

2024

IMPACT REPORT

This report highlights Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance's efforts to strengthen Indigenous food and seed sovereignty through funding, advocacy, and strategic partnerships.





we acknowledge

Indigenous food systems are our living relatives; rooted in spirit, knowledge, and deep connection to our ways of life.

Indigenous food holds the power of healing; physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Food sovereignty begins at the community level, where Indigenous peoples hold the knowledge, relationships, and authority to sustain and protect their food systems best.

The land, air, water, flora and fauna deserve reciprocal relationships, and we must honor this balance and responsibility.

Indigenous food systems are not isolated; they're intricately woven into the fabric of Indigenous ways of life.

We must ensure Indigenous peoples remain central to all policy and land management decisions.

We honor tribal self-determination while fostering connections and strengthening intertribal trade networks.

contents

01	acknowledgements	01
02	letter from executive director	04
03	about us	05
04	sector achievements	09
05	capacity building & organizational development	26
06	gratitude	39

wáa sá iyatee?

Nearing the end of my first year as Executive Director, I am feeling optimistic and encouraged as we work through a variety of challenges and opportunities.

There have been changes in key personnel, additions to the Leadership Council, new policies and processes, and a continuing need to assess the impact of our work and improve in all areas of focus. You will see new faces and biographies in this report, as we build out our team going into 2025. But the main focus is on our Indigenous Seed Keeping Network and Food & Culinary programs.

In this Report we are excited to share some of the stories around these efforts, which is really the work of Indigenous community activists, leaders, and grassroots allies in Indigenous food systems. 2024 was a year of reorientation and grounding as we look to the coming years of stability and growth.

We have laid a foundation and are ready to build up our current programs, and begin to study where else we can be most impactful in the years to come. A big Gunalchéesh to our Leadership Council for their commitment and hard work, to our loyal and committed staff, and to our many funders and supporters. We know the world can be an increasingly scary place, but together we can and will make a difference!



Ted Wright

introduction

ABOUT NAFSA

The Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance (NAFSA) is a national network of Indigenous leaders dedicated to restoring food systems that support tribal self-determination and community wellness. NAFSA brings together proven strategies with innovative thinking as we support and promote Native Food Sovereignty initiatives that renew natural resources and enhance traditional cultural life ways to mentor a new generation of Native food sovereignty activists, chefs, farmers, seed keepers and land stewards.

OUR MISSION

We believe in empowering communities as they foster traditional, Indigenous food practices to ensure sustained wellbeing for our future generations.

OUR VISION

We envision a future where Indigenous peoples exercise their inherent right to self-determination, fully controlling their traditional foodways. Rooted in our ancestral knowledge, we strive to ensure the persistence of food security, cultural continuity, and environmental sustainability.

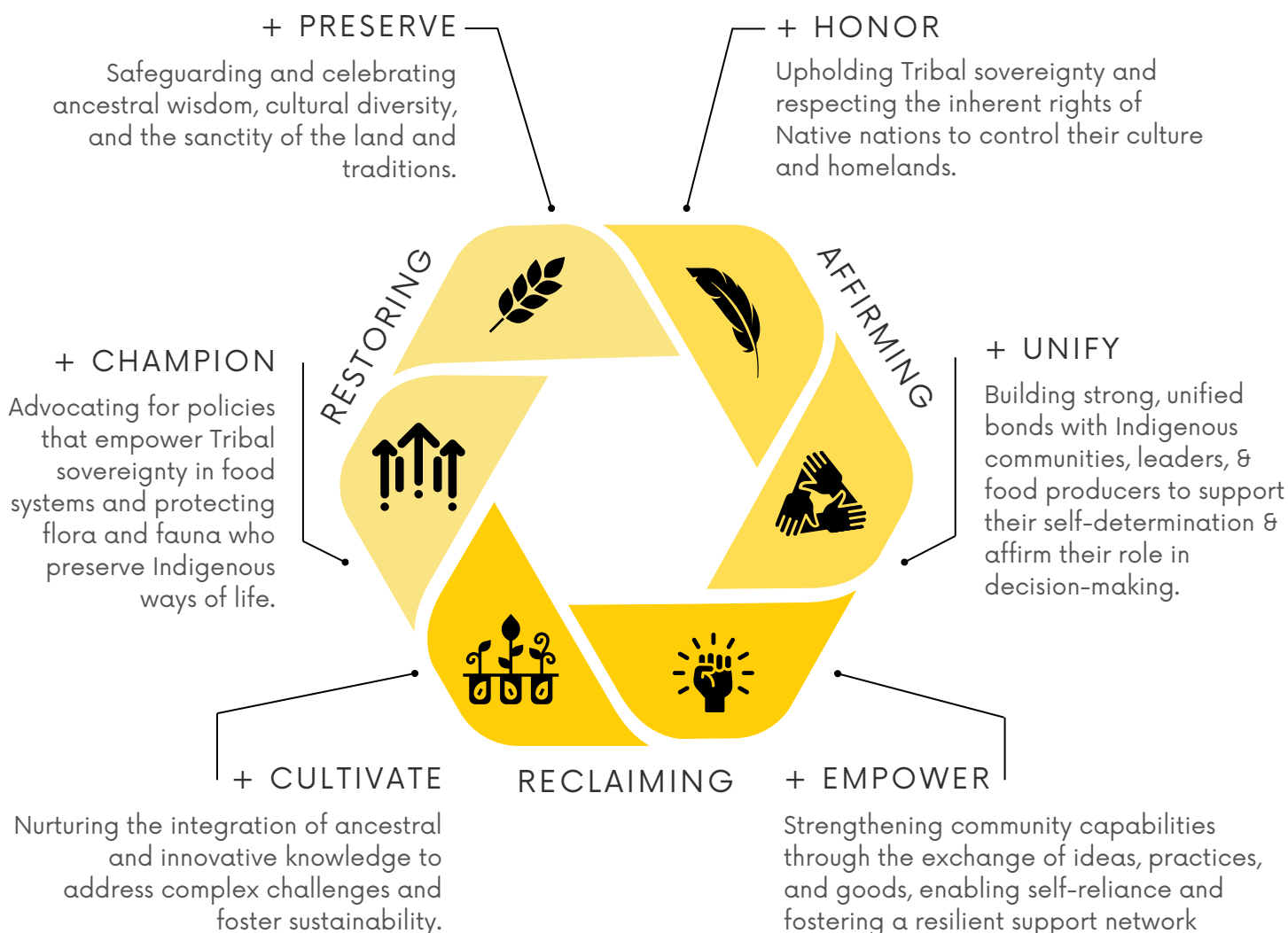


OUR STORY

NAFSA emerged from a 2005 Oxfam America grant, bringing together grassroots Native food activists. Representatives from 13 tribes shared knowledge in agriculture, seed saving, and traditional foods.

our values

NAFSA is committed to lead with efforts that restore, affirm, and reclaim, guided by our core values and the wisdom of Indigenous communities. Our approach upholds Tribal sovereignty and uplifts ancestral knowledge, fostering sustainable food systems for future generations.



our team



Ted Wright, Tlingit
Executive Director



Trena Bizardi, Diné
Senior Program Officer



June James, Ally
HR & Operations Manager



Kaitlyn Walsh, Anishinaabe
Upper Midwest ISKN Coordinator



Megan Dwyer, Ally
Executive Assistant



Mereya Blanco, Mexican- Indigenous (Apache-Raramuri)
Southwest ISKN Coordinator



Marian Bitsui, Diné
Director of Communications



Jay Bonner, Ally
Financial Consultant





FRONT ROW (L-R)

Jon Matthews
Treasurer
NEZ PERCE

Josephine Chase
Vice Chair
MANDAN / HIDATSA
IHUNKTAWANNA / HUNKPAPA

Loretta Oden
LC Member
POTAWATOMI

Gloria Mae Skeet
Secretary
DINÉ

Daniel Cornelius
Chair
ONEIDA

Roy Kady
LC MEMBER
DINÉ

BACK ROW (L-R)

Amyrose Foll
LC Member
PENOBSCOT / ODANAK FIRST NATION

Aaron Baumgardner
LC MEMBER
CATAWBA NATION

Luke Black Elk
LC Member
CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX TRIBE

Joseph Rocchi
LC MEMBER
PAMUNKEY

NOT PICTURED

Stephanie Morningstar
LC Member
MOHAWK (SIX NATION)

Sasha Jones
LC Member
SHOSHONE PAIUTE

John Bonaparte
LC Member
MOHAWK NATION OF
AKWESASNE

Pati Martinson
LC Member
LAKOTA

Terrie Bad Hand
Advisory Member
ITALIAN / CHEROKEE

2024

sector achievements

In 2024, NAFSA strengthened its organizational capacity, expanded program offerings, and deepened partnerships to advance Indigenous food sovereignty. Through strategic planning, resource distribution, and community-driven initiatives, NAFSA reinforced its role as a leader in supporting Indigenous-led food systems.





Seeds are a vibrant and vital foundation for food sovereignty, and are the basis for a sustainable, healthy agriculture. We understand that seeds are our precious collective inheritance and it is our responsibility to care for the seeds as part of our responsibility to feed and nourish ourselves and future generations.

MISSION

The mission of the Indigenous Seed Keepers Network (ISKN) is to nourish and assist the growing Seed Sovereignty Movement across Turtle Island (North America). As a national network, we leverage resources and cultivate solidarity and communication within the matrix of regional grassroots tribal seed sovereignty projects.

OUR APPROACH

We accomplish this mission by providing educational resources, mentorship training, outreach and advocacy support on seed policy issues, and organizing national and regional events and convenings to connect many communities who are engaging in this vital work. We aim to create a collaborative framework and declaration for ethical seed stewardship and indigenous seed guidelines for tribal communities to guide them as they protect their seeds from patenting and bio-piracy.

key initiatives

+ FIELD DAY MICROGRANTS

Nine grants of \$5,000 each were distributed to organizations in New Mexico, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Colorado, and Arizona.

+ SPRING GROWER STIPENDS

Provided 32 spring stipends and 37 fall stipends to Indigenous farmers.`

+ DREAM OF WILD HEALTH SEED HUB SITE VISIT & CORN FESTIVAL

Provided technical assistance and event support to Dream of Wild Health as a seed hub.

+ REGULAR SOUTHWEST & UPPER MIDWEST ISKN VIRTUAL MEETINGS:

Facilitated knowledge-sharing and networking among seedkeepers and food sovereignty advocates.

+ SOUTHWEST ISKN SEED NETWORK RESOURCE FOLDER

Created, launched, and maintained a resource-sharing platform for ISKN members in November 2023.



ISKN PHOTOS

Clockwise, Starting at the Top Right: Aaron Lowden Leading SW Gathering, Ukwakhwa Corn Harvest Shifting Seasons Summit, Dawa Keyah Garden & Nursery Photos; Harvested Nuts, Watermelon, & Harvest







HEALING MEALS GRANTEES

Clockwise, Starting at the
Top Right: Sherman Indian
High School, Unkitawa,
Eugenia "Carol" Tiger,
Casita del Barrio & Xanich,
and Candace Stock
ChaxShep Heweska Winga



food & culinary

NAFSA's Food and Culinary Program assists Indigenous peoples and communities in reconnecting with their traditional diets and lifeways for the wellbeing and health of their communities.

+ HEALING MEALS MICROGRANT PROGRAM

NAFSA awarded 10 grants to support Indigenous-led organizations, groups, collectives, and individuals in projects that provided community meals, food boxes, meal deliveries, culinary classes, and food-focused events—all highlighting locally sourced Indigenous ingredients. The program activities take place in 2025, amplifying food sovereignty and community connection through cultural culinary practices.

+ ORGANIZATIONS

- Rematriation Inc, Northeast, New York
- Casita del Barrio Este, West, California
- Oyate Wookiye - For the People, Midwest, South Dakota
- Sherman Indian High School, West, California
- Coharie Indian Education & Well Leaf LLC, South, North Carolina
- American Indian Center of Chicago, Midwest, Illinois
- MIGIZI, Midwest, Minnesota
- Unkitawa, Northwest, Washington

+ INDIVIDUALS

- Candace Sophia Stock, Midwest, North Dakota
- Eugenia Kathryn Tiger "Carol", South, Oklahoma





meet carol

+ 2024 HEALING MEALS GRANTEE

Eugenia "Carol" Tiger, Mvskoke (Muscogee/Creek), is a dedicated advocate for Indigenous food sovereignty and cultural preservation. With a deep-rooted passion for traditional Mvskoke foodways, she shares knowledge with younger generations and communities, ensuring that cultural foods remain a vital part of Indigenous identity and sustainability.

+ PROJECT VISION

Carol's work centers on revitalizing ancestral foodways, fostering mindfulness about eating habits, and restoring the nutrient-rich diets of Indigenous peoples. By passing down recipes, cooking methods, and food knowledge, she helps preserve cultural identity while promoting self-sufficiency and sustainable food practices. She believes that Indigenous foods are more than just sustenance—they are a direct connection to the land and the history of the people.

“Indigenous foods are the basis of who we are and the land that we originate from...My hope is that by sharing my knowledge, I can inspire others to carry on these traditions, just as I was inspired.”

- Eugenia "Carol" Tiger

A hand holding a small amount of dark seeds, with three yellow and black butterflies flying in the sky above a field. The word "communications" is written in a large, white, cursive font across the middle of the image.

communications

The Communications sector has made significant strides in 2024, expanding its capacity to support NAFSA's mission through strategic outreach, branding, and engagement. These initiatives have positioned NAFSA as a leading voice in Indigenous food sovereignty while strengthening relationships with community partners and stakeholders.

KEY CAMPAIGNS

In 2024, NAFSA launched 14 targeted campaigns, strengthening brand identity, engagement, and visibility.

Key initiatives included:

- Leadership Council Recruitment Campaign
- RFP Auditor Campaign
- 2023 Impact Report
- Summer Solstice Campaign
- New Executive Director Announcement Campaign
- Spring Grower Stipends Campaign
- Healing Meals Microgrants Campaign
- Field Day Microgrants Campaign

These campaigns effectively expanded outreach and engagement within Indigenous food sovereignty networks.

BRANDING & IDENTITY

NAFSA drafted and approved the Brand Identity Style Guide to ensure consistent visuals and messaging.

The Editorial Style Guide (Version 1) was drafted to standardize language and tone and is now being finalized.

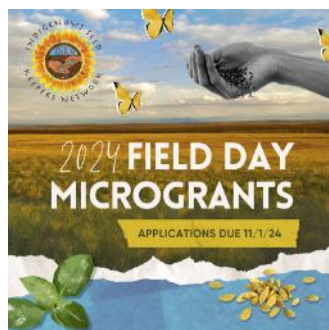
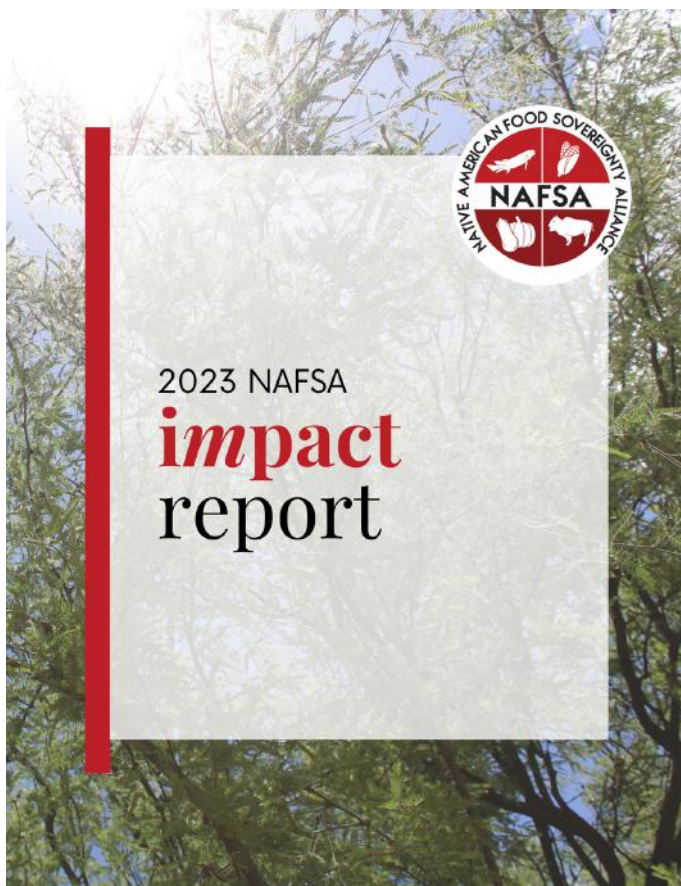
DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

NAFSA created a photo library in Canto to organize and store high-quality visual assets.

The team integrated Later.com to streamline content scheduling and maintain a consistent social media presence.

NAFSA expanded its use of Mailchimp to improve subscriber engagement and outreach.

visual highlights



Counter Clockwise, Starting from the Top Right: 2024 Impact Report, Give Native Day, CPA Audit Campaign, Honoring Tyrone Thompson, Field Day Microgrant Campaign, and For the Love of Seeds Spring Seed Grower Stipends.



resource mobilization

Over the past year, NAFSA distributed \$262,600 in grants to support Indigenous communities in strengthening their food systems. These initiatives empower Native producers, enhance access to traditional foods, and build resilience in local food networks. NAFSA's strategic grantmaking sustains farming cooperatives and community-led efforts, preserving Indigenous agricultural practices.

As Indigenous communities face political and climate challenges, reliable funding is crucial for reclaiming traditional food systems. NAFSA aims to amplify Indigenous voices and invest in sustainable food systems, ensuring Native foodways thrive for future generations, with gratitude to partners providing necessary funding.

\$287K

Total Grants &
Stipends
Distributed

8

Organizations
Supported

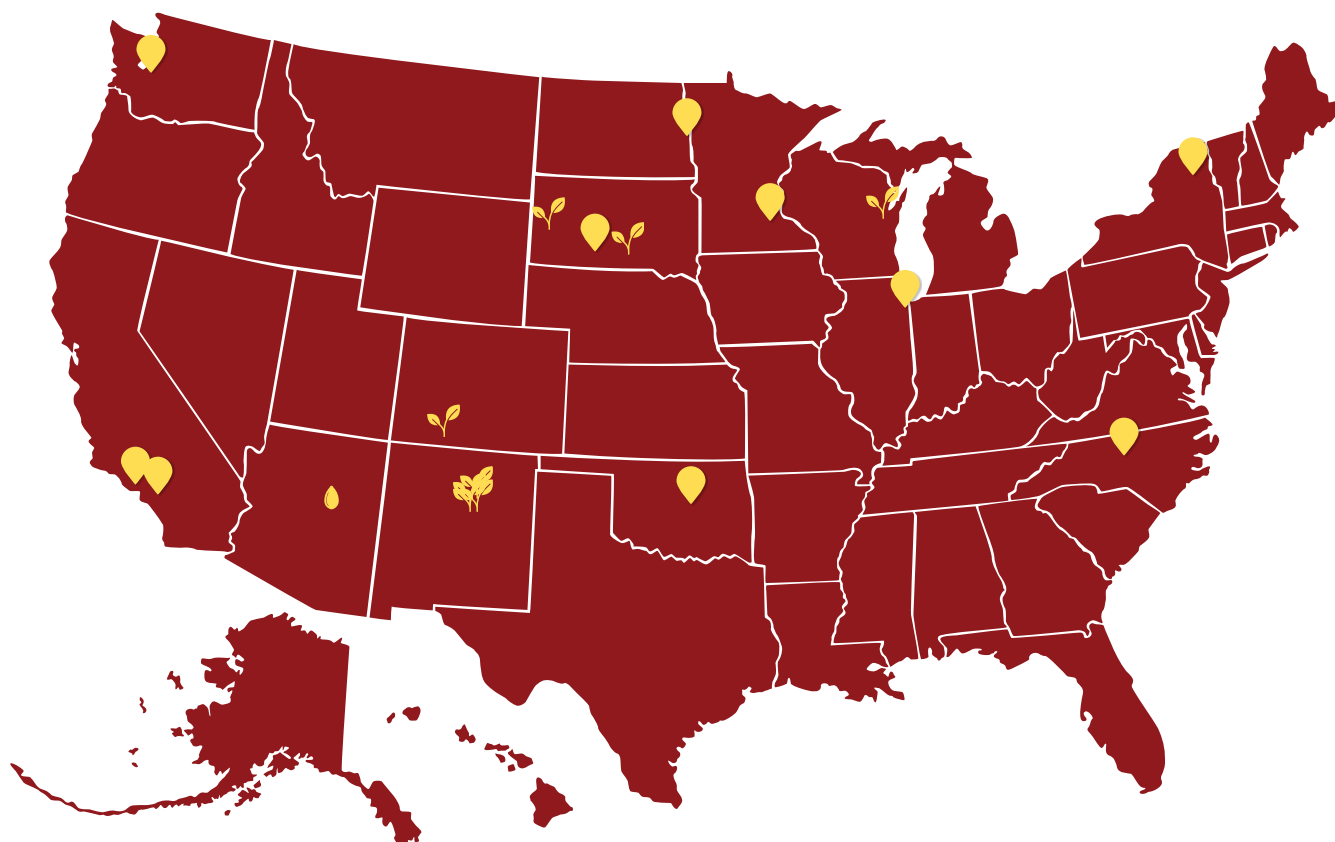
19

Micrograntees
Awarded

95

Stipends
Awarded

visual impact



HEALING MEALS

The NAFSA Healing Meals Microgrant offering is intended to provide community based food sovereignty initiatives with financial and capacity building support to provide Indigenous foods and education to the community.



FIELD DAY

The NAFSA Field Day Microgrants offering is intended to financially support our Indigenous community partners in hosting Native-led hands-on, educational opportunities related to seed literacy and food sovereignty.



meet jaiden

+ 2024 SPRING GROWER STIPEND RECIPIENT

Jaiden Willeto, Diné, Mandan, Hidatsa, & Arikara (MHA) Nation, is a dedicated seed keeper and farmer working to strengthen Indigenous food sovereignty in the Southwest. With an intermediate-level farming background and access to 2–5 acres of land in Fort Defiance, Arizona, Jaiden supports and trains small-scale farmers in seed keeping, ensuring the continuation of traditional food systems in their region.

+ PROJECT VISION

Jaiden used funding to cover critical farming and seed work expenses, including travel costs, equipment maintenance, and materials for seed storage and preservation. Their work involves training two small-scale farmers to become seed keepers, requiring frequent travel between fields and investments in tools such as sifters, drying racks, bins, and shelves. These resources will help sustain their efforts and expand the network of Indigenous seed keepers on and around the Navajo Nation.

“If Indigenous peoples and their governance prioritized food sovereignty and seed keeping, we could be in a very beautiful place.”

- Jaiden Willeto

events & partnerships

Our events and partnerships are rooted in the collective commitment to Indigenous food sovereignty, seed stewardship, and cultural revitalization. Below are our key principles:

+ COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

We work in collaboration with community leaders, providing the support they need while ensuring they maintain full ownership of their food sovereignty initiatives.

+ UPLIFT & AMPLIFY

Through our communication channels, we uplift and amplify Indigenous-led food sovereignty efforts, ensuring their impact reaches a broader audience.

+ REVITALIZING INDIGENOUS ECONOMIES

Our approach promotes “economies of care”, emphasizing resource-sharing and reinvestment in Indigenous food systems.





+ BRAIDING THE SACRED UPPER MIDWEST SEED REMATRIATION GATHERING

September 6–8, 2024

This Farmer-to-Farmer exchange, focused on reuniting Indigenous communities with their reclaimed seed relatives from the Seed Savers Exchange (SSE) seed collection. This gathering supports Indigenous seed keepers in multiplying, stewarding, and redistributing seeds to their home communities, ensuring their continued existence and cultural significance.

+ 7TH BIANNUAL CORN SUMMIT

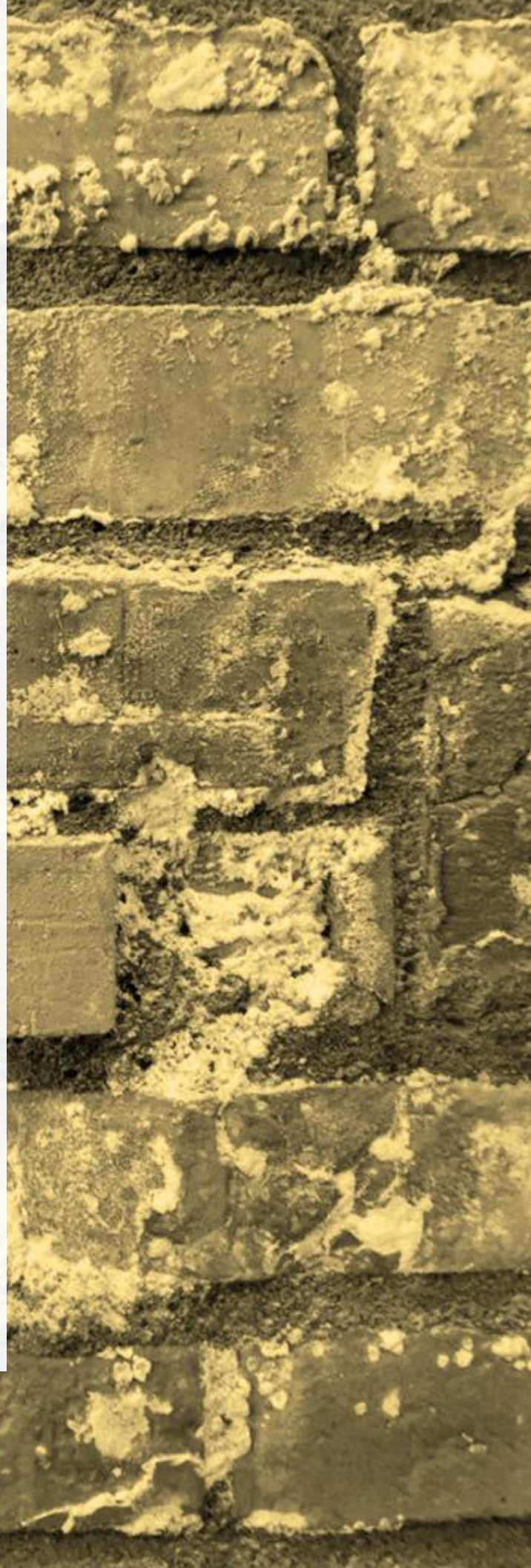
Upcoming 2025

The 7th Biannual Corn Summit celebrated the resilience of sacred corn and its role in Indigenous food sovereignty. Hosted by TNAFA and the International Indian Treaty Council, this gathering will unite farmers, knowledge keepers, storytellers, artisans, Indigenous rights defenders, and environmental

2024

capacity building & organizational development

In 2024, NAFSA strengthened its organizational capacity through two key gatherings, focusing on leadership development, strategic planning, and community engagement.



2024 strategic direction

In 2024, NAFSA focused on stabilizing its operations, strengthening financial security, and laying the groundwork for a long-term strategic vision. Following a period of transition, it was essential to reinforce our foundation to ensure that NAFSA could continue to serve Indigenous communities effectively and uphold our commitment to food sovereignty. Guided by the Leadership Council's priorities, our efforts were shaped by three key goals:

1

ENSURING ORGANIZATIONAL STABILITY

A stable, well-supported team is crucial for long-term success. We improved structure by streamlining processes, clarifying roles, and introducing tools for better efficiency and board engagement. Hiring key staff enhanced our capacity, ensuring continuity and sustainability.

2

BUILDING FINANCIAL SECURITY

Financial stability allows us to sustain and expand our impact. We improved financial tracking and reporting systems, and strengthened donor and grant management. The addition of finance and development staff enhanced our ability to secure funding and ensure fiscal responsibility.

3

ADVANCING STRATEGIC PLANNING

A clear strategic direction is necessary to align our work with the evolving needs of Indigenous food sovereignty. While a finalized strategic plan is forthcoming, we made significant progress in refining our mission, vision, and long-term direction. We established a strong foundation for future planning by aligning our priorities with the communities we serve.

mid-year gathering

The mid-year gathering in Minneapolis, MN, provided an opportunity to update NAFSA's mission, vision, and values, ensuring alignment with its long-term goals. Leadership Council members and staff developed partnerships, expanded connections, and finalized nominations for new council members.

One of the highlights of the gathering was our community engagement. We had the opportunity to meet with Executive Chef Vernon DeFoe at the Gatherings Cafe at the American Indian Center. DeFoe shared insights about the cafe's mission to offer the local community access to healthy and affordable Indigenous cuisine.

We hosted a community luncheon at Owamni, where Linda Black Elk, NATIFS's Director of Educational Programming and Community Engagement, shared insights on land connection and NATIFS's initiatives. The interactive session also highlighted the healing properties of wild teas.

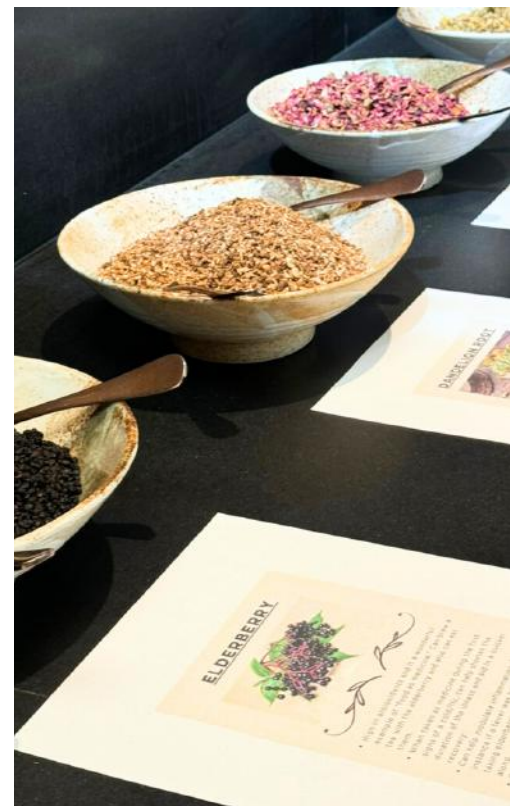
Executive Chef and Owamni Founder, Sean Sherman then shared Owamni's story, goals, and overall vision to provide food access to Indigenous Cuisine, sourcing from Indigenous producers, and financially supporting these food systems. Attendees learned of NATIFS current impacts and plans for expansion into Montana.





MID-YEAR GATHERING

Clockwise, Starting at the Top Right: New Team Member Kaitlyn Walsh, Review of Meal Course, Tea Demo from NATIFS, Gathering Cafe, Linda Black Elk's Mini Teach on the Name Owamni



year-end gathering

NAFSA's annual gathering took place in early December in Phoenix, Arizona. Six new Leadership Council members and four new staff members joined our team. In addition to introductions and building relationships, the team's key discussions included:

- Refining Internal Processes
- Strengthening Community Impact
- Expanding Advocacy & Partnerships
- Enhancing Outreach & Visibility
- Ensuring Long-Term Sustainability

During the gathering, NAFSA visited Scottsdale, Arizona, for a community dinner at the Frybread Lounge, a recently opened Indigenous-owned restaurant in Old Town Scottsdale.

The restaurant is led by Chef Darryl Montana, a member of the Tohono O'odham Nation, who previously worked at Owamni, an award-winning Indigenous restaurant in Minneapolis. Chef Montana has been a mentor in our Food and Culinary program and was mentored by one of our board members, Loretta Barrett Oden, an acclaimed Potawatomi chef, Native foods historian, and television show host.

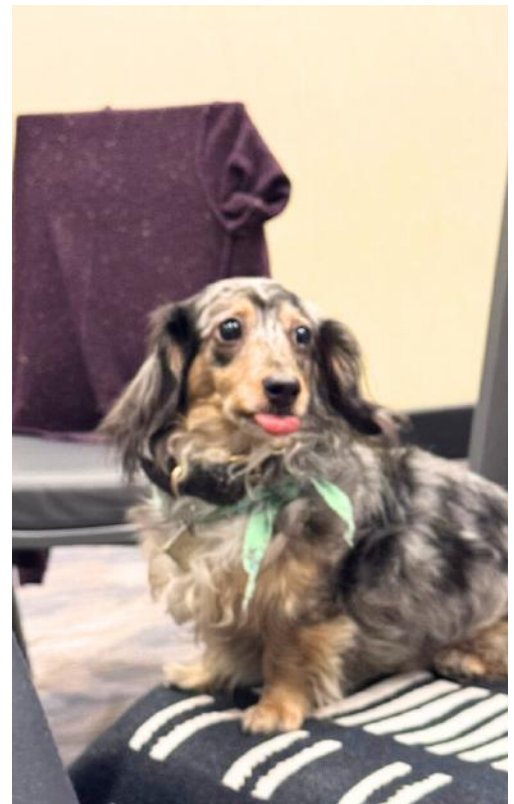
This experience reinforced our commitment to supporting Indigenous-owned businesses and celebrating the contributions of mentors promoting Indigenous culinary traditions.





YEAR END GATHERING

Clockwise, Starting at the Top Left: Frybread Lounge Restaurant, Daryl Chats with Loretta and Dan, Fur Fried Niebo, Frybread Lounge Appetizer, NAFSA Team Silly Photo



theory of change

In 2024, NAFSA developed a draft Theory of Change to guide our work, refine our impact, and strengthen our fundraising strategy. This framework outlines how our programs, partnerships, and advocacy efforts contribute to long-term systems change in Indigenous food sovereignty.

Presented to the Leadership Council, this draft serves as a foundation for deeper discussion and refinement. In 2025, we will further develop and integrate it across key areas, including

our brand identity, storytelling, donor engagement, and program strategy. This model will help us communicate our vision more effectively, align internal and external efforts, and ensure that our work remains responsive to the needs of Indigenous communities.

As we refine our Theory of Change, we remain committed to centering Indigenous knowledge, community, and sustainable solutions to build a stronger, more resilient food system.



inputs



activities



outcomes

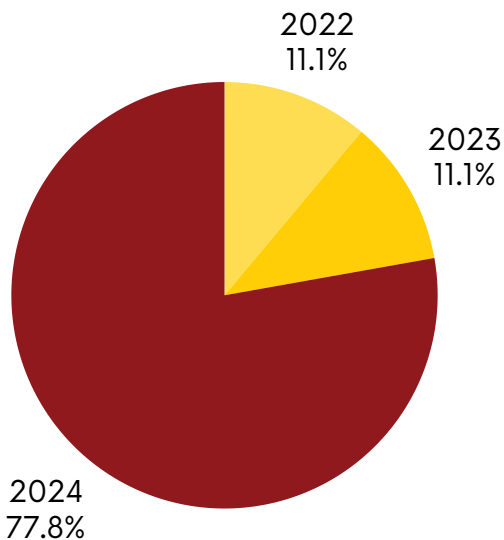


If NAFSA **restores** ancestral knowledge, **affirms** community initiative, and **reclaims** resources and space for Indigenous food systems to thrive, we can achieve access to resources, stronger local food systems, and empowered communities. These efforts will lead to lasting food sovereignty, thriving economies, and healthier, more abundant communities.

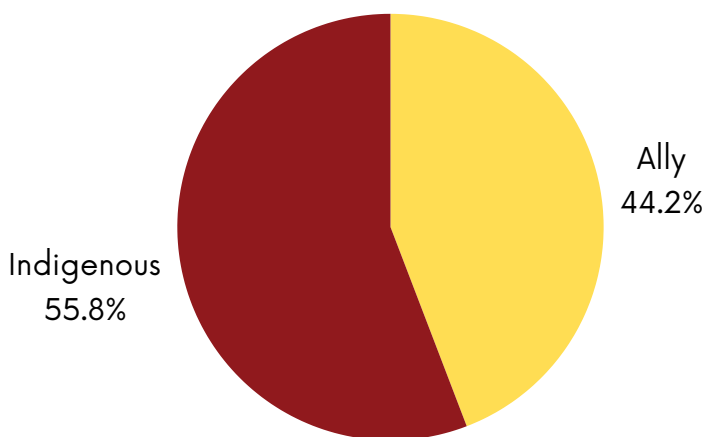


organizational stability & growth

Our 2024 efforts have positioned NAFSA to better serve communities, grow our impact, and uphold our commitment to Indigenous food sovereignty.



STAFF ONBOARDING BY YEAR
77.8% were hired in 2024



CULTURAL DEMOGRAPHICS

STABILITY

In 2024, NAFSA significantly expanded its team, with 77.8% of current staff hired this year. This growth reflects the organization's commitment to strengthening its internal capacity to better serve Indigenous food sovereignty efforts.

DIVERSITY

NAFSA remains committed to Indigenous leadership, with 55.6% of staff identifying as Indigenous peoples and 44.4% as Allies. This balance ensures both cultural expertise and broad-based support for advancing NAFSA's mission.

100%

**Indigenous Members on
the Leadership Council**

Pathways Forward

EMERGING NEEDS & PRIORITIES FOR 2025

By focusing on clarity, equity, and collective impact, NAFSA is poised to build on its successes and deepen its contributions to Indigenous communities across Turtle Island. Below are the key areas we will focus on in 2025:

Organizational Growth and Alignment:

A clear need was identified to refine internal processes for transparency and accountability while revisiting and aligning the mission, vision, and values for strategic direction.

Empowering Communities:

NAFSA will place an emphasis on grassroots impact including grants, programs, mentorship, and regional expansion for the purpose of building community capacity and amplifying local voices.

Capacity Building and Advocacy:

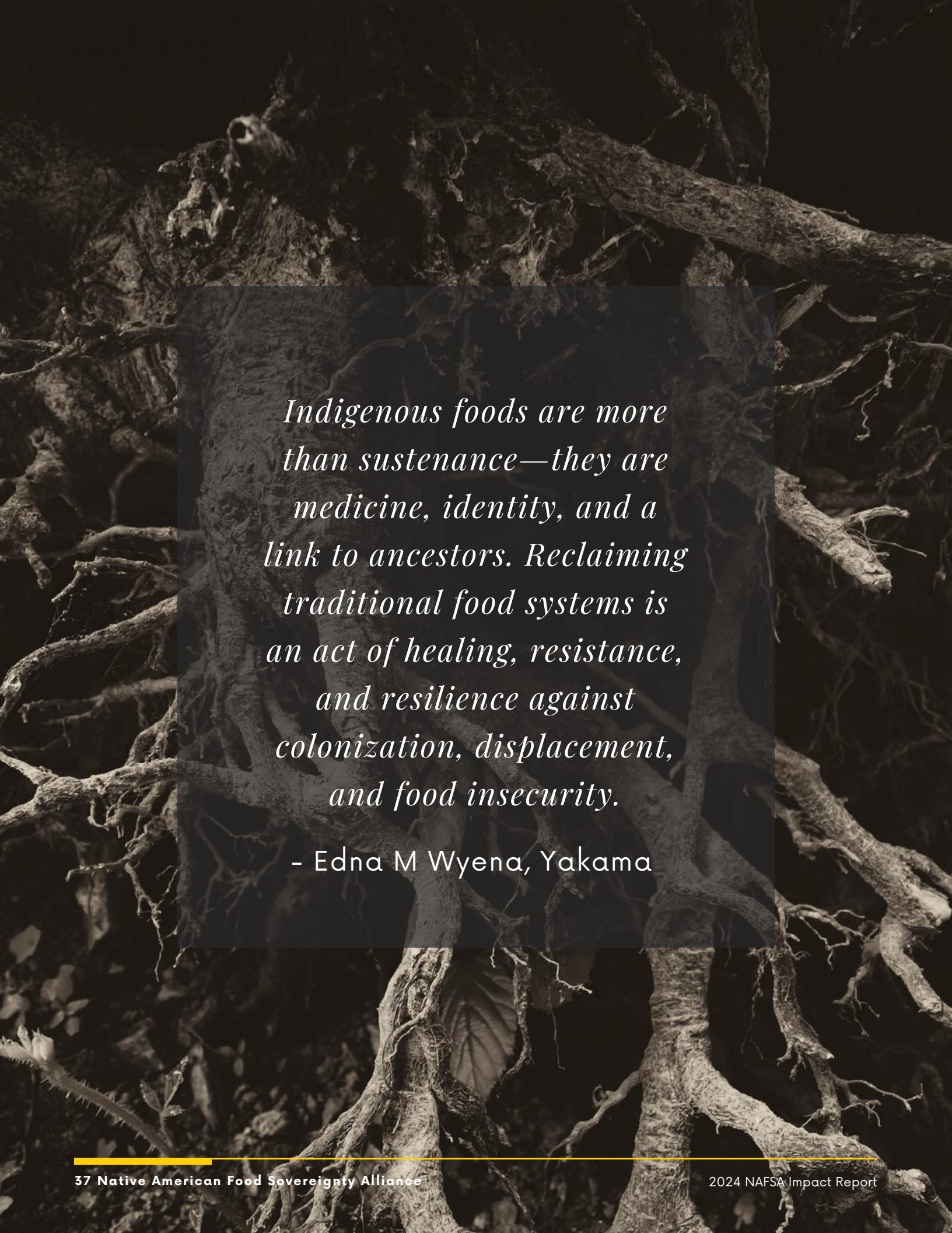
Our organization will balance micro-level programming with broader advocacy efforts by expanding partnerships with tribal colleges, regional councils, and tribal governments to drive systemic change.

Marketing and Visibility:

Enhancing digital presence and addressing branding challenges were identified as critical, with a focus on innovative outreach strategies such as social media videos, print publications, and strategic event participation to reach broader audiences.

Sustainability and Collaboration:

A commitment was made to sustain programs through operational funding, staff benefits, and streamlined structures while ensuring collaborative decision-making and inclusivity to align leadership, staff, and community stakeholders.



Indigenous foods are more than sustenance—they are medicine, identity, and a link to ancestors. Reclaiming traditional food systems is an act of healing, resistance, and resilience against colonization, displacement, and food insecurity.

- Edna M Wyena, Yakama



Ahéhee'! Aise Aise! Askwali!
Dá'wá'éh! Hawu^h! Kenah! Kenah
Netap! Ku'na'ah! Kwa'kwai!
Miigwech! Nia:wen'koa! Pilamiyaye!
Wliwni! *In Gratitude*

The strength of our food systems lies in the hands of Indigenous farmers, seed keepers, wild-crafters, fishers, hunters, ranchers, and eaters. Thank you for your dedication to preserving, cultivating, and protecting the foods that nourish our communities. Your work sustains not only our bodies but also our cultures, histories, and future generations.

To our partners, funders, and community members—your support ensures that this vital work continues. By investing in Indigenous leadership and self-determination, you help create a future where our foodways remain strong and sovereign.

As we move forward, we remain committed to this shared vision—one rooted in tradition, strengthened by community, and carried forward for generations to come.

2024

CONTACT

Native American Food
Sovereignty Alliance
P.O. Box 675
Flagstaff, AZ, 86002
928-224-2958
info@nativefoodalliance.org

www.nativefoodalliance.org

