesses are admitted and assigned to an age- and diagnosis-appropriate room. Staff members develop a care plan that takes account of the child's age, symptoms, and activity level. If a child is well enough, these activities include Chickasaw-based educational materials, toys, and games. Each child's health is monitored throughout the day, and under a Memorandum of Understanding with the

Chickasaw Medical Center and the Sovereign Medical Clinic, Sick Child Care staff nurses administer medical tests and dispense medication to children as needed. Center staff also update parents by text or email and, at pick-up, make a recommendation concerning the child's return to daycare or school. At the end of a child's stay, the care room is disinfected using the same sanitization standards as hospitals.

Today, Chickasaw Nation employees and area families are active users of the Sick Child Care Program's services and have great confidence in the care their children receive. In 2015, parents using the facility avoided 1,097 absences from work, days that bolstered their family incomes and improved their chances of career success. As the program's founders had hoped, the Chickasaw Nation also was a major beneficiary of these reclaimed work days: its employees accounted for 890 of the avoided absences for caregiving. The program has proven so popular that the Nation is planning to open a second facility in conjunction with a new child care center in Ardmore, Oklahoma; with this new development, even more parents will be able to access sick child care services.

CULTURAL CAREGIVING

The Chickasaw Sick Child Care Program is the only service of its kind in the state of Oklahoma and the first in Indian Country. The program is well integrated into the area's child care and medical infrastructure. It coordinates with Head Start to offer parent education classes on health and wellness topics such as nutritious foods and medication dosage guidelines. While formed to address the needs of Chickasaw Nation citizens and employees, the program is available to all area children, making life easier for working families



Parents report that their children have such positive experiences and love the center so much that many ask if they can attend even when they are not ill. One father noted that when his son needed to attend the center for many days while recuperating from surgery, the fact that he could practice his Chickasaw made the recovery time well spent. Significantly, these cultural connections are advantages of a tribally controlled program: the Chickasaw Nation, not outside authorities, determine these key aspects of program operation and design.

BRINGING THE LESSONS HOME

A modern economic reality is that sick children often equate with missed work days for parents. With its Sick Child Care Program, the Chickasaw Nation makes it possible for parents to take care of family members while maintaining their economic productivity, and for mildly ill children to get proper medical supervision and enriching cultural experiences when they cannot be in school.



LESSONS:

1. When tribal governments empower their employees and citizens to identify and address solutions to community challenges, they lay the groundwork for successful tribal programs.
2. Tribal programs that serve both Native and non-Native community members build goodwill.
3. When a nation's core values are infused into program policies, its citizens thrive.

**NATIVE AMERICAN DRUG AND GANG
INITIATIVE TASK FORCE
Intertribal Nations of Wisconsin**

Honors



Drug dealers and gang members threaten the wellbeing of communities throughout the United States. In Indian Country, jurisdictional issues and a lack of trust in law enforcement complicate the apprehension of drug- and gang-involved offenders. Tribal Police Departments in Wisconsin formed the Native American Drug and Gang Initiative Task Force to strengthen their ability to deal with these illegal activities with support from the tribal governments. The Task Force facilitates inter-agency cooperation and helps tribes take the lead in addressing public safety threats to their communities.



ILLICIT ACTIVITIES ON TRIBAL LANDS

Federal, state, and tribal agencies struggle to address drug and gang problems on reservations. Jurisdiction on tribal lands is complex, and can result in confusion about which laws apply. Many federal and state drug officers have limited cultural and community knowledge. Community members may be reluctant to cooperate with investigators—tribal or nontribal—making it difficult to pursue leads and make arrests. Criminals take advantage of these complications, and as a result, drug and gang prosecutions on reservations occur at a significantly lower rate than off-reservation communities.

Still other characteristics of Wisconsin reservations have made them prime locations for gang and drug activity. Their proximity to major population centers such as Chicago, Minneapolis, and Milwaukee make them valuable trafficking routes. In addition, tribal members who suffer from long-term unemployment and lack of community connection are vulnerable to addiction and gang recruitment.

A 2007 law enforcement study in Wisconsin found increasing numbers of drug dealers and

gang members operating and living on reservations. Native-focused gangs, such as Native Mob and Sovereign Warriors—known for appropriating sacred objects and cultural practices to conceal illegal activities—and nationally known gangs, such as the Latin Kings and Satan's Disciples, recruit and operate on tribal lands.

As gangs and trade in illicit drugs—like heroin, methamphetamine, and synthetic cannabinoids—moved onto reservations in Wisconsin, tribal police were ill-equipped to deal with the surge of violence and related social problems that followed. Tribal officers lacked the training, contacts, and funding needed for effective gang and drug investigations. In addition, federal and state agencies hesitated to share intelligence because they feared tribal officers would mishandle the information. In contrast, gangs were establishing sophisticated trafficking and recruiting networks that reached well beyond reservation borders.

A COORDINATED TRIBAL RESPONSE

In 2007, tribal police departments in Wisconsin explored the idea of establishing a drug task force under the state's Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Enforcement Group. More than a dozen such groups existed in the state to facilitate regional drug-related law enforcement, but none address issues specific to operating on tribal lands. The

Native American Drug and Gang Initiative (NADGI) Task Force was the first to address these problems, addressing geographically disconnected jurisdictions.

The NADGI Task Force is a collaboration of the Wisconsin Department of Justice, the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, and the law enforcement agencies of nine Wisconsin tribes (Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin, Stockbridge-Munsee Community, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Oneida Nation, and the Ho-Chunk Nation). It consists of 35 law enforcement officers designated by their tribal nations as members of local tribal Task Force teams. These patrol officers and detectives continue with their regular law enforcement duties but also receive specialized NADGI training. The Task Force is governed by a board composed of the nine tribal police chiefs and the chief warden of the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission. It receives a small yearly grant from the US Department of Justice, to fund training and purchase equipment for tribal initiatives.

Functionally, the Task Force facilitates information coordination among member agencies to better fight illegal drug and gang activities on tribal lands and in surrounding communities. For example, all members of the Task Force have access to shared confidential law enforcement databases with surveillance information about suspects and drug trafficking routes. These allow tribal officers to quickly identify trends in criminal activity across jurisdictions, track links between on- and off-reservation gang and drug activity, and collaborate with other tribes and

agencies. For some investigations and special operations, Task Force partner tribes and relevant federal, state, and local drug enforcement agencies may directly assist one another by sharing staff and equipment. The NADGI Task Force also provides awareness training to police officers, first responders, tribal government personnel, and the public on drug and gang issues.

Where in the past, Wisconsin tribes had to wait for off-reservation law enforcement officers to intercede—with operations that met with limited success—the NADGI Task Force helped tribes get results. In 2007, before the formation of the Task Force, law enforcement officers arrested only 24 people on the nine Wisconsin reservations for drug crimes and seized only small amounts of marijuana and cocaine. In 2015, tribal officers arrested over 400 individuals and seized larger volumes and a wider range of illicit drugs than ever before. Now that tribal officers can respond to emerging threats more rapidly, reservation communities are becoming safer and gang membership is less enticing.

LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Through the NADGI Task Force, tribes have taken a leadership role in combating gang and drug activity on their reservations. Each Native nation develops its own plan to reduce local threats, and the Task Force provides support to carry out these tribe-specific goals. In addition, the Task Force provides guidance to tribal governments on how to use their sovereign powers to address community crime concerns. For example, in 2013, the Lac du Flambeau Band declared a state of emergency in response to the drug crisis on its reservation and it enacted laws to allow banishments and to establish restorative justice procedures for



drug- and gang-involved offenders. Other nations, including the Ho-Chunk Nation and Menominee Indian Tribe, have passed legislation to ban synthetic drug formulations designed to elude law enforcement. Significantly, each local team sees itself both as part of the NADGI Task Force team and as part of its tribe's overall efforts to prevent crime and the root causes of crime.

Task Force officers link their efforts to those of the tribal courts, Indian child welfare workers, schools, addiction counselors, and housing authority staff, among others, to better address these problems. In other words, the NADGI Task Force works broadly across Native nations and partner agencies to harness law enforcement capacity, and it works deeply within each tribe to access the community and cultural expertise needed to replace violence with healing.

One of the NADGI Task Force's most notable achievements is renewed trust in law enforcement. Years of ineffective operations by state and federal agencies tasked with gang and drug crime interdiction caused tribal citizens to lose confidence in the police. The Task Force has proven that tribal officers, working in partnership with

external agencies, can keep reservation communities safe. Tribal officers also build trust and respect through an emphasis on communication.

The Task Force prioritizes a reciprocal flow of information between law enforcement and the community. Reservation residents are informed about the objectives of law enforcement and kept updated on their efforts to fight crime. The Task Force educates and engages hundreds of elders, community members, first responders, casino employees, and other tribal employees to help them identify the signs of gang recruitment and drug activity. Notably, community outreach includes information on resources to help family and friends who are dealing with addiction and abuse.

Efforts to restore trust are further aided by tribal officers' sensitivity to cultural protocols. This not only guides them in their communication efforts, but it also helps them properly deal with sacred items, such as drums and eagle feathers, that gangs have co-opted for illegal uses. Ultimately, renewed trust in law enforcement has encouraged tribal citizens and other reservation residents to express their concerns, share sensitive information, and participate in the process of crime prevention.

The NADGI Task Force gives tribal police officers the tools they need to address gang and drug activity more effectively. Tribes have access to federal and state specialists in gang behavior and drug trafficking. Increased cooperation among tribes, local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies has reduced the jurisdictional uncertainty that allowed illegal activities to flourish on tribal lands. Non-tribal officers no longer view their tribal counterparts with suspicion but now see them as competent and knowledgeable partners in investigations and special operations.



Intelligence sharing leads to more robust surveillance across borders and makes it more difficult for suspects to evade capture. For example, when a Latin King gang member fled to the Menominee reservation shortly after shooting a Satan's Disciple gang member on the Oneida reservation, the Task Force responded immediately and the suspect was taken into custody within hours. With increased officer training, shared costs, and better access to information, the NADGI Task Force allows tribes to make their nations safer.

CONCLUSION

The Native American Drug and Gang Initiative Task Force helps Wisconsin tribes lead the effort to identify and eliminate threats to public safety on their reservations. By working with one another and in cooperation with the federal, state, and local law enforcement partners, Wisconsin nations protect their sovereignty and help ensure the future of their communities.



LESSONS

- 1 Tribally led drug and gang task forces increase the effectiveness of law enforcement by improving cooperation and coordination among federal, state, and tribal agencies.
- 2 Engaging and educating the public about drug and gang activity is critical to keeping communities safe.
- 3 Intertribal law enforcement task forces strengthen Native nations by providing new opportunities for tribes to address their own problems in their own ways.

**PROJECT TIWAHU:
REDEFINING TIGUA CITIZENSHIP**
Ysleta del Sur Pueblo
High Honors



Establishing the criteria for citizenship is an inherent right of national governments around the world. This right determines who can be a citizen and how citizenship is transferred through generations. Yet for Indian nations, history complicates efforts to fully exercise sovereignty. Project Tiwahu—Redefining Tigua Citizenship was an Ysleta del Sur Pueblo wide—initiative to reform and self-determine enrollment as an exercise of tribal sovereignty. Reform efforts addressed the hard questions about belonging and built consensus around a new, more inclusive approach to tribal citizenship.



LOSS OF TRIBAL CITIZENSHIP

Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, the southernmost Rio Grande pueblo, is a Tigua community with reservation lands located just north of the Mexican border between the cities of El Paso and Socorro, Texas. In the late 1960s, the US government transferred trusteeship of the Pueblo to the state of Texas. A 1987 act of Congress restored the federal trust relationship, but it also established conditions on tribal citizenship. The statute explicitly stated that only individuals listed on the Tribal Membership Roll of 1984 would be considered members and that only those descendants with at least one-eighth degree Ysleta del Sur blood quantum would be eligible to enroll in the future.

These restrictive rules disenfranchised many descendants and created divisions between those with and without the specified blood quantum. Only enrolled members were eligible for federally funded programs and services, and in an increasing number of cases, some had access to benefits that close relatives did not. This exclusion made many unenrolled descendants feel alienated from the Pueblo and “not Indian enough.” Without citizenship, they drifted away from tribal activities and cultural events. Others remained deeply

involved in preserving tribal traditions but were frustrated by their inability to participate formally in the nation’s governance. Most seriously, as fewer and fewer Tigua descendants met the blood quantum requirements, the Pueblo’s population was aging and shrinking. The fact that the Pueblo could not determine its own citizenship criteria threatened its cohesiveness, its Tigua identity, and even its existence.

Over a span of 25 years, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo leaders made several attempts to amend the federal restoration act and remove the restrictive citizenship wording. In 2012, it met with success: Congress passed legislation stating that the Pueblo’s membership consisted of “any person of Tigua Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Indian blood enrolled by the tribe.” The Pueblo’s next significant challenge was to decide what its own, self-determined citizenship rules should be. Some current citizens worried about decreases in benefits and the possibility that a large increase in enrollment could create a tribal budget crisis. Others feared that removing the blood quantum standard could make the Pueblo vulnerable to false claims about its status as an Indian tribe.

A COMMUNITY-WIDE REFORM

Recognizing the complexity and sensitivity of redefining citizenship, the Ysleta del Sur Tribal Council launched a comprehensive initiative called Project Tiwahu. Meaning “Tiwa Person,” the project aimed to conduct research, raise awareness, and engage the tribal community in planning for a new membership ordinance.

The case for reform began with careful groundwork. The Tribal Council appointed an advisory board, consisting of both enrolled members and non-enrolled descendants, to guide all Project Tiwahu activities. Invited outside experts facilitated executive education sessions, which provided tribal leaders with insights from the experiences of other Native nations and helped establish project objectives. The Council initiated a descendant census to better understand how the Pueblo’s population had evolved over time. Pueblo employees reviewed historical documents that dealt with the creation of the original membership roll and researched 1980s efforts to identify Ysleta del Sur Pueblo members. Pueblo staff also studied the potential financial impacts of alternative citizenship rules. Project Tiwahu then summarized the findings from these projects in a public information guide with sections on Tigua history, the tribe’s population profile, and the possible fiscal impacts of proposed changes.

Over the next two years, the Tribal Council hosted four community meetings to inform members of the project’s progress, answer questions, and obtain comments. Project staff also facilitated four focus groups, each designed to elicit feedback from a specific subset of the population—descendants, elders, employees, and community members-at-large. Following these community conversations, the project administered a community citizenship survey

in December 2013. More than 70% of potential respondents provided feedback on questions concerning cultural identity, tribal services, tribal finances, and enrollment rules. Survey findings showed overwhelming support for removal of the blood quantum requirement and the enrollment of new members through family relationships. In sum, Project Tiwahu successfully developed consensus for tribal enrollment inclusive of descendants, who had been ineligible for citizenship under the previous federal law.

The Ysleta del Sur Tribal Council affirmed this consensus in new citizenship rules established by ordinance in November 2015, and as a result, the Pueblo’s enrolled membership doubled, growing from 1,718 to 3,462. Today, new citizens are returning to the community and cultural life is flourishing. Reflecting on these positive changes, one citizen stated, “We are going to keep growing. I feel it. I know we are. I am proud to be Tigua.”

TIGUA CITIZENSHIP REDEFINED

Restrictive blood quantum requirements had been in place at Ysleta del Sur Pueblo for almost 30 years. While there were reasons to change the rules, there was also concern in the community that new enrollment criteria could affect the rights and benefits enjoyed by tribal members. Through Project Tiwahu, the Tribal Council was able to frame the issue as a reclamation of sovereignty—and as a challenge to the colonial mindset, which equated the terms “member” and “beneficiary” (of payments, programs, and services). Project Tiwahu emphasized that Tigua citizenship should define a distinct community whose members had responsibilities to each other. As a result, conversations about enrollment criteria centered on the ways that new citizenship rules could support the preservation of the Pueblo’s identity and could





contribute to the economic and cultural growth of the tribal nation. Members discussed changes to benefits, but they did so within the broader context of the Pueblo's political, economic, and cultural revival. In other words, Project Tiwahu is an instructive example of how to expand conversations about tribal citizenship to include both individual rights and community consequences.

Recognizing that fundamental institutional and policy change takes time, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo developed a systematic, multi-year process for replacing the federal government's imposed enrollment rules. Project Tiwahu gave the Pueblo's members and descendants the opportunity and time needed to educate themselves about citizenship options. Critically, the Pueblo's leadership sought to develop robust data at all stages of the project and to fully advise the population about the implications of any changes. In fact, Project Tiwahu's financial analysis found that increasing the population while maintaining the same levels of benefits and services would strain the tribal budget; projections showed that demand for healthcare, human services, and tribal distributions would increase by almost 40%. But, because the process was transparent, community members had confidence that they were well informed. In the end, they decided that the long-term advantages of the new rules outweighed their immediate fiscal drawbacks. Ysleta del Sur Pueblo's methodical approach through Project Tiwahu is a model for any Native nation seeking to accomplish significant but potentially contentious institutional or policy reform. Each step served to build understanding and to generate the popular support necessary to implement change.

From the beginning, the Tribal Council was conscious that it could not make a decision about enrollment criteria without widespread public involvement. Project Tiwahu used a variety of

methods to connect with individuals from diverse backgrounds and engage them in the process. It mobilized the Pueblo's citizens to learn the history of tribal enrollment, consider the issues, and give individual input on proposed changes. At times, these open discussions caused friction within the community. Yet by addressing unpleasant facts, Project Tiwahu fostered a deeper understanding of the damage created by existing enrollment rules and by federal certification of blood quantum. Ultimately, the high level of community engagement allowed for smooth implementation of the Pueblo's new citizenship ordinance, strengthened community members' connections to the tribe, and encouraged more active citizen participation in all aspects of Pueblo life.

BRINGING THE LESSONS HOME

Tribal efforts to change enrollment criteria—tribal citizenship—are a hallmark of self-determination. But the process can raise sensitive questions: Who belongs? How might changes affect the distribution of benefits? What impact has federal Indian blood certification had? How do citizenship rules affect the community overall? Project Tiwahu steered the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo to address these issues and reclaim its inherent right to self-determine citizenship criteria. The resulting and broadly supported reform helps sustain the Pueblo's identity, spirituality, and culture in perpetuity.



LESSONS:

- 1 Defining the boundaries of citizenship is fundamental to tribal sovereignty.
- 2 Community engagement, data gathering, and planning are essential ingredients in building and sustaining a strong Native nation.
- 3 Transparent, inclusive, and clearly communicated community engagement processes help generate plans and decisions that a tribal community "owns."

About HONORING NATIONS



Established in 1998 by the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, Honoring Nations highlights tribal government success by celebrating, documenting, and disseminating the stories of outstanding programs in self-governance.

At the heart of Honoring Nations is the principle that tribes themselves hold the key to social, political, cultural, and economic prosperity—and that self-governance plays a crucial role in building and sustaining strong, healthy Indian nations. Honoring Nations helps shift the focus from what does not work to what does, fostering confidence and pride in American Indian governments as critical contributors to the wellbeing of their communities and citizens.

Honored programs serve as important sources of knowledge and inspiration for communities throughout Indian Country and far beyond. As honorees share their innovative ideas and effective governing approaches, Honoring Nations helps Native nation builders learn from each other and seed promising practices. The high public visibility and news coverage of Honoring Nations also permit non-Native policymakers, the media, and the general public to see what Native nations are actually doing in the drive for self-determination.

Honoring Nations invites applications from American Indian governments across a broad range of subject areas: education, health care, resource management, government reform, justice, intergovernmental relations, and economic, social, and cultural programs. The Honoring Nations Board of Governors—distinguished individuals from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors—guides the evaluation process. At each stage of the selection process, programs are evaluated on the basis of significance to sovereignty, effectiveness, cultural relevance, transferability, and sustainability.

Honorees receive national recognition to share their success story with others. Together with its partner organization, the Native Nations Institute (NNI) at the University of Arizona, the Harvard Project produces reports, case studies, and other curricular materials that are disseminated to tribal leaders, public servants, the media, scholars, students, and others interested in promoting and fostering excellence in governance.

To date, Honoring Nations has recognized 130 exemplary tribal government programs, three All-Stars, and held five tribal government symposia.

About The HARVARD PROJECT on American Indian Economic Development

From Indian Country to Congress to international arenas, the Harvard Project is recognized as the premier producer of world class, practical tools for Indigenous nation building. Founded by Professors Stephen Cornell and Joseph P. Kalt at Harvard University in 1987, the Harvard Project is housed at the Harvard Kennedy School.

Through applied research and service, the Harvard Project aims to understand and foster the conditions under which sustained, self-determined social and economic development is achieved among American Indian nations. The Harvard Project's core activities include research, advisory services, executive education, and the administration of a tribal governance awards program, Honoring Nations. In all of its activities, the Harvard Project collaborates with the Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, and Policy at the University of Arizona.

At the heart of the Harvard Project is the systematic, comparative study of social and economic development on American Indian reservations. What works, where, and why? Among the key research findings:

- **Sovereignty Matters.** When Native nations make their own decisions about what development approaches to take, they consistently out-perform external decision makers—on matters as diverse as law enforcement, natural resource management, economic development, health care, and social service provision.
- **Institutions Matter.** Assertions of sovereignty must be backed by capable institutions of self-governance. A nation does this as it adopts a stable rule of law—a rule of its own law—and then protects that with fair and independent mechanisms for dispute resolution, efficient administration, and systems that separate politics from day-to-day business and program management.
- **Culture Matters.** Successful nations stand on the shoulders of legitimate, culturally-grounded institutions of self-government. Indigenous societies are diverse; each nation must equip itself with a governing structure, economic system, policies, and procedures that fit its own contemporary culture.
- **Leadership Matters.** Nation building requires leaders who introduce new knowledge and experiences, challenge assumptions, and propose change. Such leaders—whether elected, community, or spiritual—convince people that things can be different and inspire them to take action.

For three decades, the Harvard Project has undertaken hundreds of research studies and advisory projects. Results of Harvard Project research are published widely. Summary treatments are provided in “Reloading the Dice: Improving the Chances of Economic Development on American Indian Reservations” (Cornell and Kalt) and “Sovereignty and Nation-Building: The Development Challenge in Indian Country Today” (Cornell and Kalt). For more information, please visit: www.hpaied.org.

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We thank **Megan Minoka Hill** for administering the awards program and extend endless gratitude to **Nicole Grenier**, **Moana Ho-Ching**, and **Valerie O’Kane** for their tireless work during the awards season. We especially thank **Liza Bemis** for recruiting tribal government applicants. **Joe Kalt** and **Miriam Jorgensen** deserve enormous praise for their countless contributions and insights. Special thanks to **Catherine Curtis** for writing the honoree profiles contained in this report and to **Amy Besaw Medford** for creating the report layout and design... and for always stepping in to lend a hand. Gratitude also goes to Harvard student **Damon Clark**, Boston University student **Brian Hough**, and Reed College student **Ashlee Fox** for investing in our efforts while maintaining busy class schedules. Some of the beautiful photographs were taken by **John Rae** of John Rae Photography New York City.

Site visitors play a key role in the evaluation process. Appreciation to the 2016 site visitors: **Amber Annis**, **Misko Beaudrie**, **Sherry Salway Black**, **Catherine Curtis**, **David Gipp**, **Caleb Grant**, **Kenny Grant**, **Eric Henson**, **Megan Minoka Hill**, **Moana HoChing**, **Ashley Kidd**, **Michael Lipsky**, **June Noronha**, **Rachel Starks**, **Jonathan Taylor**, and **Joan Timeche**.

Most importantly, thanks to the **Honoring Nations 2016 awardees**. Their vision, determination, and extraordinary triumphs give Indian Country and the rest of the world remarkable inspiration!

The work of the Harvard Project is made possible through the generous support and partnership with the:

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About the Artist



Peter B. Jones Potter/Sculptor

Born on Seneca's Cattaraugus Indian Reservation to an Onondaga mother and a Seneca father, Pete's childhood experience was in an era of transition. It was a period of hearing the adults speak only in Seneca and one where children were encouraged to speak English. At fifteen, Pete decided to attend the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, NM where he studied under master Hopi artist, Otellie Loloma. This led to his life's work as an artist and spokesperson for Indigenous people.

Pete now enjoys over 40 years of living as an artist, working in mediums of both pottery and sculpture. The National Museum of the American Indian; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Institute of American Indian Arts; The Heard Museum; Museum of Anthropology, Berlin, Germany; and the Seneca-Iroquois National Museum, among many others, include his works in their collections. Pete is often

invited to participate in the prestigious Indian Market at the Eiteljorg Museum as well as many other special exhibitions, both nationally and internationally. He hopes his works of art prompt us all to remember that the pottery tradition of Iroquois people is still alive and well.

Hailing from the Beaver Clan, Pete often bases his creations on traditional Iroquois pottery designs. The special curation for the Honoring Nations Awards are thus inspired. We wish Pete and his family all the best and offer sincere appreciation for his invaluable contributions to Honoring Nations.

Pete can be contacted at pbjones@dishmail.net.



HONORING NATIONS

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