



Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act

**Report to the
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and the
Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives**

Fiscal Year 2020-2022



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About This Report

This report presents an overview of progress made under the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience Act (NATIVE) Act. The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce are each required to submit a report to the Committee on Indian Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives under [Section 4\(e\) of Public Law 114-221, the NATIVE Act](#).

The report is required to discuss the following:

- (1) the manner in which the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Commerce, as applicable, is including Indian Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations in management plans;
- (2) the efforts of the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Commerce, as applicable, to develop departmental and agency tourism plans to support tourism programs of Indian Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations;
- (3) the manner in which the entity or organization described in subsection (d)(1) is working to promote tourism to empower Indian Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations to participate fully in the tourism industry; and
- (4) the effectiveness of the entity or organization described in subsection (d)(1) based on the metrics developed under subsection (d)(4).

Message from Indian Affairs Leadership

At the Department of the Interior, we are working to usher in a new policy era of Tribal revitalization. The United States has a trust responsibility based on the sovereign-to-sovereign relationship with Tribes that predates the formation of the United States and helped to form the very basis for American democracy. To fulfill this responsibility, we must protect and strengthen Tribal sovereignty and we must collaborate with Tribal nations to make life better for Indigenous people. We have a duty to revitalize Tribal languages, cultures, economies, and lands to address the harms that past policies have inflicted on Indigenous peoples.

Promoting economic opportunities in and near Tribal communities helps to ensure that people have the opportunity to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives in their Tribal communities. This includes supporting Tribes in promoting tourism, a vital part of many Tribal economies.

Indian Affairs has engaged in significant regionally focused Tribal tourism efforts since the inception of the [Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience Act \(NATIVE Act\) of 2016](#) (Public Law 114-221). Indigenous tourism offers communities an opportunity to generate income, alleviate poverty, increase access to healthcare and education, and conserve cultural and natural resources. The NATIVE Act, which was signed into law on September 23, 2016, attempts to address the need for long-term investment from the Federal government in building Tribal capacity for tourism and economic development.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented new barriers and highlighted existing challenges in developing Tribal tourism economies. There is a need for capacity building in a broad range of areas, including physical infrastructure, workforce development, governance, food, culture, healthcare, administration, and education. Through coordinated, targeted investments, we can build the foundation for long lasting sustainable development in Tribal Nations and communities.

The Office of Indian Economic Development and the Office of Native Hawaiian Relations have supported a range of projects aimed at improving regionally focused tourism recovery over the past four years through NATIVE Act funding of a variety of projects and grants. This congressional report provides an outline of NATIVE Act activities accomplished in Fiscal Year 2020 through Fiscal Year 2022 and plans for FY 2023.



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Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs*

Section I – Executive Summary

As stated in Public Law 114-221, the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience Act (NATIVE Act) was enacted to “enhance and integrate Native American tourism, empower Native American communities, increase coordination and collaboration between Federal tourism assets, and expand heritage and cultural tourism opportunities in the United States.”¹ This report describes NATIVE Act activities in Fiscal Years (FYs) 2020-2022 and plans for FY 2023. This report does not include detailed FY 2023 activities. A full report on FY 2023 activities will be provided at a later date.



Part of the Department of the Interior’s (DOI) responsibilities under the NATIVE Act are implemented by the Division of Economic Development in the Office of Indian Economic Development (OIED). OIED is housed within DOI’s Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (AS-IA). OIED employs a comprehensive and collaborative approach to support Native American² tourism nationwide pursuant to the NATIVE Act. It employs grant programs, technical assistance, and direct engagement with Tribes and Tribal Organizations to support Native American communities interested in expanding their tourism assets. It also coordinates with DOI’s Office of Native Hawaiian Relations (ONHR), other Federal agencies, universities, and Native American technical assistance organizations to coordinate assets and provide direct assistance to Federally-recognized Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations (NHOs).³ OIED’s work to implement the NATIVE Act falls into three key initiatives:

- Initiative 1: NATIVE Act Management Planning
- Initiative 2: Tourism Pilot Projects
- Initiative 3: Tribal Tourism Grant Programs

This report satisfies the Secretary of the Interior’s reporting requirement under the NATIVE Act by providing details on DOI’s efforts to promote Native American cultural tourism through its management plans and departmental initiatives. It also summarizes the manner and effectiveness in which technical assistance is being delivered to empower Indian Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and NHOs to participate fully in the tourism industry.

Section II – OIED NATIVE Act Initiatives and Highlights

This section describes OIED’s efforts to implement the NATIVE Act, including management planning, tourism pilot projects, and grant programs during FY 2020-2022.

Initiative 1: NATIVE Act Management Planning

In FY 2022, OIED completed two actions to include Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and NHOs in OIED’s management plans as required under the NATIVE Act.

1. First, OIED coordinated and delivered a week-long office-wide strategic planning session in November 2022 for OIED staff, which resulted in an OIED strategic plan. This effort represented the first strategic planning session conducted by the office in recent years. The November 2022 agenda included OIED’s NATIVE Act

¹ Public Law No: 114-221 (09/23/2016): [www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1579/text](https://www.congress.gov/bills/114/congress/senate/bills/1579/text).

² For purposes of this report, “Native American,” “Tribes,” and “Tribal,” refers to Indian Tribes and Tribal Organizations as described in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

³ “Native Hawaiian Organization” means a nonprofit organization that services the interests of Native Hawaiians in which Native Hawaiians serve in substantive and policymaking positions and that is recognized for having expertise in Native Hawaiian culture and heritage, including tourism.

activities and resulted in implementation actions for including Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and NHOs in OIED management plans.

2. Second, OIED is collaborating with the White House Council on Native American Affairs to institute a NATIVE Act subcommittee to the Economic Development, Energy, and Infrastructure Committee. Federal agency participants include the Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Department of Transportation, Department of Labor, DOI, and DOI's ONHR. The first convening occurred on September 22, 2022, wherein top priorities were discussed including:
 - The coordination of Federal and non-governmental partners for effective implementation of the NATIVE Act; these entities have many industry and academic partners with additional resources to share.
 - The provision of funding resources, capacity-building tools, and technical support to Tribes to develop and manage sustainable tourism while enhancing culture and community.
 - The provision of education and training to increase Tribal capacity to plan, implement, administer, and sustain tourism infrastructure projects, including the establishment of laws, ordinances, and codes and expansions in workforce, business, and community development.
 - Plans for the subcommittee to report to and work with Congress to further develop Federal support and delivery of services for Tribal tourism capacity building.

Upcoming meetings will establish a task force of Federal and non-Federal tourism industry experts with the aim to complete a FY 2023 NATIVE Act action plan.

Initiative 2: Tourism Pilot Projects

OIED issued NATIVE Act funds to a diverse set of pilot projects to increase tourism capacity and encourage Tribal communities to engage more fully in Native American tourism activities. Pilot projects and recipients are listed below.

Table 2.1 OIED Tourism Pilot Projects

Recipient	Project
American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA)	A cooperative agreement to conduct research and provide a means for the delivery of technical assistance to empower Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and NHOs to participate fully in the tourism industry.
George Washington University	A cooperative agreement to provide technical assistance to Tribes in the areas of tourism planning, management, and product development in North and South Dakota. The cooperative agreement also supports a new Indigenous Tourism Collaborative established by DOI's AS-IA, the Organization of American States (OAS), and George Washington University. The initiative aims to build a resource network to inform and support the development of sustainable indigenous tourism industry.
NAFSA/Woksape, Inc. Food Sovereignty Grant	A grant to provide technical assistance to Tribal communities interested in developing cultural tourism activities through food sovereignty.
Pilot Technical Assistance Program	A pilot technical assistance program administered by Tribal Tech, LLC to promote workshops and trainings to Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and NHOs interested in OIED economic development grants and other Federal grant opportunities, specifically promoting tourism development through the NATIVE Act.
Strongbow Strategies Navajo Wool Mill Grant	A grant to support the planning and development of a Navajo wool mill on the Navajo reservation that will serve as a cultural tourism destination and include a storefront for Navajo woolen products.
Virginia Tech	A cooperative agreement to provide technical assistance to Tribes in the areas of tourism planning, management, and product development in Montana and Virginia.
Yakutat Tlingit Tribe Cultural Tourism Project	A grant to support a feasibility study that will incorporate community engagement and provide recommendations on leveraging cultural tourism. (FY 2018 & 2019 only)

American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA)

Founded in 1998, AIANTA is a non-profit membership organization established by Tribes for Tribes to address inequities in the tourism system. AIANTA board members represent members from 15 geographic regions. OIED used a cooperative agreement to award a total of \$4.4 million dollars in NATIVE Act funds to AIANTA during FY 2018 and FY 2019. AIANTA has been unable to fully expend the awarded NATIVE Act funds, in part due to COVID-19. Unspent funds have been carried forward into FY 2023 to continue implementation of the cooperative agreement. Pursuant to the cooperative agreement, AIANTA is tasked to achieve two broad goals:

1. Identify areas where technical assistance is needed through consultations with Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and NHOs to empower Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and NHOs to participate fully in the tourism industry; and
2. Provide a means for the delivery of technical assistance and coordinate the delivery of assistance to such entities in collaboration with the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Commerce, and other entities with distinctive experience as appropriate. This includes the following:
 - Establish metrics for activities such as capacity building, workforce development, technology support, database development and maintenance, educational programs, and infrastructure support.
 - Measure the effectiveness of AIANTA in strengthening tourism opportunities for Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and NHOs.



Accomplishments to Date

The below accomplishments reflect progress on metrics development; a full report on metrics will be provided in a subsequent update.

- Conducted virtual trainings and outreach in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. AIANTA pivoted to the Zoom platform to reach Native Americans to assess cultural tourism technical assistance, training, and resource needs for Native-owned businesses and Tribal enterprises. AIANTA staff teamed up with Federal partners to provide webinars on resource development opportunities and other tourism-related topics. To date, AIANTA has hosted 43 Webinars for 2,752 participants. In 2022, AIANTA, in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, developed a three-part series on resources available for agritourism and rural development with the following titles: Building Collaborative Tourism in Hawai'i through Teamwork, Collaboration, and Communications; Evolution of the Native Arts Collective; and Developing Culinary Tourism. It also developed a mass email distribution list to release announcements on resources and cultural tourism updates.
- Planned and hosted annual American Indian Tourism Conferences (AITCs). AITC celebrated its 23rd anniversary in FY 2022. The conference attracts over 300 attendees annually for networking opportunities, high-level keynote sessions, and informative breakout sessions led by hospitality industry experts. Attendees must register and pay a registration fee to participate in AITC. In FY 2020, the event was held virtually due to COVID-19.
- Planned and hosted Go International, a two-day training conference hosted annually in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The conference introduces international tourism markets to Tribes, Tribal businesses, and Native Hawaiian businesses interested in marketing their cultural tourism assets globally. It also supports participants in identifying tourism product(s) for pricing, packaging, and selling to markets overseas. To date, conference participants have included Tribal leaders (74), Tribes/Tribal tourism practitioners/professionals (57), Tribal enterprises (67), Native businesses (57), Native organizations (40), NHOs (3), and Native Hawaiian businesses (2).

- Maintained [NativeAmerica.Travel](#), a destination website that connects travelers to American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian destinations in the United States. The website features historical, cultural, and outdoor narratives to invite domestic and international visitors to explore Indian Country. AIANTA also conducted outreach and provided content development support and direct training to Tribes on how to utilize the website's resources.
- Conducted six interactive Town Hall meetings in 2021 and 2022 that highlighted AIANTA's resources for Tribal tourism professionals to promote knowledge sharing on cultural heritage tourism programming and identify needs for technical assistance, training, and resources.
- Developed the guidebook, *Cultural Heritage Tourism: A Planner for Indigenous Tourism Professionals*, to help Tribal communities interested in growing their cultural tourism programming. The guidebook includes success stories from Tribes, Native business owners, and other Tribal hospitality professionals who have leveraged cultural heritage tourism to strengthen their economies.
- In 2022 AIANTA participated in the Reservation Economic Summit (RES) and the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) annual conference. At RES, AIANTA presented and hosted an exhibit booth. At NCAI, AIANTA staff hosted an exhibit booth.



George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies (GWU)

Since 2013, the George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies (GWU) has provided technical support to foster Tribal economic development through Tribal tourism planning, management, and product development. This work uses a holistic approach that can be replicated throughout Indian Country to support OIED efforts. In FY 2018, OIED issued a cooperative agreement with GWU using NATIVE Act funds for two purposes:

1. Strengthen North Dakota and South Dakota tourism entities:
 - Support the launch of the North Dakota Native Tourism Alliance (NDNTA) as a regional tourism organization, building its institutional capacity to manage tours.
 - Help establish the South Dakota Native Tourism Network (SDNTN), which includes all nine of the Federally-recognized Tribes located in South Dakota.
2. Launch the Indigenous Tourism Collaborative of the Americas, a partnership with the Organization of American States (OAS) and DOI's AS-IA to support indigenous community leaders in developing sustainable cultural heritage tourism.

The following sections describe the two items above in detail. The support provided by OIED under their cooperative agreement will expire at the end of FY 2023.

GWU and the Federally-recognized Tribes in North and South Dakota work continuously with Tribal organizations to support new tourism businesses and alliances. The following tables provide an overview of the partnerships maintained over the past 12 months.

Table 2.2 Summary of GWU South Dakota Tribal Tourism Support

South Dakota Tribal Nations & Tribal Organizations	Tourism Alliance Development & Strengthening	Capacity-Building – Tour Development & Tour Testing	Tour Sales & Business Development	Other Technical Assistance
1. Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe	X			X
2. Crow Creek Sioux Tribe	X			X
3. Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe	X			
4. Lower Brule Sioux Tribe	X			X
5. Oglala Sioux Tribe	X	X		X
6. Rosebud Sioux Tribe	X	X	X	X
7. Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Nation	X			X
8. Standing Rock Sioux Tribe	X	X	X	X
9. Yankton Sioux Tribe	X			
10. First Peoples Fund	X			
11. Four Bands Community Fund	X			
12. Lakota Cultural Center and Museum	X	X		
13. Lakota Youth Development	X	X	X	X
14. Lode Star Casino & Motel	X			
15. Oglala Sioux Tribe Department of Transportation	X			
16. Pine Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce	X	X	X	X
17. Rosebud Sioux Tribe Sicangu Resource Development	X	X		X
18. Rosebud Casino	X	X		
19. Rosebud Sioux Dept. of Natural Resources and Game, Fish & Parks	X			
20. Sinte Gleska University	X	X	X	X
21. Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribal Historic Preservation Office	X			X
22. Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Department of Planning (involved in South Dakota and North Dakota projects)	X			
23. Sitting Bull College Visitor Center (involved in South Dakota and North Dakota projects)	X	X	X	X
24. Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Tribal Planning (involved in South Dakota and North Dakota projects)	X			
25. Tatanka Rez Tourz	X	X	X	X
26. Thunder Valley CDC	X	X		

Table 2.3 Summary of GWU North Dakota Tribal Tourism Support				
North Dakota Tribal Nations & Tribal Organizations	Tourism Alliance Development & Strengthening	Capacity-Building – Tour Development & Tour Testing	Tour Sales & Business Development	Data Collection
1. Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nation (Three Affiliated Tribes)	X	X	X	
2. Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribal Historic Preservation Office	X	X		
3. Spirit Lake Nation	X	X	X	X
4. Standing Rock Sioux Tribe	X	X		
5. Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians	X	X	X	X
6. Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Nation	X	X		X
7. North Dakota Indian Affairs Committee	X			
8. Sitting Bull College Visitor Center			X	
9. Spirit Lake Nation Tourism Department	X	X	X	X
10. Turtle Mountain Community College	X	X		X
11. MHA Tourism Department	X	X	X	
12. MHA Interpretative Center	X			
13. Prairie Knights Casino & Resort	X			
14. Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Research Review Board				X
15. Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Economic Development Office				X
16. Dakota Magic Casino				X
17. Cankdeska Cikana Community College				X

North Dakota

GWU has assisted North Dakota Tribes with tourism development, self-sustainability, and research. GWU assisted the North Dakota Native Tourism Alliance (NDNTA) in preparing for the formal launch of Native American Cultural Tours (NACT), its tour operation arm. NACT brings NDNTA one step closer to establishing itself as a regional Native American tourism organization. GWU assistance included the development of a website to serve as a one-stop shop for the promotion and online booking of one-day and multi-day tours. GWU also provided technical mentorship and training to NDNTA to build their capacity to manage tours.

To promote self-sustainability, GWU has been assisting NDNTA in identifying new funding sources and preparing funding proposals to help ensure its long-term viability. In November 2021 NDNTA submitted a grant application for \$30,000 to the First Nations Development Institute under its Strengthening Tribal & Community Institutions Program. The request was approved, along with a supplemental amount of \$15,000 that will cover NACT's operating cost. In addition, GWU provided technical mentoring for NDNTA to secure funding from the Bush Foundation. In July 2022 NDNTA was awarded \$600,000 over five years. The grant will assist NDNTA in continuing its efforts toward developing and testing new tourism experiences. Assisting the NDNTA in securing long-term funding was a central component of GWU's exit strategy.

GWU also supported institutional capacity building and strategic planning through ongoing training and mentorship to the Board. GWU's focus has been to prepare the Board to manage all aspects of its Board responsibilities and NACT, as GWU's role as their technical assistance partner wraps up at the end of FY 2023.

As part of this work, GWU helped the Board establish an executive committee structure that will enable faster discussion and decision-making of emerging issues needed to operate the NACT.



During 2021 and 2022 GWU assisted NDNTA in researching baseline data about tourism to understand tourism's actual and potential impacts. It partnered with Tribal colleges to collect and analyze visitor and resident survey data that can be used to help inform future tourism development efforts. Tribes approved their survey instrument and research methods. GWU trained Tribal colleges and their students to deploy the survey. The training was carried out for Tribal nations that were ready to deploy the survey, such as Turtle Mountain. To date, 297 residents have completed the resident survey. Spirit Lake recently began to collect visitor data in cooperation with the casino. In FY 2023 GWU will help analyze their survey results.

With the training and mentorship provided by GWU, NDNTA organized a panel discussion at the North Dakota Governor's Conference on Tourism held in April 2022. The Panel discussion focused on NDNTA's work. Panelists encouraged tourism industry planners and marketers to partner with NDNTA. The session was well attended, and feedback from participants was very positive. The conference culminated with NDNTA receiving the 2022 North Dakota Governor's Trailblazer Award. The alliance's vision, initiative, and hard work focused on creating an authentic cultural experience for tour operators landed them this industry-wide recognition.

South Dakota

In 2021 GWU developed a regional Native tourism plan and assisted in establishing the South Dakota Native Tourism Alliance (SDNTA). GWU worked with the nine Tribes in South Dakota to ensure the inclusion of Native American communities in South Dakota tourism through the launch of the Native American Tourism Development and Management Plan, 2020-2025, South Dakota. The plan was unveiled on August 26, 2021 at the Journey Museum in Rapid City, South Dakota. It helped unite nine Federally-recognized Tribal nations in South Dakota to form SDNTA, a network of more than sixty organizations and local, state, and Federal partners working together to develop Native American tourism as a catalyst for economic growth. SDNTA maintains a website at sdnativetourismalliance.org.

In late July 2021, a familiarization visit (FAM) showcased existing and potential tourism attractions and sites in Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Standing Rock, and Three Affiliated Tribes, as well as Native American initiatives such as the Lakota Youth Development Initiative located outside Tribal lands. Members from SDNTA and NDNTA led the tour of their respective nations and/or initiatives. The South and North Dakota Departments of Tourism organized the logistics for the FAM since this is the type of support they provide locally. The tour included Destination America, a global tour company operator. GWU's presence assured Destination America that the participating Tribes had a technical assistance partner that would help them develop and price tour itineraries and provide the training needed to operate tours successfully.

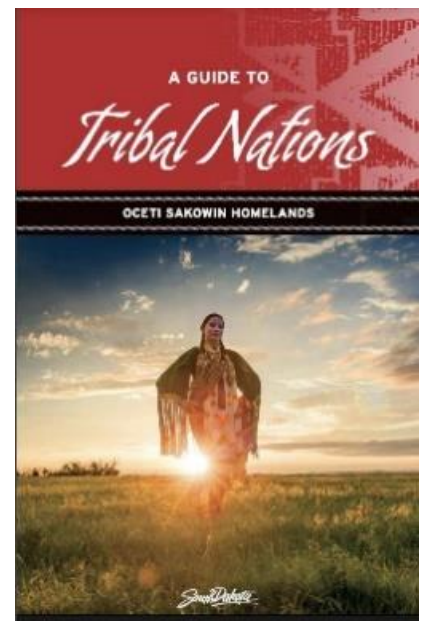
To assist Tribes with tourism product development, GWU conducted an onsite training in November 2021 with each Tribe and Native organization that will form part of a Destination America multi-day tour of Tribal lands. Each group developed a detailed tour itinerary and priced it to submit to Destination America. Destination America, SDNTA, and NDNTA members finalized agreements and tours are scheduled to begin in spring 2023.

In July 2022, GWU, in partnership with the South Dakota Department of Tourism, hosted a four-day test tour of the South Dakota destinations on the Destination America tour, including Pine Ridge Reservation, Rosebud Reservation, the Lakota Youth Development Camp in Milks Camp, and the Sitting Bull Visitor Center in Standing Rock Nation. Twenty participants, including tour operators, marketers, guides, and SDNTA members, participated in the test tours and provided practical feedback to support the tour operators and help guides improve their tour operations, timing, and overall experience. The tour was seen as a great success by all. The tour providers received practical guidance for improvements including building, developing, and strengthening relationships between tour providers and operators. As an example, a participating operator, Black Hills Adventure Tours, booked tours for the summer of 2022 immediately following the test tour. Examples from each destination on the tour are presented below.

- Lakota Youth Development (LYD), Milks Camp, Rosebud Sioux Tribe staff shared what an experience would be like at their location in Milks Camp, South Dakota. Staff provided a warm welcome and introduction for participants to begin their overall experience traveling through reservations across South Dakota. Participants were treated to a gourmet meal prepared and served by a LYD worker who had been trained by chef Kimberly Tilsen-Brave Heart, renowned Native chef and mentor. The group enjoyed a special “decolonize” meal of freshly prepared buffalo with choke cherry sauce on a bed of locally grown sweet potatoes and greens. Staff members provided a tour of the land filled with life (beehives, organic and subterranean gardens, and Native plants) and provided history on the area and the camp, which was created over 30 years ago.
- At Pine Ridge Reservation, the Pine Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce organized a tour that started at the Oglala Living History Village. Tourists learned about the importance of the tipi and participated in a walk-through of props and guided discussion of the journey of Native American communities from the start of colonization through modern times. A delicious Native soup made with local turnips, meat, corn, and potatoes was served at the Oglala Lakota Artspace and followed by a guided tour of the Pine Ridge Visitor Center, showcasing Native arts, crafts, sculptures, photos, jewelry, and animal exhibits. Tatanka Rez Tourz guided the group through a deeply meaningful and educational experience about Native American life in South Dakota and the history of the Wounded Knee Massacre, including a visit to the site.

On June 23, 2022, the South Dakota Department of Tourism, in partnership with the South Dakota Native Tourism Alliance (SDNTA) released a new Tribal Nation visitor guide. This effort took over a year to finalize. The visitor guide features a map of Tribal lands, a brief history of each Tribe, visitor etiquette suggestions, and destinations that provide opportunities to learn more about each Tribe. The guide’s title and content were produced and approved by members of the SDNTA. The South Dakota Department of Tourism printed 30,000 copies of the new guide. Visitors will find the free guide distributed at South Dakota’s Welcome Centers and many visitor-intensive businesses or online at TravelSouthDakota.com, where a digital copy can be downloaded for free.

To promote SDNTA’s self-sustainability, GWU has been assisting them in identifying new funding sources and preparing funding proposals to help ensure long-term viability. In August 2022 SDNTA secured funding from the Economic Development Administration for a two year period. The grant award totals approximately \$430,000. The South Dakota Department of Tourism provided an additional \$100,000 to co-fund the project.



Indigenous Tourism Collaborative of the Americas (ITCA)

The ITCA is an advisory network of over 100 indigenous leaders and non-indigenous tourism leaders working together to recover from COVID-19, build capacity and resilience in indigenous tourism, and gain respect and inclusion for indigenous tourism leadership in government and the tourism industry.

The ITCA provides a platform for indigenous community leaders, policymakers, and business owners to share their experiences, learn from one another, take collective action, and better understand how to promote change through tourism without compromising their cultural values. The ITCA meets regularly to share ideas, experiences, and dialogue to drive collaborative action for sustainable development in indigenous communities throughout the Americas. Its current priorities are COVID-19 recovery; building capacity, sustainability, and technology; and respect, representation, and inclusion in government and tourism industry planning and development.

The ITCA is comprised of 55 indigenous tourism associations and groups and 45 tourism industry organizations that include travel companies, ministries of tourism, state tourism offices, tourism nonprofits, and Tribal colleges and academia. It is steered by GWU, the Organization of American States (OAS), and OIED.

The ITCA is building a first-of-its-kind digital repository, the Indigenous Tourism Resource Portal (Portal). The Portal will serve as an easily accessible, comprehensive inventory of tools and resources to help indigenous peoples and their stakeholders develop and manage tourism. The Portal will be leveraged to achieve sustainable tourism throughout the Americas — United States, Canada, Mexico, Central America, Caribbean, and South America — and rebuild the sector following the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2022. The first call for resources closed on November 1, 2022. Details on the digital repository are available at <https://indigenoustourism.net>.

In October 2020, OAS, GWU, and OIED hosted the first-ever Indigenous Tourism Forum of the Americas. Nearly 300 individuals attended from indigenous tourism organizations, travel companies, and representatives of governments, nonprofits, and academia from Canada, the Caribbean, Central America, South America, and the United States. The event was designed to discuss development challenges that indigenous peoples face and the role of tourism in driving sustainable economic development.

In October 2021, the ITCA was unveiled officially by Kathryn Isom-Clause, DOI's Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs for Policy and Economic Development, in her remarks at the XXV Inter-American Congress of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Tourism meeting. The meeting was held virtually, organized by OAS, and hosted by Paraguay. Kathryn Isom-Clause's announcement is below:

“Join us on the ground floor of this evolution in travel, supporting your indigenous communities and tourism industry leaders to create a new tourism network of strength, knowledge, and vision. As indigenous tourism continues to face one of its greatest challenges with the COVID-19 pandemic, let us work together to reconstruct and rebuild a prosperous and resilient indigenous tourism economy.”

NAFSA/Woksape, Inc. Food Sovereignty Grant

Woksape, Inc., under the fiscal sponsorship of the Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance (NAFSA), received NATIVE Act grant funding to support Tribal communities and Native individuals in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Virginia on a technical assistance project to deliver strategic economic development support in the areas of cultural tourism and food sovereignty.

Food sovereignty provides a foundation for healthy, sustainable community-based economic development through tourism-related small businesses, including Native-owned restaurants serving indigenous foods. This work involves restoring the knowledge and practice of indigenous foods and medicines and enhancing cultural knowledge that provides the backbone of healthy communities. These are foundational mediums for exchange to visitors and tourists interested in learning from indigenous cultures.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Woksape, Inc. delivered workshops and technical assistance to Tribal communities in a virtual setting. In FY 2022, activities were focused on providing technical assistance to support the following eight Tribal community fellows in implementing pilot food sovereignty projects:

- Food Access and Sustainability Team (FAST) Blackfeet
- Fort Belknap
- Nakoda Aahniih Economic Development Corporation (EDC)
- Red Paint Creek
- Salish-Kootenai
- Sitting Bull College/Visitor Center
- Standing Rock Community Development Corporation (CDC)
- Turtle Mountain Entrepreneurial Center

The Woksape, Inc. pilot projects were designed to expand opportunities for cultural tourism, elevate living standards by increasing access to local food, and provide Tribal members with opportunities to generate income. Below are highlights of the fellows' accomplishments.

- During the pandemic lockdown, Sitting Bull College of Cultural Tourism conducted classes on traditional crafts to be sold when visitors returned.
- FAST Blackfeet, Nakoda Aahniih EDC, Sitting Bull College Visitor Center, Standing Rock CDC, and Turtle Mountain Entrepreneurial Center received funding from other sources to move forward with food sovereignty ventures developed during the Woksape, Inc. fellowship.
- FAST Blackfeet formed a cooperative for a group of women who grow and process a line of indigenous teas that is sold regionally, including at nearby National Parks.
- FAST Blackfeet and Standing Rock CDC are in the process of developing certified commercial kitchens, which serve as critical infrastructure for Tribal food products, markets, and eateries.



NAFSA/Woksape, Inc.'s FY 2022 accomplishments are listed below.

- Coordinated and conducted monthly Zoom webinars for fellows from recognized experts from Oneida, Tesuque Pueblo, Tocabe Restaurants in Denver, indigenous chefs, and indigenous seed keepers. The webinars connected Tribal communities and shared Native expertise in entrepreneurship, Tribal agriculture and food, cooperative marketing, cultural tourism, and value-added opportunities.
- Held monthly clinics to assist fellows with specific issues. Clinics were held on Zoom or by phone.
- Planned, coordinated, and conducted an in-person Woksape Fellows Assembly at Tohono O'odham Nation on June 22-25, 2022. The Assembly provided a forum for fellows to present their pilot projects to one another and exchange lessons learned.
- Conducted on-site visits to South Dakota and Montana to conduct close-out surveys and provide final implementation assistance.



Woksape, Inc.'s activities have been firmly focused on promoting the sustainability of each fellow's project. The webinars and in-person Assembly successfully unified the fellows as a cohort; fellows have connected with one another to exchange advice and provide general support. Woksape, Inc. also provided fellows with funding information and referrals to resources, including programs from Rural Development under the Department of Agriculture. The term of OIED's grant ended on September 30, 2022, with all funds expended.

Pilot Technical Assistance Program

In March 2022 OIED launched the Pilot Technical Assistance Program (PTAP). The PTAP supports Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and NHOs interested in OIED economic development grants and other Federal grant opportunities, specifically promoting tourism development through the NATIVE Act. PTAP activities are focused on pre-application training, grant writing, business plan development, and business sustainability.⁴ A contractor, Tribal Tech, LLC, is administering PTAP under the direction of OIED. Tribal Tech, LLC is American Indian-owned and certified as woman-owned under SBA's 8(m) Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Program. FY 2022 accomplishments are listed below:

- Planned and delivered four pre-application trainings on OIED Division of Economic Development FY 2022 open grant opportunities. Pre-application trainings were provided for the Tribal Tourism Grant Program (TTGP), the Native American Business Development Institute (NABDI) grant, National Tribal Broadband Grant, and the Indian Business Incubators Program.
- Launched the [PTAP website](#), which provides application checklists, webinar recordings, and links to grant opportunities.
- Coordinated and facilitated OIED's inaugural Tourism Grantee Conference, which is described in detail in the next section.
- Launched the Training and Technical Assistance Website for ONHR's Heritage (Tourism) Opportunities in Hawai'i (HŌ'ĪHI) Grant Program. The purpose of the website was to help interested applicants understand the HŌ'ĪHI program's Notice of Funding Opportunity. The website also included a portal to request technical assistance.

⁴ Business sustainability is focused on providing grantees with resources so that planned projects become fully implemented. This includes providing Tribes with tools and information on funding and technical assistance so that a planned project will proceed through the planning stage and become fully operational.

The following PTAP activities are planned for FY 2023:

- Continue providing pre-application webinars for open grant opportunities and conduct grant writing, business plan development and sustainability workshops.
- Collaborate with the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Native Americans (ANA) on economic development-focused workshops, both virtually and onsite throughout the country.
- Explore opportunities to collaborate with the Small Business Administration's Office of Native American Affairs to explore potential collaborative efforts and share Tribal resources available to those served by OIED's programs and services.
- Plan and deliver approximately four onsite technical assistance workshops. The purpose will be to increase OIED funding program visibility and provide a platform for in-person training in the areas of grant writing for economic development, business plan development, and business sustainability.
- Conduct an onsite FY 2023 OIED Grantee Meeting in August 2023. All OIED grantees will be required to attend the onsite Grantee Meeting to share, learn, and network with OIED staff, presenters, and other Tribal grantees. Grantees will also receive training in grant management best practices.

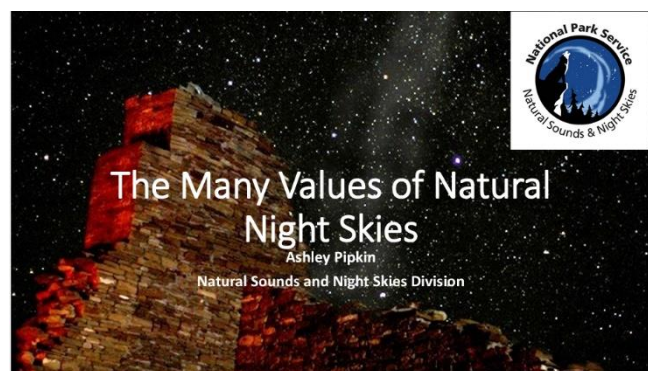
PTAP Tourism Grantee Conference

On August 9-10, 2022, OIED held a virtual Tourism Grantee Conference for 2021 TTGP and tourism pilot project awardees. The event was coordinated and facilitated by Tribal Tech, LLC. The Tourism Grantee Conference accomplished the following objectives:

- Provided Tribes with exposure to different types of Tribal tourism concepts;
- Provided information on next steps for grantees completing feasibility studies and developing business plans; and
- Provided forums for grantee networking.

The program was conducted during two half-day sessions and featured a wide range of topics, including these highlights:

- Presentations from two tourism pilot project grantees. Strongbow Strategies, LLC discussed their progress and lessons learned in developing the Navajo wool mill in "Utilizing Cultural Knowledge for Ecotourism," while NAFSA/Woksape, Inc. shared information on the projects they supported in "Building Connections and Strengthening Communities for the Future with Food Sovereignty."
- The NPS's Natural Sounds & Night Skies Division provided an overview on astrotourism in their presentation on the "Many Values of Natural Night Skies." The presentation described strategies for protecting starry skies and specific examples of astrotourism, including guided constellation tours, indigenous storytelling, campgrounds, and infrastructure projects.
- An interview by Native Community Capital with the Picuris Pueblo Finance Director to discuss tourism project planning next steps and funding options.
- La Posta Band of Mission Indians, Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, Mesa Grande Business Development Corporation, and Blue Lake Rancheria shared their tourism projects and approaches.
- Economic Development Specialists from OIED's Division of Economic Development researched, compiled, and presented an informational handout containing Federal and non-Federal resources for Tribal tourism implementation. The handout provided an effective medium for connecting Tribal communities with a wide range of Federal assets that support tourism development, including programs



for transportation infrastructure, international tourism promotion, cultural heritage preservation, and capital access.

- The North Dakota Native Tourism Alliance (NDNTA) shared a short video titled “[Native American Tourism Development in North Dakota](#)” with conference participants. GWU produced the video with the support of OIED, showcasing the successful work achieved in North Dakota around tourism.⁵

The event was the first grantee conference organized by OIED. Thirty-one participants attended the event. Attendees reported that they appreciated learning about different tourism concepts and valued the opportunity to network with other Tribes that are on a similar journey.

Strongbow Strategies Navajo Wool Mill Grant

Strongbow Strategies, LLC received NATIVE Act grant funding to plan, develop, and implement a wool mill on the Navajo Nation. The wool mill procures wool from area farmers at fair market value and processes wool into a value-added product for sale to the vast organic wool market, both domestically and internationally. The wool mill also provides a teaching environment for young Navajo members interested in the traditional processing, marketing, and selling of Navajo wool. It is also designed to serve as a cultural tourism destination for visitors interested in traditionally-spun woolen rugs, blankets, and other crafts.

In FY 2022, NATIVE Act funding supported Strongbow Strategies, LLC in completing the following critical actions to implement the wool mill project:

- Executed an agreement with Diné College as a partner institution to operate the wool mill. Selected a building on Diné College to house the wool mill’s operations.
- Provided technical support to amend Diné College’s charter to allow Diné College to own the wool mill as a business entity.
- Developed a business plan for the wool mill.
- Facilitated an on-site wool mill grading certification course. Five individuals participated and were certified. The certification was required to ensure that the mill’s wool will be sorted correctly into different piles based on quality.
- Secured videography services to create a set of videos on Navajo wool production for the wool mill’s online storefront at www.navajowoolmill.org.
- Researched machinery options, including the selection of two wool balers.
- Participated in broader Navajo Nation planning efforts to promote economic development through tourism. Namely, it created the concept of the “Turquoise Trail,” which is a proposed tourism loop on which the wool mill will be located.



The term of OIED’s grant ended on September 30, 2022, with all funds expended. In spring 2023 the wool mill’s balers were installed and the wool mill became operational. The wool mill’s website videography is in the process of being completed; it will soon be added to the online storefront.

⁵ “Native American Tourism Development in North Dakota.”

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QenNw9G_KcM49vFf78rkeQNNevtdCouN/view?usp=sharing

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VA Tech)

OIED entered into a cooperative agreement with VA Tech to support tourism activities for Tribes in Montana and Virginia. The partnership resulted in the creation of tourism models that OIED can reproduce in other Tribal communities to further promote Tribal tourism development. The support provided by OIED under the cooperative agreement will expire at the end of FY 2023.

In Montana, the Tribal Tourism Development in Montana Project (TTDMP) focused on raising awareness about strategic, culturally appropriate, and sustainable tourism destination development in seven Tribal communities. VA Tech assessed the current tourism situation in each of the seven Tribes to ascertain opportunities and challenges for Tribal tourism development.

In Virginia, the project focused on supporting the state's newly Federally-recognized Tribes, the Nansemond, Chickahominy, Monacan, Rappahannock, Mattaponi and Upper Mattaponi. VA Tech identified the Chickahominy, Monacan, Nansemond and Upper Mattaponi Tribes' tourism assets and provided technical assistance to improve the positioning of tourism assets and build human capital to increase both the share and absolute value of visitor spending to Tribal and Tribal member-owned entities. A list of the specific Tribes and Tribal organizations VA Tech engaged and the type of assistance they provided is shown in the following table.

Table 2.4 Summary of VA Tech Tribal Tourism Support			
Tribes and Tribal Organizations	Tribes and Tribal Organizations Engaged	Assistance Provided	
		Creation of Tourism Alliance [1]	Tourism and Grant Writing Capacity Building
Montana			
1. Blackfeet Tribe	X	X	X
2. Chippewa-Cree Indians of the Rocky Boy's Reservation	X	X	X
3. Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation	X	X	X
4. Crow Tribe	X	X	X
5. Fort Belknap Indian Community	X	X	X
6. Fort Peck	X	X	X
7. Little Shell Chippewa Tribe	X	X	X
8. Northern Cheyenne Tribe [1]			X
9. Apsáalooke Tours	X		
10. Blackfeet Manpower	X		
11. Native American Development Corporation	X		
12. Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council	X		
13. Three Chiefs Cultural Center on Flathead Reservation	X		
14. Triia Native Artist Organization	X		
Virginia			
1. Chickahominy	X		X
2. Mattaponi	X		
3. Monacan	X		X
4. Nansemond	X		X
5. Rappahannock	X		
6. Upper Mattaponi	X		X

[1] The Montana Indigenous Tourism Alliance (MITA) was created and ratified by the Rocky Mountain Tribals Leaders Council. All Federally-Recognized Tribes are involved in MITA in some capacity, with the exception of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, which was invited but has not yet participated.

Virginia Project Accomplishments

- VA Tech supported tourism planning and assessments for the Chickahominy (2020), Upper Mattaponi (2021), and Nansemond Tribes (2022). The Tribes in Virginia, being newly Federally-recognized, have not been actively involved in tourism before this project. Each Tribe is currently working with VA Tech to determine how tourism might support their Tribal economic development needs. Additionally, VA Tech is working with each Tribe to launch a Native Virginia Heritage Trail concept.
- Due to the work of this project and related activities at VA Tech, the Monacan Nation is currently developing a comprehensive land use plan and tourism assessment for their newly acquired 1,200 acres of land. This plan will consider a wedding/event venue utilizing an existing historic property on the ground and a recreation area for Tribal and non-Tribal members.

Montana Project Accomplishments

- The Montana Indigenous Tourism Alliance (MITA) launched to promote collaboration in Tribal tourism marketing and planning. MITA includes all Montana (MT) Tribes and Tribal members involved in the tourism business and the Montana Governor's Office of Economic Development-Indian Affairs. MITA represents the first time that Tribes have exchanged insights around tourism, learning from each other and discussing joint events. Since its inception, MITA has worked with the state to direct marketing funds and grant considerations. Each of the Tribes received a tourism development grant this past cycle from the Montana Governor's Office of Economic Development-Indian Affairs to support work to further their tourism activities. In addition, MITA presented a panel at the MT Governor's Conference on Tourism. The topic focused on how non-Native tourism operators could incorporate Native tourism into their planning. The event had over 50 people attend (standing room only). The combined presence of the Tribes has also influenced the Montana Governor's Office of Economic Development-Indian Affairs to support Tribes with more targeted marketing, including assistance with a video project and an online presence. During 2022, MITA met twice for the first time in person, with plans for quarterly in-person meetings in the future.
- During COVID-19 when Tribes were shut down, VA Tech focused its assistance on capacity building. In partnership with Airbnb and GWU, VA Tech trained a set of entrepreneurs in developing online tourism experiences. One participant applied what she learned to showcase her Native designs via social media. She is now widely recognized as an up-and-coming Native designer and was featured in the Montana Native Women's Fashion Show in Billings, Montana.
- As a direct result of the tourism assessment conducted by the project, Blackfeet diversified its campground use. They expanded their campground activities in four existing campgrounds and created a winter project in an area that would usually be closed. Winter Wonderland was created to generate recreation activities for Tribal and non-Tribal guests in March 2022.
- Blackfeet created and filled the Blackfeet Office of Manpower Director of Tourism position in 2022. Blackfeet became the first Montana Tribe to create a Director of Tourism position to focus solely on increasing the Tribe's cultural heritage and outdoor tourism activities.
- In 2022, the Crow Office of Economic Development took over the management of the Okabah Marina Recreation area.
- The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes opened the Three Chiefs Cultural Center in 2021; their original center established in 1991 burned down during the pandemic.



Yakutat Tlingit Tribe Cultural Tourism Project

In 2019, AS-IA awarded a grant to support a feasibility study for the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe's Cultural Tourism Project. The study supported the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe's interest in leveraging cultural tourism to create long-term and sustainable employment opportunities for Tribal residents and diversify local employment opportunities. The project was designed to develop tourism recommendations using appropriate community and industry

engagement strategies based on industry best-practices. It also intended to identify the following:

- Advantages and disadvantages in cultural tourism programs.
- Marketing strategies to target customers and suppliers.

The project was put on hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Tribe's operations were resumed post-pandemic stage. The project was completed with a final report to be prepared soon.

Initiative 3: Tribal Tourism Grant Programs

OIED has utilized Community Economic Development funds to implement the NATIVE Act since 2019. The NATIVE ACT aims to establish a more inclusive American tourism strategy that will expand economic opportunity to Native communities, create jobs, and elevate living standards. Some of the focus includes:

- Leverage tourism to achieve sustainable growth and economic development in Native communities, increase tourism capacity, and spur important infrastructure development.
- Strengthen and improve self-determination and self-governance capabilities in the Native American community to promote greater self-sufficiency.

OIED's NATIVE Act tourism goals have been supported in part through OIED's [Tribal Tourism Grant Program \(TTGP\)](#) as well as ONHR cooperative agreements and grants. Updates on activities are provided below.

TTGP

Launched in 2021 using FY 2020 funding, TTGP supports Tribal economic development and fulfills the mission of the NATIVE Act by providing funding for Tribes to conduct Tribal tourism feasibility studies and business plans. Feasibility studies and business plans support Tribes in making informed decisions about potential tourism projects. In 2021, OIED managed 18 one-year TTGP awards totaling \$1.5 million. OIED received 39 applications requesting \$3.6 million. The 2021 awardees, award amounts, and tourism projects are provided in the following table. In FY 2022, OIED allocated \$2 million to TTGP, which was awarded in FY 2023. (FY23 awardees and award amounts will be included in a full report on FY 2023 activities at a later date.)

Tribes	Awarded	OIED Zone	Purpose
Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana	\$145,000	Eastern	Feasibility study to develop agritourism, a market for local produce, arts, and crafts.
Delaware Nation	\$70,000	Eastern	Feasibility study to develop a world class marathon and promote tourism, the local economy, and local Tribal attractions.
Seminole Tribe of Florida	\$60,000	Eastern	Tourism feasibility study will be conducted of the Seminole Tribe of Florida's Big Cypress project to determine methods to identify potential tourists.
Seneca Nation of Indians	\$75,000	Eastern	Feasibility study and business plan for the development and implementation of an Iroquois Sports Museum/Center on their territory.
Lummi Nation	\$75,000	Northwest	Tribal Cultural Heritage tourism feasibility study and business plan.
Nez Perce Tribe	\$40,600	Northwest	Tribal tourism feasibility to promote the Tribe's tourism and economic development.
Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe	\$142,000	Northwest	Feasibility study to prioritize the best use for a Tribally owned parcel of land.

Table 2.5 FY 2021 OIED Tribal Tourism Grant Program Awards			
Tribe	Awarded	OIED Zone	Purpose
Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation	\$70,000	Northwest	Feasibility study to identify and assess several tourism related resources on Tribal land.
Spirit Lake Tribe	\$138,750	Northwest	Feasibility study to assess potential tourism projects on Tribal land.
Blue Lake Rancheria, CA	\$51,625	Southwest	Feasibility study to assess the tourism potential and growth of the Hou'l Park: a waterpark.
Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria	\$70,866	Southwest	Feasibility study and business plan for the Trinidad Rancheria Harbor Business District.
Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria	\$76,200	Southwest	Feasibility study to identify and evaluate the list of potential ecotourism / outdoor recreation activities on a Tribally owned parcel of land.
La Posta Band of Missions Indians	\$50,400	Southwest	Feasibility study with the goal of producing a fundable business plan to construct, operate, and maintain an RV park utilizing an abandoned Tribal casino site.
Mesa Grande Business Development Corporation	\$90,608	Southwest	Feasibility study of a Multi-Purpose Conference Center and Lodging Facility on its Golden Eagle Farm.
Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation	\$75,000	Southwest	Feasibility study to promote tourism and elevate the education of Tribal history particularly surrounding the Bear River Massacre.
Pueblo of San Felipe	\$148,867	Southwest	Feasibility study and business plan to increase Tribal tourism capacity located on Tribally owned land.
Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians	\$79,312	Southwest	Tribal tourism feasibility study and business plan for the triangle property.
Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation	\$53,325	Southwest	Tribal Tourism feasibility study on two properties.
18 TTGP Awards	\$1,512,553		

ONHR Cooperative Agreements and Grants for NHOs

In 2021 using FY 2020 funds, OIED, in partnership with ONHR and the National Park Service (NPS), supported two cooperative agreements with NHOs in Hawai'i. One agreement is with the Edith Kanaka'ole Foundation (EKF) for the restoration and utilization of traditional placenames at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. The other agreement is with the Historic Hawaiian Foundation (HHF) to engage NHOs in a stewardship training program that engages visitors and residents in the preservation of culturally-significant sites in Hawai'i. A progress summary for each project is provided below.

Edith Kanaka'ole Foundation – Restore & Utilize 'Ōiwi Spatial Data at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

Project Period of Performance: September 2021 – December 2023

- Identification and research of traditional chants (mele) and other sources that refer to storied land areas (wahi pana) and other features regarding the summit area of Kīlauea and Kahuku, with Kīlauea being the primary focus due to having the greater concentration of visitors.
- Geodatabase established for the horizontal and vertical land divisions within Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.
- Coordination on-going with NPS staff for the development of relevant and appropriate interpretive materials as research outputs are produced and integrated into the geospatial database.

Historic Hawai‘i Foundation – Native Hawaiian Organization Stewardship Training Program

Project Period of Performance: June 2021 – June 2026

- Solicitation issued in December 2021 for the first cohort of NHOs to the Stewardship Training Program.
- Three (3) NHOs selected in July 2022. Their respective project sites include:
 - Pacific American Foundation – Waikalua Loko I‘a, O‘ahu;
 - Kauluakalana - Ulupō Heiau, O‘ahu; and
 - Huliauapa‘a - Kahalu‘u Kūāhewa, Hawai‘i.
- Program activities and regulatory compliance reviews initiated in September 2022.



HŌ‘IHI Program - E hō‘ihi aku, e hō‘ihi mai

In FY 2022, OIED continued its partnership with ONHR in the development of the Heritage (Tourism) Opportunities in Hawai‘i or HŌ‘IHI Grant Program (CFDA 15.068) for NHOs to implement the NATIVE Act in Hawai‘i.

The Hawaiian value of hō‘ihi (respect), reflected in the ‘ōlelo no‘eau (Hawaiian proverb) “E hō‘ihi aku, e hō‘ihi mai,” meaning “show respect, get respect” represents the core principle of ONHR’s program. Through showing respect, visitors can be welcomed to Hawai‘i as guests with a shared kuleana (responsibility) in perpetuating the values and importance of Native Hawaiian traditional knowledge and cultural practices.



Under the HŌ‘IHI Grant Program, NHO grantees will utilize their amassed traditional knowledge and expertise in Native Hawaiian cultural practices to develop and implement a new, or enhance an existing, engagement program that: educates visitors on the history, usage, purposes of, and protocols associated with a traditional Native Hawaiian cultural practice; engages visitors in the cultural practice such that they develop a first-hand, authentic experience resulting in a greater understanding and appreciation for the Native Hawaiian culture and Hawai‘i; and undertakes related activities with visitors that convey respect and reaffirm the principle of reciprocity to the place, resources, and traditional knowledge holders and practitioners, as well as the sustainability of the cultural practice.

Story telling with visitors at Ulupō Heiau - Kaleo Wong

A progress summary for the HŌ‘IHI Grant Program is provided below.

- A solicitation to NHOs was issued by ONHR in April 2022.
- Seven (7) NHOs were awarded HŌ‘IHI grants in September 2022 and their respective projects include:
 - ‘Ao‘ao o Nā Loko I‘a o Maui - Kō‘ie‘ie Fishpond Visitor Engagement Program;
 - Hanalei River Heritage Foundation - I Mana Ka ‘Āina Visitor Engagement Program;
 - Hi‘ipaka LLC – Hō‘ihi no Waimea;
 - Moanalua Garden Foundation Inc. - 46th Annual Prince Lot Hula Festival;
 - Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association - Festival Event Engagement Program for Visitors & Native Hawaiian Cultural Practitioners;
 - PA‘I Foundation - Nānā I Ke Kumu: Look to the Source; and
 - Wai‘anae Economic Development Council - E Mau Ke A‘o: Sustaining the Cultural Practitioner.
- Project grants range between 12-24 months in duration beginning October 2022.

- ONHR is currently engaging grantees in project initiation activities.

Section III – OIED NATIVE Act Funding Summary

The summary on the next page highlights OIED’s annual funding and activities from FY 2018 through FY 2022. As shown, in some years OIED awarded more funds towards NATIVE Act activities than the amount appropriated, utilizing other standard annual OIED appropriations.

Table 3.1 Annual OIED NATIVE Act Funding and Activities*						
NATIVE Act Initiatives	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	Total
Initiative I - Native Act Management Planning						
Administrative Oversight	\$0	\$0	\$300,000	\$1,700,000	\$1,035,000	\$3,035,000
Grant Solutions - Application Review Module	0	0	0	0	\$389,000	\$389,000
OIS Transfer-Staff**	\$600,000	\$0	\$0	\$600,000	\$0	\$1,200,000
Initiative II - Tourism Pilot Projects						
AIANTA	\$2,000,000	\$2,400,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,400,000
George Washington University - South Dakota and North Dakota	\$440,772	\$564,000	\$463,704	0	0	\$1,468,476
George Washington University - Indigenous Tourism Collaborative of the Americas	\$0	\$0	\$80,535	\$176,000	\$0	\$256,535
NAFSA/Woksape, Inc. Food Sovereignty Grant	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$209,000	\$0	\$0	\$609,000
Pilot Technical Assistance Program - Tribal Tech TA Contract	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$500,000	\$0	\$500,000
Strongbow Strategies Navajo Wool Mill Grant	\$96,058	\$49,920	\$80,991	\$0	\$0	\$226,969
Virginia Polytech University - Montana and Virginia	\$260,000	\$407,511	\$150,511	\$0	\$0	\$818,022
Yakutat Tlingit Tribe Cultural Tourism Project	\$0	\$49,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$49,000
Initiative III - Tribal Tourism Grant Programs						
Tribal Tourism Grant Program - Feasibility Studies/Business Plans	\$0	\$0	\$1,512,553	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$3,512,553
ONHR-Native Hawaiian Organizations	\$0	\$0	\$600,000	\$0	\$1,176,000	\$1,776,000
NABDI Grant Program	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$800,000	\$1,800,000
FY NATIVE Act Total	\$3,596,830	\$3,670,431	\$3,397,294	\$3,976,000	\$5,400,000	\$20,040,555
FY NATIVE Act Appropriations	\$3,400,000	\$3,400,000	\$3,400,000	\$3,900,000	\$5,400,000	\$19,500,000

*Due to the timing of awards and appropriations, in some cases, funding was awarded in the FY following the FY in which it was appropriated.

**Funding was transferred to the Office of Indian Services for staffing support for the Public Law 102-477 workforce development program including efforts to support Tribal tourism.

Section IV – USDA Forest Service: NATIVE Act Projects and Progress FY 2021 and FY 2022

FY 2021

In FY 2021, USDA Forest Service (FS) was the first Federal land management agency to receive funding under the NATIVE Act. As managers of 193 million acres of public lands (much of which Tribes consider to be their Traditional Homelands as well as sacred and treaty lands) and hosts to 168 million recreation visitors annually, the FS is a logical partner for NATIVE Act implementation. The agency received a \$1 million congressional allocation with the objective of enhancing and integrating Native American tourism in Federal agency planning. The NATIVE Act and associated funding are meant to empower Native American communities, increase coordination and collaboration between Federal tourism assets, and expand heritage and cultural tourism opportunities in the United States.

In FY 2021, each region in the National Forest System (NFS) received a portion of the funds to work with Tribes who had already-existing agreements with NFS units. FY 2021 program highlights are:

- United Keetoowah Band. The FS's Southern Region finalized a five-year agreement totaling \$25,000 with the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee (UKB) in early May 2021. This agreement and funding allowed the UKB to plan, organize, and provide all logistical support for a tour of their ancestral homelands and important cultural and sacred sites on National Forest lands in eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina. The UKB also hosted their own memorial walk on a portion of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. Tribal representatives appreciated that this agreement and the NATIVE Act funding: (1) enabled the UKB to offer this opportunity to Tribal citizens who are too old to qualify for a position on the Tribal Youth Conservation Corps crew, and (2) allowed for more self-determination in the use of these funds for Tribal tourism.
- Southeast Alaska. The FS's Alaska Region obligated funds into agreements with three Federally-recognized Tribal Organizations:
 - \$75,000 for a cooperative relationship that assists Hydaburg Cooperative Association and the greater community to encourage visitors on the Prince of Wales Island road system to visit the village by highlighting important cultural sites in Hydaburg and increase economic opportunities through tourism. The Hydaburg Totem Park and other important sites are venues for traditional practitioners and Hydaburg residents to share their ancestral stories in an authentic way and enrich the experience of visitors to the community and Tongass National Forest. The Tribe and community have a major investment in totem poles, a carving shed, longhouse, and café in their remote and rural community in the Tongass National Forest, with a river that runs through town and is a critical food source.
 - \$100,000 for a partnership agreement with the Organized Village of Saxman focused on conducting restoration and improvements to the Saxman Totem Park. This agreement included a cultural apprenticeship component through the establishment of a totem-carving training program to support the passing on of traditional and cultural knowledge, customs, and practices for future creations and strengthening of Tribal and cultural tourism efforts in the community of Saxman and the Tongass National Forest.
 - \$70,000 in a participating agreement with Sealaska Heritage Institute to develop a more deliberate and visible presence and reflection of Alaska Native cultural history at the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area. Through Tribal consultation, the local Federally-recognized Tribes outlined requests for specific involvement in the planning processes, opportunities for economic development, and a more visible cultural presence, specifically:
 - Culturally appropriate interpretive exhibits, interpretive design elements, and Alaska Native language translation/proofreading will be developed in collaboration with the project's partners (Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska [CCTHITA], Sealaska Heritage Institute, and Aak'w Kwaan).

- Collaborating on culturally-appropriate art and design in overall sign designs that feature Tlingit form-line.
 - Collaborating on an interpretive trail that highlights traditional plant use and other features of subsistence life, and exhibit cases to display and steward cultural/repatriated items.
- Nez Perce. The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest in Montana and Idaho entered into a partnership agreement with Nez Perce Tourism LLC for \$130,000 to update signage on the National Forest and along the Nez Perce National Historic Trail with traditional Nez Perce names, including the trail itself, which is known as the Nimiipuu trail by the Nez Perce Tribe. The CEO of Nez Perce Tourism wrote a guest piece for *Inside the Forest Service* about the kick-off celebration of the project and commemoration of the several initial sites on FS-managed land where the traditional names were reintroduced.⁶
- Non-Tribal Recipients. The San Juan National Forest in Colorado executed a new challenge cost-share agreement with the San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA) to facilitate outreach to 25 Tribes who supported and were instrumental in the monument’s designation and subsequent visitor facility and interpretation. The monument hosted a Tribal-exclusive use day before the public event, which included Tribal dignitary speeches and dances from area Tribes and Pueblos. There were also visits from Tribal royalty, highlighting the important historical and cultural role Chimney Rock has in Southwestern Colorado.
 - **Number of Tribes benefiting:** Twenty-five Tribes benefited including Acoma Pueblo, Hopi Tribe, Kewa Pueblo, Cochiti Pueblo, Isleta Pueblo, Jemez Pueblo, Laguna Pueblo, Nambe Pueblo, Picuris Pueblo, Pojoaque Pueblo, San Ildefonso Pueblo, Sandia Pueblo, Santa Clara Pueblo, Taos Pueblo, Tesuque Pueblo, Zia Pueblo, Zuni Pueblo, Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo, San Felipe Pueblo, Santa Ana Pueblo, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Navajo Nation, Southern Ute Tribe, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Ute Tribe of the Uintah, and Ouray Reservation.
 - **Number of people benefiting:** Approximately 15,535 visitors (not including walk-ins and off-season use) visited the monument in 2020. The monument hosted over 1,000 visitors on the public day of the celebration, the most single-day visits in the monument’s 10-year history. The Major Lunar Standstill Event (2023-2025) is expected to benefit a similar number.

FY 2022

In FY 2022, FS received a \$1.01 million congressional allocation. To increase awareness of the funding opportunity, increase funds directly to Tribes, increase Tribal sovereignty, and increase the flexibility of where and how the funds can be used (on or adjacent to FS-managed lands), FS entered into a partnership agreement with AIANTA to solicit grant proposals directly from Tribes. Grantees were selected and notified in March 2022.

The selected project proposals are geographically and topically diverse and were chosen to develop infrastructure and/or technical assistance in Native American communities within a two-year time span. The U.S. Forest Service/AIANTA NATIVE Act Grantees for FY 2022 are as follows:

- **Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe in Sequim, Washington**
Grant Award: \$147,000
Project Name: Enhance Tourism by Designing, Fabricating, and Installing Outdoor Exhibits Interpreting Interconnections between S’Klallam Cultural Traditions and Olympic National Forest’s Dungeness Watershed Resources
- **Metlakatla Indian Community Tourism Department in Metlakatla, Alaska**
Grant Award: \$50,000
Project Name: Gyiik Galdzox (Camp Hemlock) and Nature Trails Renovation
- **Pueblo of Picuris in Penasco, New Mexico**
Grant Amount: \$250,000
Project Name: Celebrating, Protecting and Sharing the History of Picuris Pueblo through Our Voices

⁶ [NATIVE Act funds help reestablish ancient place name: wispin’itpe | US Forest Service \(usda.gov\).](https://www.usda.gov/press-releases/2022/03/22/native-act-funds-help-reestablish-ancient-place-name-wispin-itpe)

- **United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma (UKB) in Tahlequah, Oklahoma**
Grant Award: \$83,000
Project Name: Mulberry River Cane Restoration Project
- **La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians in Pauma Valley, California**
Grant Award: \$250,000
Project Name: La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians Kíicha Heritage Immersion Tours/Camping Experience
- **Jemez Community Development Corporation (DBA Jemez Enterprises) in Jemez Pueblo, New Mexico**
Grant Award: \$129,000
Project Name: Red Rocks Interpretive Trails

FY 2022 Grantees will submit their first progress reports in summer 2023.

Section V – FY 2023 NATIVE Act Next Steps

Below are the steps that OIED and FS will take in FY 2023 to implement the NATIVE Act, while recognizing the need for additional resource support to meet current interest from Tribes. In addition, the NATIVE Act does not give granting authority to USDA, which impedes the ability of FS to execute appropriations and implement the NATIVE Act in a streamlined manner.

In FY 2023, OIED will support the following NATIVE Act efforts:

- OIED will continue to leverage FY 2023 NATIVE Act funds to support PTAP through contractor Tribal Tech, LLC, providing OIED grant pre-application training to all interested Tribal applicants and NHOs. OIED will provide virtual and on-site workshops related to business sustainability, grant writing, and business plan development, enhancing Tribal capacity in all areas of economic development, but closely focused on tourism-related initiatives for Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and NHOs.
- OIED awarded \$2 million in FY 2022 funding and \$1 million in FY 2023 funding for the TTGP in 2023. The FY 2022 and 2023 funds were awarded under a single funding announcement. Detailed information on awardees and award amounts will be included in a full report on FY 2023 activities at a later date.
- OIED will continue utilizing FY 2023 NATIVE Act funds for the Indigenous Tourism Collaborative of the Americas to encourage Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and NHOs to engage more fully in Native American tourism activities to increase visitation to rural and remote areas in the United States that are too difficult to access or are unknown to domestic travelers and international tourists.
- In coordination with DOI's NPS and ONHR, OIED will continue support for two cooperative agreements with NHOs in Hawai'i. One agreement is with the Edith Kanaka'ole Foundation for the restoration and utilization of traditional placenames at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. The other agreement is with the Historic Hawai'i Foundation to engage NHOs in a stewardship training program that engages visitors and residents in the preservation of culturally-significant sites in Hawai'i. OIED will also continue providing FY 2023 funding to support the seven (7) NHOs that were awarded HŌ'IHI grants in September 2022.
- OIED will continue the White House Council on Native American Affairs NATIVE Act subcommittee efforts focused on completion of a FY 2023 NATIVE Act Action Plan and consideration for a multi-agency coordination to further support Tribal tourism business funding opportunities.
- OIED's Division of Economic Development is administering a contract for an audit evaluating AIANTA's capacity to carry out the scope of work in the cooperative agreement, including metric progress and budgeting and reporting compliance.

In FY 2023, FS will support the following NATIVE Act efforts:

- Put \$1.5 million into the partnership agreement with AIANTA to conduct a call for proposals for Tribal

- tourism and recreation projects on or adjacent to NFS lands.
- The remaining \$500,000 will go to one or two FS visitor centers at \$250,000 each, which will start the transition to Tribal co-stewardship of environmental and cultural interpretation and associated programs. If the second visitor center is not fully staffed to start the process this year, their \$250,000 will be added to the AIANTA agreement.