

2018 STATE OF NATIVE YOUTH REPORT
GENERATION INDIGENOUS



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NATIVE
YOUTH
2018

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2018



CENTER FOR NATIVE
AMERICAN YOUTH
AT THE ASPEN INSTITUTE



THE ASPEN INSTITUTE



2018 STATE OF NATIVE YOUTH REPORT GENERATION INDIGENOUS

NOVEMBER 2018



FRONT COVER ART BY: Darby Raymond-Overstreet, Diné digital artist who was born in Tuba City, AZ, grew up in Flagstaff, AZ, and currently lives in Santa Fe, NM.

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FOREWORD

KENDRICK EAGLE, STANDING ROCK SIOUX AND GEN-I AMBASSADOR
MEMBER OF CNAY ADVISORY BOARD



“I foresee Gen-I advancing to places no one ever thought possible. Gen-I can help provide our youth never-ending opportunities...for ourselves and our communities.”

– Kendrick Eagle, Standing Rock Sioux

HELLO, MY NAME IS KENDRICK EAGLE. I am from a small town called Cannonball, and I am an enrolled member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe located in North Dakota. I am a facilitator, mentor, and leader in my community. I also serve on CNAY’s Youth Advisory Board and am a Gen-I Ambassador.

In 2014, President Barack Obama visited my community on the Standing Rock reservation. It was supposed to be a quick meet and greet, but he stayed with us for hours. We spoke about our successes and the needs of our communities due to decades of governmental policies and neglect. After our meeting, it was clear that President Obama had a new appreciation for the needs and histories of tribal communities and how Native youth are at the center of our bright future.

After President Obama’s visit to Standing Rock, he flew 21 youth from our reservation to Washington, D.C., where we had meetings with various high-ranking officials and program leaders, ranging from education and economic development to youth leadership. Meeting with U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan was an eye-opening experience for me. We talked about how to improve individual education programs on reservations and how the education system had been failing my brothers, who I’ve been raising since I was 18. These conversations alone gave me a new excitement and passion to continue supporting my community.

Toward the end of our visit to D.C., we had a planning session where we were asked to outline what we wanted in our communities and what was needed to create more spaces for Native youth to grow in healthy environments. We made our lists in small groups and then presented to our peers, which was awesome. There were amazing

ideas, and the positive energy in the room could be felt. At the closing of this exercise, we were told that President Obama wanted to create an initiative for Native youth, and we were asked what we were going to call it. After many names were thrown around, we chose the best two words that described us as youth and us as Native people. Generation Indigenous was born.

Being a part of this experience was life changing and encouraged me to better the lives of my peers and generations to come. It has become my passion and my platform. Knowing that there are programs out there that can create new opportunities for kids on reservations is such a huge deal for me. I grew up on the reservation with hardly any opportunities, and I know how hard that is and how positive these programs can be. Now I work with national organizations, local partners, and community members who are willing to create new opportunities to give to kids on any reservation.

I foresee Gen-I advancing to places no one ever thought possible. Gen-I can help provide our youth never-ending opportunities, including leadership trainings, mentorship, and fellowships that will help us build a strong future for ourselves and our communities. It’s on all of us to ensure that the resources and support are there to keep inspiring our young people on reservations across America.

FOREWORD

SALLY JEWELL, FORMER SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
MEMBER OF CNAY ADVISORY BOARD



AS INCOMING SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR IN THE SPRING OF 2013, I WAS BOTH INSPIRED AND INTIMIDATED BY MY RESPONSIBILITIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE OF UPHOLDING TRUST AND TREATY OBLIGATIONS TO TRIBAL NATIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. I received some simple yet powerful advice from my colleague at the time, Kevin Washburn, Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs and member of the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma: “Sally, it’s as simple as this...don’t forget the Indians.” Kevin was right. Tribal perspectives matter in every element of government – health, education, housing, public land management, water rights, justice, environment, military service, and so much more. Yet our nation’s performance over hundreds of years has been shameful.

President Obama’s commitment to engaging annually with leaders at the Tribal Nations Conference, and his creation of the White House Council on Native American Affairs, helped ensure that his Cabinet kept Native communities in mind across their work. More importantly, the creation of Generation Indigenous (Gen-I), in partnership between the White House and the Center for Native American Youth, inspired all of us to take actions that began to change our relationship with tribes, especially youth. It is gratifying to see Gen-I continue, led by young people who are using social media to stay connected with each other, building pride in their heritage, sharing ideas, and encouraging each other’s success in life.

In my many visits to indigenous communities across the country, one constant was meeting incredible young people who were committed to respecting and honoring their native traditions, while embracing today’s world. Like Gen-I participant Kendrick Eagle, who, along with one of his brothers, was in line with me for breakfast at the Standing Rock casino, as we both prepared for President Obama’s 2014 visit to the reservation. Kendrick’s personal story – raising four brothers by himself, while attending college and working – helped open the President’s eyes to the very real challenges of life for Native youth. Kendrick’s video appeal during the Standing Rock Water Protector’s efforts to halt pipeline construction built on efforts of other Standing Rock youth who literally ran from the reservation to Washington, D.C. to deliver a petition to the government, inspiring thousands of others to raise their voices. Those collective voices resulted in government action in support of Standing Rock that is still working its way through the courts. They also raised world-wide awareness of the rights of tribes and the risks of development.

On several visits to the Arctic to better understand the impact of climate change on indigenous communities, I heard first-hand from elders and youth how their lifeways were being challenged by changing caribou migration, a lack of sea-ice for seal and whale hunting, and melting permafrost that was impacting gathering. While there, I also met a group of students at Kotzebue High School who were volunteering to prevent youth suicide through a peer intervention program. Youth voices in both cases were important in inspiring action to strengthen communities and encourage action by leaders.

One of my favorite activities was engaging with young people in environmental stewardship, like removing invasive species in Hawaii with native Hawaiian youth through Kupu, cleaning bayous in Louisiana with the Chitimacha Tribe, and celebrating Anthony “Chako” Ciocco’s leadership in the Ancestral Lands Program. These were just a few of the actions I witnessed by Native youth who were setting an example of how we can all take action to live in harmony with nature.

I look forward to working with the Center for Native American Youth to support the voices and actions of young people committed to improving their lives and the lives of those around them, while building pride in their heritage and culture. At a time of conflict in our nation’s psyche and challenges to our shared environment, it is inspiring to witness young people standing up for their future, encouraging others – young and old (like me) – to join them.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY11

HEALTH AND WELLNESS16

SYSTEMS INVOLVING YOUTH.....24

EDUCATION AND JOBS 32

SACRED SITES, LANDS, 40
AND WATERWAYS

CITIZENSHIP 48

APPENDIX

 GLOSSARY 56

 ABOUT THE COVER ART 58

 ABOUT US59

INTRO AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



2018 CNAY Champions for Change with NCAI President Jefferson Keel.

WHEN PRESIDENT OBAMA LAUNCHED THE GENERATION INDIGENOUS (GEN-I) INITIATIVE IN 2014, IT WAS A CALL TO ACTION to policymakers and to nonprofit, philanthropic, and business leaders to do everything they could to support and expand opportunity for Native youth. After visiting the Standing Rock Youth Council, President and First Lady Michelle Obama were moved by the passion, drive, and resilience that Native youth brought to the table, even while facing daunting challenges in their communities.

The Center for Native American Youth (CNAY) partnered with the White House to help launch the Gen-I National Native Youth Network. Native youth from across the country took the “Gen-I Challenge” and told us about the positive work they are doing in their communities. Today, we have nearly 2,000 Native youth who are part of the Gen-I Network. Together, they have taken a call to action and turned it into a sustainable national platform that connects Native youth leaders and their movements.

This year, our focus for our annual State of Native Youth report is on the people, initiatives, and organizations that make up the Gen-I Network. This summer, we asked Native youth artists from across the country to answer the prompt: What does Generation Indigenous mean to you? Throughout the report, you’ll see the incredible ways these young creative advocates understand the role of their generation in creating a bright and strong future for tribal communities. We also feature perspectives from individual youth leaders and innovative initiatives.



Cheyenne River Youth Project's 2018 Growing into Wowachinyepi (one who the people can depend on), a youth recognition program designed in consultation with CNAY based off of Champions for Change.

While our nation remains deeply divided, Native youth are setting an example for the future. They're focused on building relationships across nations and communities, bringing out their strengths and supporting one another's confidence, and strengthening their cultural foundations through the teachings of their ancestors. In 2014, President and Mrs. Obama were honoring and acknowledging a movement long in the making. The following is a summary of some of the important themes and findings from this year's report.

THE IMPACT OF COLONIAL BORDERS AND A NEW ERA OF INDIGENOUS CIVIC ACTION

At the core of the Gen-I challenge is civic action. As we explore throughout the report, Native youth and their partners are organizing at the local, regional, and national levels to tackle some of the biggest

issues facing Native communities. In this divided and unsettling part of our nation's history, Americans are questioning the very foundation of some of our most important political and civic institutions. Native youth, however, are drawing strength and unity from their roots in an indigenous civic identity that pre-dates all of these institutions.

A record number of Native candidates are running for office in the midterm elections this year, and they're helping mobilize Native youth leaders around their priorities. They're demanding respect for the nation-to-nation treaty responsibility between tribal nations and the federal government, protection of sacred sites, lands, and waterways, and many other priorities that Native youth care about. Native youth are also creating new platforms of their own to engage with policymakers. Inspired by President Obama's first-ever White House Tribal Youth conference, a group of Gen-I Ambassadors in Minnesota successfully organized the first-ever Minnesota State Tribal Youth Gathering in partnership with Governor Mark Dayton's office, bringing hundreds of Native youth leaders from tribal nations across the state.¹

Another serious civic challenge facing many Native youth relates to borders and immigration. Indigenous communities have struggled with these imaginary and arbitrary notions of citizenship for generations. On the southern border, the Tohono O'odham Nation has been on the front lines of this issue since the border was created. It is the second-largest tribe by land base, and a considerable portion of it is in Mexico, isolating nearly 2,000 of their 34,000 members.² The Tohono O'odham people already face challenges with ceremonies, like their annual pilgrimage to the Sea of Cortez, and with gathering traditional plants, all of which are even more threatened by many of the current administration's new proposals.³ These

proposals also threaten to further separate families living on either side of the border. We explore more of these issues about the border, the candidates who are running for office, and the Native youth leaders who are organizing in the Citizenship chapter.

FINDING STRENGTH IN CULTURE TO IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The significant physical, mental, social, and emotional challenges facing Native youth are also at the roots of President Obama's call to action. Perhaps one of the most daunting challenges for Native youth is the epidemic of suicide. Native youth commit suicide at a rate 2.5 times the national average, and it is the second-leading cause of death for Native youth ages 10-24.⁴ Substance abuse is also very prevalent for youth in tribal communities. The rate of illicit drug use among American Indians and Alaska Natives was 12.3 percent in 2013 compared to the national average of 9.4 percent.⁵ These are only a few examples of some of these challenges, but as we explore throughout our Health and Wellness chapter, Native youth are leading the way to change these statistics by relying on their strengths and their cultures.

Native youth leaders are strengthening their communities' health and wellness through traditional gardens, suicide prevention, social media campaigns, and medicine-gathering walks. While they are driven by the teachings of their own cultures and ancestors, research also shows the need for culture as a solution. A study of Inupiaq youth in Alaska showed an improvement in a sense of strength and capability for youth when they were more connected to their culture, including indigenous language, involvement in subsistence practices, and participation in other cultural activities.⁶ It also showed

an improvement in their ability to cope with challenges in their lives.⁷ As you'll see in this report, for these reasons, culture and language need to be a central element to any solution to these health and wellness challenges.

Native youth leaders are strengthening their communities' health and wellness through traditional gardens, suicide prevention, social media campaigns, and medicine-gathering walks.

THE CIVIC CONNECTION TO SACRED SITES, LANDS, AND WATERWAYS

Native youth are also focusing on improving health and wellness by connecting youth with sacred sites, lands, and waterways. Connection to the land is central to indigenous cultures, and Native youth understand the power it has to heal their communities. The youth-led fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline at the Standing Rock reservation was perhaps the most broadly known indigenous movement by a generation in the United States, but it was only part of a much larger movement across the country.

Climate change is also a principal concern for Native youth. As we discuss in the Sacred Sites, Lands, and Waterways chapter, youth in communities like the United Houma Nation in Louisiana are seeing their traditional lands disappear at alarming rates into the ocean. The disappearance of these lands also means the disappearance of traditional plants and medicines that have been central to their culture for generations. This is a common challenge for a diverse range of tribal nations.

The federal government has a critical role to play on these issues. When it comes to lands and waterways, the federal government manages approximately 640 million acres of land, two percent of which is held in trust for tribes. It is vital that the federal government enforce federal laws to protect these resources and honor the trust and treaty responsibility they have to tribal nations, especially as it relates to treaty lands. Grassroots Native youth organizations have organized in tribes across the country to support their tribal leaders in their advocacy to federal agencies and other officials to support mitigation efforts for climate change and other protections.

Native youth are also focusing on improving health and wellness by connecting youth with sacred sites, lands, and waterways.

TRANSFORMING SYSTEMS INVOLVING NATIVE YOUTH

Among the biggest barriers to success for many Native youth are the institutions and systems that determine their outcomes from a very early age, including the child welfare, juvenile justice, and education systems. Nationally, Native youth represent 1.9 percent of the foster care population, even though they represent only 1.3 percent of the general child population.⁸ In some states, like South Dakota, Native youth represent nearly half the foster care population.⁹ In too many classrooms, Native students are also subject to disproportionate disciplinary systems. Overall, Native students represent two percent of out-of-school suspensions and three percent of expulsions, even though they

represent less than one percent of the student population.¹⁰

In some states, such as Utah, they are 7.5 times more likely to be expelled than white students.¹¹ Similarly, Native youth are more likely to be referred to the juvenile justice system, arrested, or placed in secure confinement than the white population in a number of states.¹²

As we discuss in our Systems Involving Youth chapter, the impact of these systems can be significant. When Native youth are expelled from school, they lose the educational opportunities to build career and financial success to support their families. In the child welfare system, they can often be separated from culture, family, and community. And in the juvenile justice system, whether in the state or federal system, they do not often have access to culturally centered education and support programs.

There are important efforts underway to address the negative impacts of these systems. This year, Congress passed the Family First Prevention Services Act, which will provide states and tribes with new funding aimed at connecting youth and families, providing prevention services, and supporting kinship care.¹³ In education, innovative schools, like the Native American Community Academy in Albuquerque, have developed community-driven cultural supports for parents and students and center their policies and procedures on culture and healing, which has resulted in much lower discipline rates.¹⁴ And healing and wellness courts developed by tribal communities provide alternative diversion programs aimed at reducing substance abuse without the need for incarceration.¹⁵ In all of these cases, success relies on keeping youth, families, communities, and cultures together.

CONNECTING LEADERS, CONNECTING MOVEMENTS, BUILDING POWER

Since the launch of the Gen-I initiative, the administration and our national political conversation have changed dramatically, but Native youth are realizing the power of their voice. As the Center for Native American Youth partners with these youth leaders across the country to define what they want for the Gen-I platform, one critical question keeps emerging: How can we build a stronger voice for Native youth within other youth

and social justice movements? Native youth leaders have drawn tremendous strength from their cultures to help their communities heal, and they are using it in innovative ways to empower and bring one another together across tribal nations. As you read through this year’s report, we hope you will be inspired by the positive actions of this generation—Generation Indigenous.

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CHAPTER ONE

HEALTH AND WELLNESS



NATIVE YOUTH ARE LEADING A MOVEMENT TO DECOLONIZE ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR LIVES, INCLUDING THE WAYS IN WHICH THEY THINK ABOUT HEALTH AND WELLNESS. Recognizing that colonization has attempted to decimate the very foundations that once protected them from social, spiritual, and physical ills, Native youth are returning to those traditional sources of healing – like language, culture, and ceremony – to reclaim wellness in all its forms.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Suicide among American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) youth continues to plague indigenous communities at a rate of 2.5 times the national average.¹ It is the second leading cause of death for AI/AN youth ages 10-24,² and the third leading cause of death for AI/AN youth ages 5 to 14.³ Native males in the U.S. ages 15-24 are the most at risk for suicide. Research has demonstrated that co-occurrence of substance abuse, childhood adversity, a history of trauma, and perceived discrimination are each linked to suicidality in AI/AN youth. Furthermore, sexual minority status has been associated with slightly elevated risk for mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, suicidality, and substance abuse, though data on Two-Spirit and Native LGBT individuals is lacking.⁴ These and other data disparities create statistical lapses that prevent Native communities from communicating and addressing the true extent of mental health-related challenges they face.⁵

Cultural and community connectedness are critical tools for addressing suicide in Indian Country. One study of Inupiaq (Alaska Native) youth showed that cultural connectedness – such as use of indigenous language, involvement in subsistence practices, or participation in other cultural activities – evoked a sense of strength and capability in youth that helped them cope and problem-solve through difficulties.⁶ Research has also shown that cultural continuity – or efforts to preserve and promote indigenous cultures – is associated with reduced, and in some cases

non-existent, rates of suicide in certain AI/AN communities.⁷ Thus, youth-led initiatives that center on indigenous cultures and prioritize community togetherness are strong steps to battling suicide across indigenous communities in the United States.

SPOTLIGHT

ONE MIND YOUTH MOVEMENT



THE ONE MIND YOUTH MOVEMENT (OMYM) was established in response to a string of suicides that claimed the lives of several young girls on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation. Trenton Casillas-Bakeberg, a co-founder of OMYM, is in the process of working with his tribal community to build a community safe house that helps at-risk youth support one another, provides creative outlets for healthy coping and self-expression, and introduces ceremony as a means of healing from past traumas.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Domestic violence and sexual assault continue to be significant issues in Native communities. The National Institute of Justice Office of Justice Programs reported in 2016 that AI/AN women experience violence (including rape, stalking, intimate partner violence, physical and psychological aggression) at a rate of 84.3 percent, compared to 71 percent for non-AI/AN women.⁸ A study by the U.S. Department of Justice found that one in three AI/AN women will be raped during their lifetime,⁹ and another found that one in 14 women in

the U.S. reported having first experienced completed rape before the age of 18.¹⁰ Native youth may not even recognize the wide range of behaviors that qualify as abuse. Focus tends to be primarily on physical abuse, a narrow definition that fails to count instances of emotional abuse, like insults and threats of suicide after a breakup.¹¹ Due to a lack of cultural competence and near failure of acknowledgment of intergenerational trauma, AI/AN males and females do not seek service providers or resources to address their needs. In some reservation and tribal communities, women are murdered at a rate 10 times higher than the national average.¹²

Idle No More, a grassroots movement created by four First Nations women, called for a national inquiry into the high rates of missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada,¹³ and the movement has picked up considerable momentum in the United States. Senator Heitkamp of North Dakota introduced Savanna’s Act to ensure that North Dakota tribes have access to information and resources to protect Native women and girls from violence, abduction, and human trafficking.¹⁴ Research shows that violence against Native women is most frequently perpetrated by non-Native offenders (outside tribal communities) – a particular problem for tribal communities close to extraction sites that draw an influx of site workers. The Violence Against Women Act, which directs the national response to crimes of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, is currently at risk of expiration and must be reauthorized in order to continue much-needed protections for victims of crimes like these.¹⁵ It is critical for tribal members and Native youth to be at the forefront of reauthorization, working with their members of Congress to ensure this act is reauthorized.



higher rates of lifetime illicit drug use other than marijuana as compared to heterosexual AI/AN participants.¹⁷ Battling the opioid epidemic continues to be a priority for health care practitioners and community leaders across Indian Country, but there is also a need for local, culturally appropriate behavioral health and rehabilitation programs for AI/ANs struggling with a variety of illicit, prescription, and legal substances.

ALCOHOL

A 2009-2012 study by the National Institutes of Health demonstrated that reservation-based AI/AN adolescents, especially eighth-graders, displayed prevalence rates of alcohol use that were sometimes dramatically higher than the U.S. national average. The study emphasized the need for a better understanding of root causes of this disturbing trend, which include academic failure, delinquency, violent criminal behavior, suicidality, and alcohol-related mortality.¹⁸ A study comparing Two-Spirit and heterosexual AI/AN participants found that

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN			
TYPE OF VIOLENCE	AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE, %	NON-HISPANIC WHITE ONLY,* %	RELATIVE RISK
ANY LIFETIME VIOLENCE	84.3	71.0	1.2
SEXUAL VIOLENCE	56.1	49.7	NS
PHYSICAL VIOLENCE BY INTIMATE PARTNER	55.5	34.5	1.6
STALKING	48.8	26.8	1.8
PSYCHOLOGICAL AGGRESSION BY INTIMATE PARTNER	66.4	52.0	1.3
ANY PAST-YEAR VIOLENCE	39.8	23.3	1.7
SEXUAL VIOLENCE	14.4	5.4	NS
PHYSICAL VIOLENCE BY INTIMATE PARTNER	8.6	4.1	NS
STALKING	11.6	7.0	NS
PSYCHOLOGICAL AGGRESSION BY INTIMATE PARTNER	25.5	16.1	1.6

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

A history of intergenerational trauma has also led to persistent substance abuse across tribal communities. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) states that Native American adolescents abuse painkillers and psychotherapeutic drugs at a higher rate than the national average. In 2013, among persons aged 12 or older, the rate of current illicit drug use among American Indians or Alaska Natives was 12.3 percent, and 14.0 percent among Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, compared to the national average of 9.4 percent.¹⁶ One study found that Two-Spirit participants reported significantly

AGE-ADJUSTED PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS 18 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER WHO ARE OBESE, 2015.

(PERSONS ARE CONSIDERED OBESE IF THEY HAVE A BODY MASS INDEX (BMI) OF 30 OR GREATER.)

AMERICAN INDIAN/ ALASKA NATIVE	NON-HISPANIC WHITE	AMERICAN INDIAN/ ALASKA NATIVE NON-HISPANIC WHITE RATIO
43.7%	28.5%	1.5%

Two-Spirits had their first alcoholic drink at a younger age than their heterosexual counterparts.¹⁹

TOBACCO

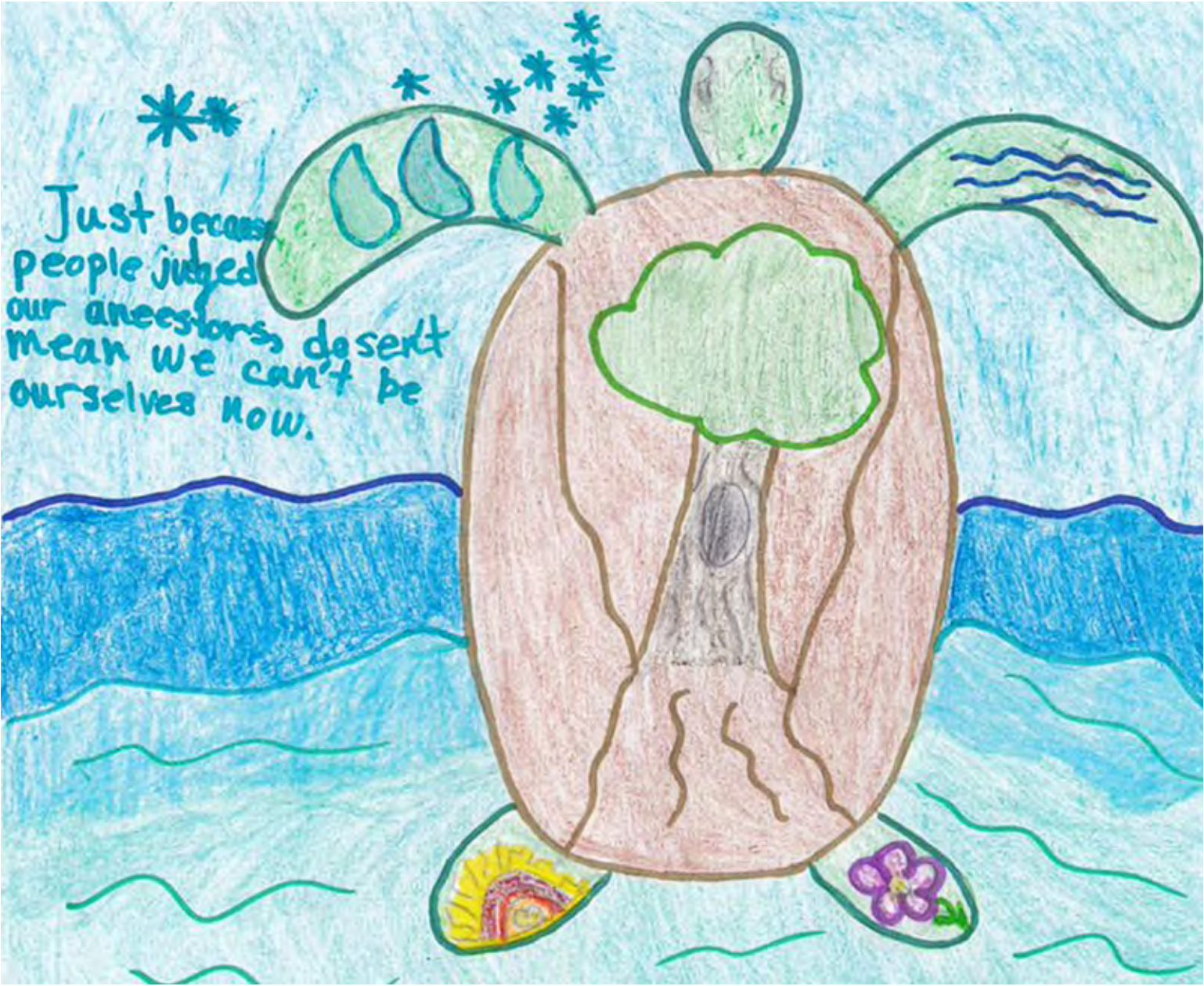
AI/AN youth and adults have the highest prevalence of cigarette smoking among all racial/ethnic groups in the United States. In 2013, over 40 percent of AI/AN adults reported current use of cigarettes, cigars, or smokeless tobacco in the past month. Tobacco companies target indigenous communities by advertising products such as “natural” cigarettes and using Native American imagery.²⁰ Keep It Sacred is an example of a program that works to decrease cancer-related health disparities among AI/AN communities and promote the roles of traditional tobacco.²¹

PHYSICAL HEALTH

The physical health of AI/AN youth is marked by critical disparities with long-term implications. Native adolescents are 30 percent more likely than non-Hispanic whites to be obese.²² According to the Indian Health Services Special Diabetes Program for Indians Report to Congress, implications of obesity include high blood pressure and Type 2 diabetes, the leading cause of death among Native American populations and a risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Increased Type 2 diabetes rates and other food-related illnesses stem from a shortage of healthy food sources in Indian Country.²³ Not only do these communities lack fundamental access to food, they also endure one of the highest rates of poverty in the United States, with 35 percent of Native American children living in poverty.²⁴ Not having enough to eat and living in places where food and jobs are scarce combine to exacerbate food insecurity in Indian Country. Additional health concerns arise from environmental hazards, such as isolated living, severe climatic conditions, substandard housing, lack of sewage disposal, and unsafe water supplies.²⁵

Since cultural factors have been linked to health outcomes for AI/ANs,²⁶ culturally relevant physical activity initiatives like Powwow Sweat – which incorporates powwow dancing as a form of exercise – could be particularly helpful in getting Native youth active and healthy. The Coeur d’Alene Tribe created Powwow Sweat in order to honor traditional dance styles of American Indian people. The structured exercise routines aim to lower the rates of obesity and Type 2 diabetes in AI/IN peoples.

CREATIVE NATIVE ARTWORK



My piece is about mother earth and how we need to help her and remember that we’re all special in our own ways and it’s going to take all of us to make a better world for the future generations to come.

LOZEN B.
Nine years old (Category 5-9 yo)
Tribal Affiliation:
Cheyenne, Blackfoot, Yaqui,
and Chichemeca

YOUTH SPOTLIGHT
REZ CONDOM TOUR



THE REZ CONDOM TOUR, a grassroots Diné youth founded movement, continues their sixth year of increasing access to condoms and inclusive sex education. Driven by generous supply donations and three passionate Diné people along with AMAZING volunteers, the tour promotes bodily autonomy, inclusive medically accurate sex education, and acceptance of all sexualities and gender expressions.

#sexisceremony
#protectourbodies
#protectourpeople



SEXUAL HEALTH, YOUNG MOTHERHOOD

Native youth experience the highest birth rates in the nation for mothers 20 and younger. Native American women giving birth at ages 15-19 rose three percent from 2005 to 2006. This group tends to seek medical attention for their pregnancies less frequently than other demographic groups.²⁷ Inadequate access to health care contributes to this problem. On the Navajo Nation, for example, which is the largest reservation in North America and is the size of West Virginia, Indian Health Services operates only six hospitals, seven health centers, and 15 health stations. Lack of proper access contributes to

an infant mortality rate 1.6 times higher than the rate for non-Hispanic whites. Additionally, infants are twice as likely to die from sudden infant death syndrome than non-Hispanic whites. Sexual health is also impacted by increased rates of HIV/AIDS. Native American and Alaska Natives are twice as likely to be affected by HIV infection compared to the white population. In 2016, Native American women were three times more likely to be diagnosed with AIDS in comparison to white females.²⁸

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CHAPTER TWO

SYSTEMS INVOLVING YOUTH

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES ARE AT THE HEART OF NATIVE CULTURES. Children and families are sacred, and culture and tradition are important pathways to healing when individuals and families struggle. When we meet with Native youth leaders across the country who are undertaking initiatives to rebuild their languages and cultures, one of their strongest motivations is the restoration of their families and communities.

Colonial settlers brought an entirely different worldview from that of the Native people who were living on the North American continent. Their social systems and institutions transformed indigenous systems into the child welfare, criminal justice, and school discipline systems that are still severely impacting Native communities today. For generations since colonial contact, Native families and communities have been subjected to a wide range of social and policy experiments that resulted in a severe loss of culture, the breakup of families and traditions, and a disproportionately high participation of Native youth in child welfare and incarceration systems. These systems have also been the vehicles of historical trauma that help explain why Native communities have come to be defined by their deficits, not their strengths.

At a time when too many policymakers are putting an emphasis on dividing communities, it is time to instead put culture, healing, and restoration back at the center. This is especially true for policies affecting Native youth and families, as it represents a return to indigenous values. These values are driving Native youth across the country to advocate for more supportive schools, justice systems, and family support systems.

THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

The country’s attention has been focused on devastating policies that are removing children from their families at the U.S. border with Mexico. This is an all-too-

familiar experience to tribal communities, as assimilation through intentional family, community, and cultural destruction was the central focus of some of the earliest colonial policies in our country.¹ Perhaps one of the most dramatic examples of these policies is the child welfare system. Nationally, Native youth represent 1.9 percent of the foster care population even though they represent only 1.3 percent of the general child population.²

“Being placed in foster care was one of the most traumatic moments in my life. However, eventually being placed with a family member allowed me to flourish and reestablish a connection to my culture, which is the backbone to my current success!”

– Autumn Adams, Yakima Nation.

In some states, the representation of Native youth in the system is two to three times the rate of other populations. In Alaska and South Dakota, Native youth represent nearly half the entire foster care population.³ These statistics are a legacy of child welfare systems intentionally designed to remove Native children from their families.

Although Native youth are still over-represented in the child welfare system—participating 2.7 times the national average⁴—recent legislation has the potential to greatly benefit tribes in their efforts to keep families together and prevent Native youth

SPOTLIGHT
LAC COURTE OREILLES’S COMPREHENSIVE TRUANCY
PREVENTION PROJECT

WHEN YOUTH BECOME FREQUENTLY OR CHRONICALLY TRUANT, IT PUTS THEM AT SERIOUS RISK FOR ENTERING THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM. The Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe identified this as a growing challenge among their youth at both their elementary and high schools in their community. Before starting the program, the county issued 147 truancy citations to youth in the community, and 89 of those citations were for only 37 youth. In response, the Executive Director of their local Boys and Girls Club assembled a multi-agency Comprehensive Truancy Prevention Team. The team, which consisted of tribal and county court judges, school officials, and others, worked together to begin sharing data and discussing strategies and interventions. While they found some modest improvements, they received a Tribal Youth Program grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in 2009 to implement a more comprehensive and effective plan. The program uses an adapted evidence-based life skills curriculum that focuses on cognitive, social, and emotional skills delivered to identified at-risk students by trained coaches. Many of the students identified for the program suffered from trauma and abuse. Coaches were also trained to identify and respond to any safety concerns for these youth. The program has been a big success. By the end of the three-year grant period, the overall truancy rate within the target student population decreased by 72 percent and students receiving three or more citations was nearly zero. In addition, the reduction of truanies has improved other services at the tribe. The child welfare office no longer received truancy referrals after the program, which freed up considerable new resources to handle other child welfare matters.

SOURCE:
www.tribaljustice.org/program-profiles/comprehensive-truancy-prevention-project

from entering foster care.⁵ Earlier this year, Congress passed the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) to provide states and tribes with funding for preventative services and kinship navigator programs, among other funding streams. These programs are designed to help families with the services they need to keep their families together.

November 2018 marks the 40th anniversary of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA,) a landmark piece of legislation designed to reduce Native American over-representation in the foster care system and to keep Native youth connected with their families, communities, and culture. It was passed by

Congress in 1978 as a direct response to the “wholesale separation of Indian children from their families,” as stated in a report by the House of Representatives in the record for the law.

Although the United States has shown a willingness to improve the child welfare system for Native children, there is still much to be done to prevent the unnecessary separation of children and families. It is critical that state and federal child welfare agencies are adequately funded and trained on how best to coordinate with tribes. For more information on ICWA and Native family structures visit our 2016 and 2017 State of

Native Youth reports, as well as the recent issue brief written in partnership with Generations United and the National Indian Child Welfare Association.

Native youth foster-alum frequently voice the critical importance of maintaining family ties and connection to their culture. Jade Tillequots, a Yakima Nation foster youth advocate, spoke at a CNAY Policy and Resource Roundtable earlier this year saying, “staying with my siblings is what got me through the [foster care] system.” Despite the strides made by the FFPSA in providing preventative services for children and families at risk of entering the foster system, it is critical that federal, state, and tribal child welfare providers coordinate to ensure the proper and most effective implementation of the bill.

DISCIPLINE SYSTEMS

While education is intended to provide young people with the knowledge and tools they need to succeed, too often it is a system focused on “discipline and push out”, resulting in adverse life course outcomes and adverse well-being. Overall, Native students represent two percent of out-of-school suspensions and three percent of expulsions—even though they represent less than one percent of the student population.⁶ In many states with high Native populations, the situation is especially troubling. The expulsion rates for Native students in Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Montana have nearly doubled since 2012, according to a recent analysis by the National Congress of American Indians.⁷ Native students in Utah are 7.5 times more likely to be expelled and eight times more likely to be referred to law enforcement than white students, according to a recent report.⁸

These discipline disparities are another way that systems are removing Native youth from their communities, and in some cases,

becoming a pathway to other systems such as incarceration. According to a 2015 report by the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education, tribal, local, and state policymakers need to focus on school discipline policies that are culturally-responsive and consistently applied.⁹ The report, based on an extensive nationwide set of listening sessions, showcases the common lack of cultural understanding by school officials when it comes to Native students’ cultural differences.

In order to reverse this course, policymakers should focus on putting tribal communities in control of their own educational systems and institutions. Recent legislation, such as the reauthorization of ESSA, has provided new tools for tribal control of education and critical new opportunities for language and culture education. Additionally, many tribes have found success through the charter school system, as it allows tribes to design schools according to their community and cultural needs. For example, the Native American Community Academy in New Mexico puts cultural healing and holistic well-being at the center of all policies and procedures at their school.¹⁰ This contributes to high graduation rates and to 80-90 percent of their graduating seniors attending college.¹¹ For other schools, particularly larger public schools that are not controlled by the tribal community and have smaller populations of Native students, the focus for administrators should be on school climate assessment and improvement. School leaders should identify any misconceptions or stereotypes held by educators, administrators, and other school staff, and develop plans for training and other interventions.¹²

THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

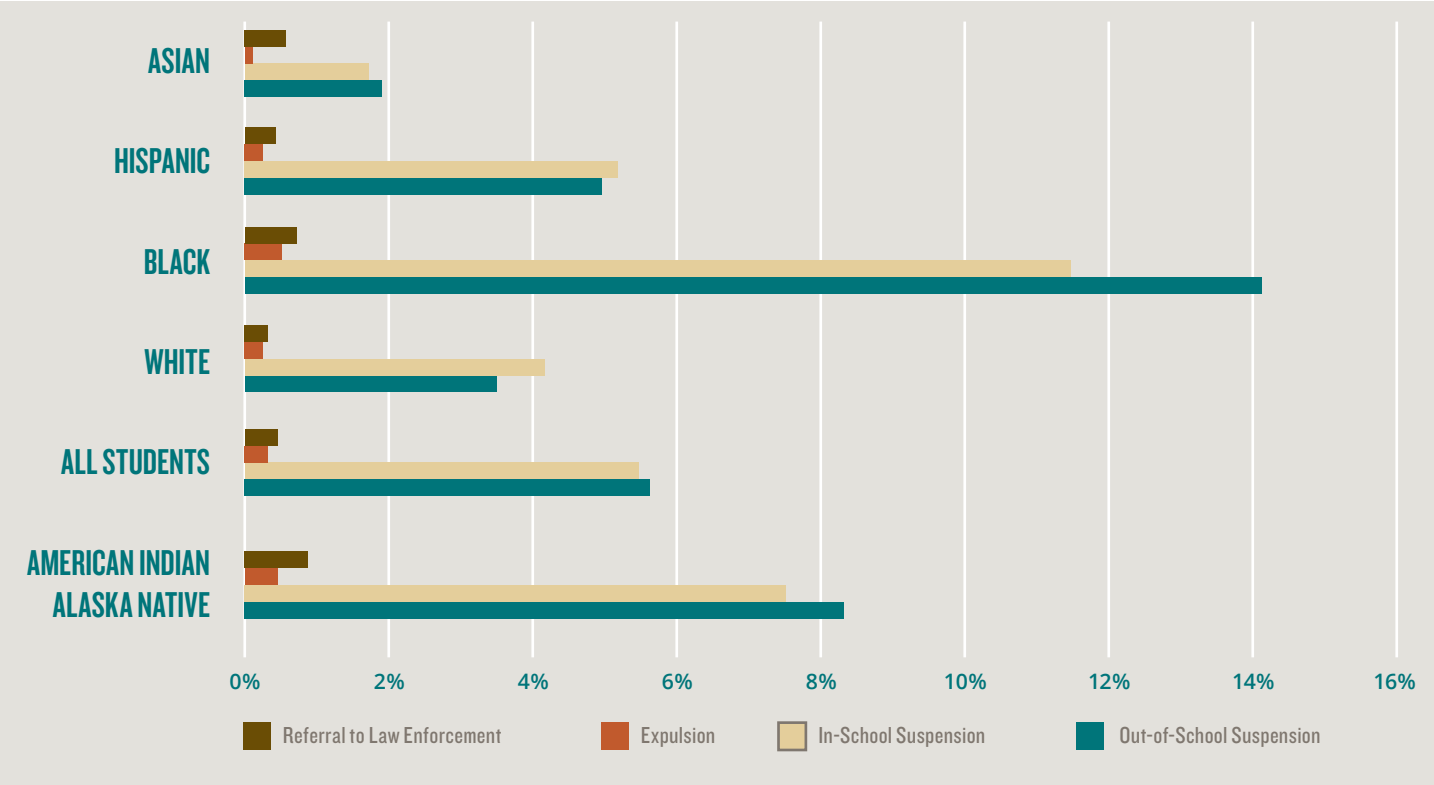
Native youth enter the juvenile justice system at very disproportionate rates compared to the overall population, especially in certain states. One of the biggest challenges in understanding this issue, however, is the lack of data. It wasn't until 1992 that the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention began requiring the collection of certain sub-populations by state juvenile justice officials. While much of the data still doesn't properly account for Native youth in justice systems, we do know that in Alaska, Arizona, Minnesota, Montana, Oklahoma, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Washington State, Native youth are disproportionately more likely to be referred to the juvenile justice

system, arrested, and placed in secured confinement than the white population.¹³

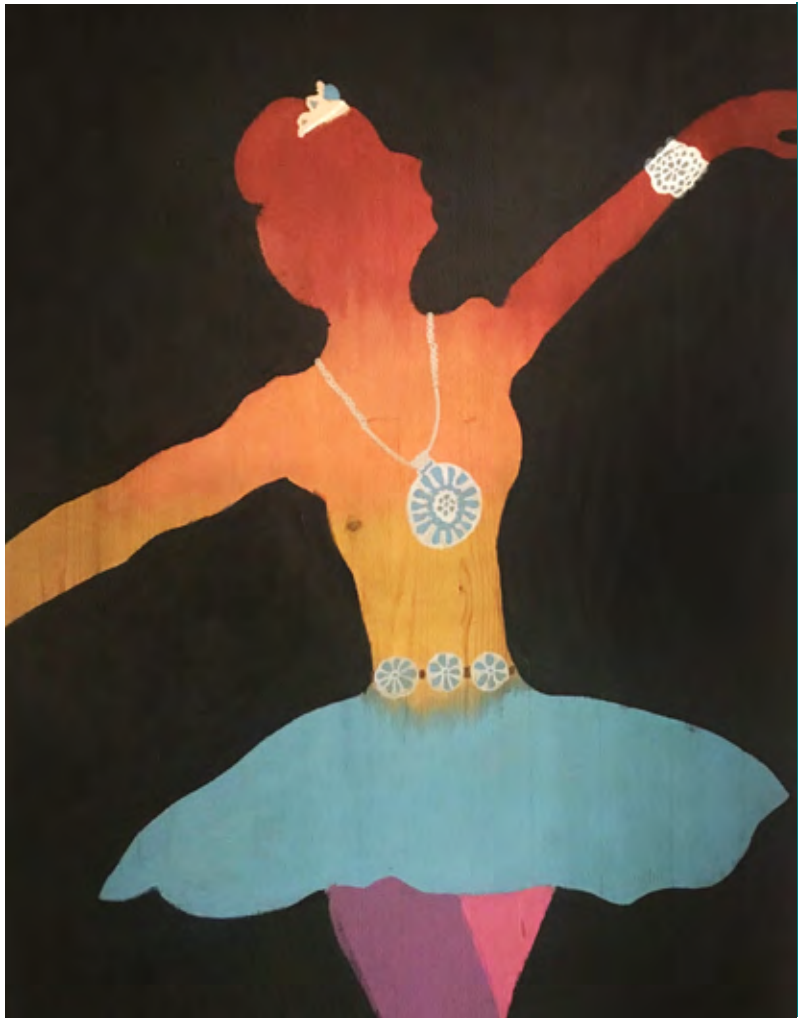
While many youth of color experience disproportionate rates of involvement in the juvenile system, Native youth also struggle with a confusing maze of jurisdiction. Depending on the charges and the location where the alleged crime was committed, they can be placed or referred into federal, state, or tribal systems. The Indian Law and Order Commission (ILOC), established by the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010, issued a report with a significant focus on areas for improvement in the juvenile justice system as it relates to Native youth, particularly due to jurisdiction. The federal system was never intended to handle juvenile cases. In fact, only two percent of federal judge and magistrate dockets are juvenile cases. This results in

NATIVE STUDENTS FACE DISPROPORTIONATE DISCIPLINE DISPARITIES

Percentage of K-12 students by race who received disciplinary actions, school year 2013-2014



CREATIVE NATIVE ARTWORK



I like to draw. The reason I draw is so I can make a statement. Sometimes I use art to express my feelings or state of well-being. When I am making a statement, I am sure to include a cultural symbol or an emotional symbol.

KAYAH M.
Thirteen years old
(Category 10-14 yo)
Tribal Affiliation: Navajo

a lack of expertise to handle these cases, and a system ill-equipped to support Native youth with proper education, mental health, cultural, and other needs.¹⁴ These supports, particularly those that are culturally-based, are crucial. Cultural connectedness has been shown in multiple studies to be one of the key protective factors for Native youth.¹⁵

If a Native youth is diverted to a state system, one of the primary challenges is that there is not a requirement to notify the tribe, according to the ILOC report.¹⁶ The result is that Native juveniles too often “go missing,” and there is very little ability for

tribes to track their well-being. Like the federal system, state systems are also often ill-equipped to provide culturally relevant support programming for Native youth.

For policymakers, one of the most important goals should be a reduction of Native youth in these systems so that they don't become a lifelong barrier to their success. There is evidence for approaches that are working. One of the strategies that the ILOC focused on was the implementation of healing and wellness courts in tribal communities. Healing and wellness courts are tribal adaptations of drug courts, which were born

SPOTLIGHT HEALING OF THE CANOE PROJECT

NATIVE YOUTH FACE SOME OF THE HIGHEST RATES OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE IN THE COUNTRY, which also puts them at risk for school truancy and entering the juvenile justice system. The Healing of the Canoe project is an innovative culturally-grounded response to this challenge led by the Suquamish Tribe and the University of Washington. Using the Pacific Northwest Canoe Journey as a metaphor for a successful life journey, youth participants in the program learn how to navigate challenges in life through skill-building based on an indigenous model. With funding from the National Institutes of Health, the project was developed through a Community Based Participatory Research method to engage diverse community leaders who led the assessment and plan to adapt the curriculum. The project team also eventually partnered with the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe. As the project leaders highlight, the planning process itself was based off of the canoe journey metaphor: “when paddling to another tribe’s village, guest canoes must stop at the shore with paddles up, introduce themselves, announce their intentions, and ask permission to come ashore.” This is just one example of the kind of lesson youth learn through the curriculum. In addition to developing the curriculum template, the project includes a training and dissemination phase. Since concluding the development of the curriculum in 2017, the Healing of the Canoe Project has trained a total of 344 attendees from 46 tribes and 14 tribal organizations in how to adapt and implement the curriculum.

SOURCE: <http://healingofthecanoe.org/>

out of a movement in the 1980’s to curb the serious increases of drug-related charges resulting in incarceration. There are now over 70 healing and wellness courts in operation across the country, focusing on traditional healing and other supports for youth, rather than nearly automatic diversion into systems of incarceration.¹⁷

When CNAY asks Native youth about any challenge they face or barriers to their success, culture is always the foundation to the solution. This is especially true when it comes to reshaping large, structural systems that were often intended to dismantle culture. Whether it’s a policy aimed at prioritizing the placement of Native children in need with their family, or building culture and traditional healing into the court system, we know that any approach to these systems should focus on bringing families, communities, and cultures back together.¹⁸



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CHAPTER THREE

EDUCATION AND JOBS



AT A TIME WHEN SCHOOL SYSTEMS NATIONWIDE ARE UNDERFUNDED AND OFTEN ILL-EQUIPPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUTH FROM TRIBAL COMMUNITIES, youth advocates are modeling effective approaches to improving education that deserve the full political support of Congress, tribal leaders, and allies.

RE-INDIGENIZING THE CLASSROOM

For indigenous peoples in the United States, education has not always taken place in the confines of a classroom setting. Since time immemorial, tribes have taught their people through engagement with the plains, prairies, deserts, mountains, and waterways of this continent, promoting a form of learning that transcends the modern American classroom. Such holistic learning integrates the natural world into the personal and educational development of Native American youth. In fact, traditional indigenous knowledge systems require an educational approach that is removed from the classroom and engages young people in an environment beyond concrete walls and standardized textbooks.

Across the country, CNAY hears from Native youth who are demanding an educational system that resides outside of the contemporary classroom setting. These youth are returning to more traditional forms of education, learning as their people have for generations in the hogan, longhouse, riverbed, and desert floor. It is within these settings that Native youth can engage in an education that reflects their needs, interests, and cultural moorings.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), passed in 2015, provides tribes with new opportunities to meaningfully engage in traditional modes of teaching. Notably, the legislation reduces the burdensome regulations that prevent tribal elders from participating in the education system, which helps promote more traditional forms of indigenous education. Previously, elders were required to gain accreditation to educate

Native youth through unnecessary and onerous certification processes.¹ To learn more about ESSA, we encourage you to visit the 2016 and 2017 State of Native Youth reports.

Despite the successes of ESSA, it is essential that the classroom is re-envisioned and re-indigenized for the benefit of Native youth and their communities. These educational environments should reflect traditional Native American modes of teaching and knowledge acquisition. Due to the immense diversity of Native American cultures, any legislation supporting a return to indigenous knowledge systems should empower tribes to formulate and implement programming rooted in their culture. One approach is to bring the classroom to the outdoors. It is here that elders can play an especially meaningful role by sharing cultural knowledge and life lessons that are impossible to teach inside the normative educational environment.

“Our elders are the foundation of who we are and who we become. With their knowledge and wisdom, our nations will thrive.”

– CJ Francis, Passamaquoddy Tribe

In the Southwest, for example, Native youth are working to incorporate traditional knowledge systems into their education system by extending learning to traditional lands and waterways with elders and cultural teachers. Damien Carlos, Native youth advocate from the Tohono O’odham Nation,

SPOTLIGHT
THE SPIRIT SURVIVES: A NATIONAL MOVEMENT
TOWARD HEALING



“THE SPIRIT SURVIVES: A NATIONAL MOVEMENT TOWARD HEALING” is the title of the inaugural conference for the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition. The conference focused on the legacy of the American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) boarding school era and modern efforts to promote healing and reconciliation. The conference featured Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, Dr. Yellow Bird, and survivors and relatives of the boarding schools. We are thrilled with the important work the coalition promotes and look forward to next year’s conference.

created the I’oligam Youth Alliance, a youth initiative to supplement the education system on his reservation. Through youth outings to the desert floor, participating in bahidaj (saguaro cactus fruit) harvesting, traditional storytelling nights, and other efforts, Damien has worked to bring Native youth back to their cultural heritage and educate them on systems of self-care, community engagement, and personal growth using traditional indigenous knowledge systems.

While grassroots efforts to re-indigenize the education system are making an impact, it is important that alternative approaches to learning also occur within school systems. There is a need for political action to grant more funding and flexibility for tribes to engage in this work and to educate their young in accordance to tradition. This can be achieved by political action and legislation. However, it is crucial that non-Native allies help in these efforts. Furthermore, it is important that Native youth groups such as Damien’s receive support from outside

organizations and funders so they are able to provide supplementary educational curricula.

SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORT
SYSTEMS

It is imperative that Native youth attending school at all levels have support systems to ensure their social, emotional, and academic well-being. For infants and young children, programs such as Head Start and culturally informed childcare can help provide the academic and cultural resources they need to grow up in healthy environments. These programs also offer parents of all ages further flexibility to work during normal business hours. However, these programs must be available to all families regardless of their ability to pay.

After-school programming is another means by which youth at all ages can remain engaged in cultural, academic, athletic, and creative pursuits. These programs provide

Native youth safe and uplifting alternatives to unstructured and unsupervised after-school activities. Furthermore, when done properly, these programs provide youth an essential support infrastructure that enables to them to connect with mentors, friends, and counselors. These connections help youth stay engaged in school, maintain healthy social bonds, and grow personally.²

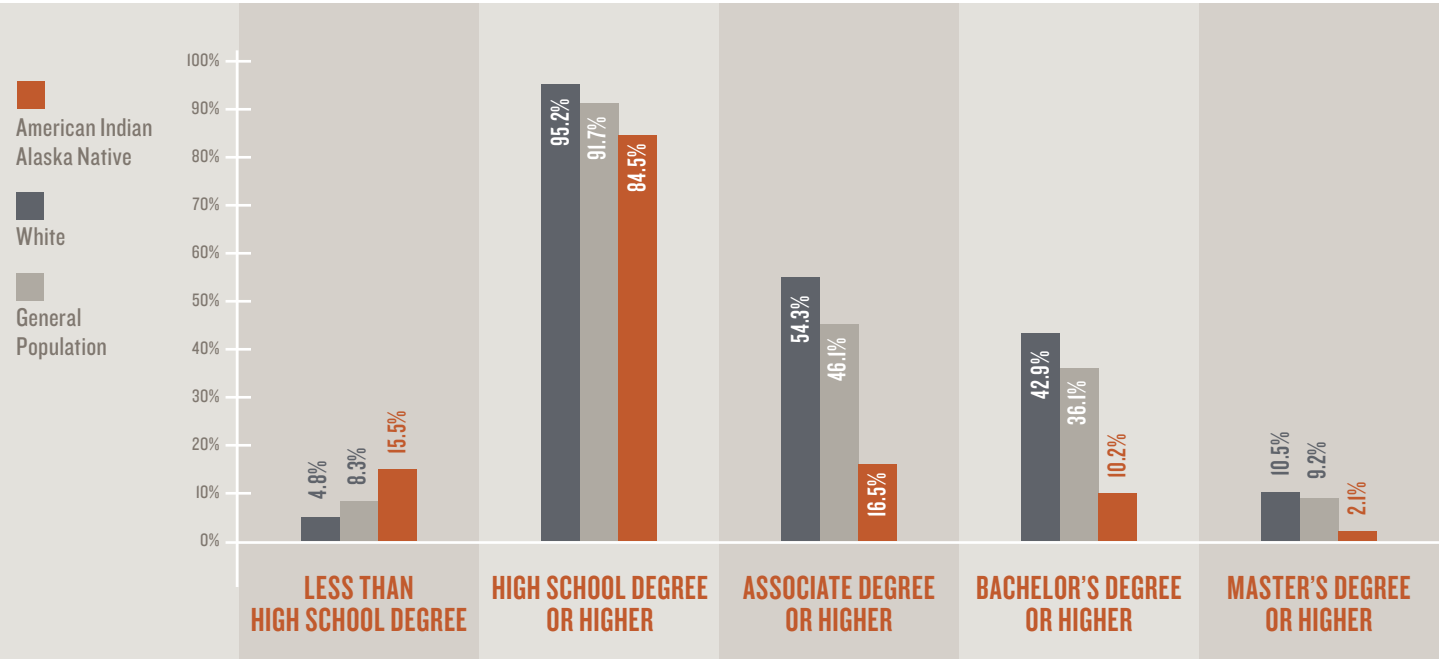
It is important that Native youth are nurtured and supported at all stages of their academic development, including adolescence. Across the country, high school and college Native students are creating affinity and alliance groups that provide Native youth the space and community they need to live vibrant and emotionally safe lives in their institutions of learning. One of the largest and most successful coalitions of Native affinity groups is the Ivy Native Youth Council, an organization that connects Native youth affinity groups from each of the Ivy League universities. These affinity groups provide a Native community of fellow indigenous

people who understand and appreciate traditional customs, norms, and ways of being. The Council hosts annual convenings ranging from board meetings on how to better their institutions of higher learning, to organizing powwows that not only provide community for Natives on campus but also help educate their non-Native peers about Native cultures.

These affinity groups, both at the collegiate and high school level, have the power to dramatically improve the well-being of Native youth across the country. Although coming together as Native peoples can be protective and healing in its own right, it is imperative that these groups have the resources they need to organize community events and provide personal, professional, and educational trainings specifically with Native youth in mind.

Native youth advocate and Gen-I Ambassador Jess Bradby of the Pamunkey Tribe has utilized Native affinity groups to help provide

YOUTH EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



mental health services and support systems for Native youth. Jess and other Native youth from across the country have advocated for culturally informed and appropriate mental health resources for Native youth attending institutions of higher learning, saying Native youth often seek out counseling only to be re-traumatized or triggered by untrained and insensitive health care professionals. Pomona College graduate and 2018 NCAI Health Fellow Esme Roddy notes that oftentimes, affinity groups and fellow Native students are the only support systems Native youth have when faced with institutions that do not provide culturally informed mental health services for their students. This can have devastating effects on the emotional, physical, and academic well-being of Native students. Often they are either in need of acute mental health treatment or they are providing care for someone else who does. Either way, it is a burden no young person should bear.

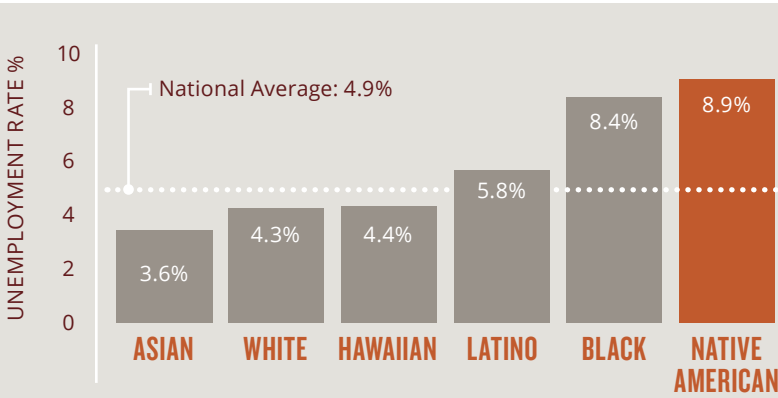
COMMUNITY TIES AND VIRTUAL INTERNSHIPS

Many Native youth want to maintain substantive ties to their communities. Some choose to stay in their community so they can help support their family members and maintain a connection to their ancestral homes. Others choose to move away from their hometowns to pursue educational or professional advancement as a means of supporting their communities later on or from afar. Often, unemployment on reservations leads Native youth to seek jobs off reservation or remain under-employed while staying close to home. Regardless of whether Native youth choose to remain within their city, town, or reservation, it is imperative that they have lasting educational and professional opportunities.

In many tribal communities throughout the United States, there are limited job opportunities and few industries and professions available to Native youth. In 2016, the President of the Navajo Nation, home of the largest reservation, gave an address in which he cited an unemployment rate on the reservation of more than 50 percent.³ In the same year, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released a report stating that the national rate of unemployment was 4.9 percent, and the unemployment rate for American Indians and Alaska Natives sat at 8.9 percent, nearly double the national rate.⁴ The lack of employment opportunities for Native American youth, both on and off reservation, is unacceptable and needs to change.

One way in which Native youth have been able to stay connected to their communities is through virtual internship programs that allow interns to work remotely and communicate with their employers through email, phone, and other long-distance forms of communication. Although virtual internships remain largely underused, they

U.S. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, 2016



In 2016, the overall unemployment rate for the United States was 4.9 percent; however, the rate varied across race and ethnicity groups. Among the race groups, the rates were higher for American Indians and Alaska Natives (8.9 percent), Blacks (8.4 percent), and people categorized as being of Two or More Races (7.5 percent) than for Asians (3.6 percent), Whites (4.3 percent), and Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders (4.4 percent). The jobless rate for people of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity was 5.8 percent, higher than the 4.7 percent rate for non-Hispanics.

CREATIVE NATIVE ARTWORK



To be Generation Indigenous means to be born strong. You are born worthy. Indigenous is small, compared to the feeling and the connections that come with being born Indigenous. We are a sacred part of the sacred hoop my family talks about. We are protectors, we are providers, we are our culture and our language. We are courageous. We are resilient. My drawing represents all life, and life, no matter the form, is sacred and has a purpose.

HAPAN T.
10 years old, (Category 10-14 yo)
Tribal Affiliation:
Crow Creek Sioux Tribe/Dine' Nation

SPOTLIGHT
TURNING POINTS MAGAZINE

TURNING POINTS MAGAZINE IS A NATIVE MAGAZINE AND BLOG BASED OUT OF ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY IN TEMPE, ARIZONA. The magazine is notably written both for and by Native students. Modern American pop-culture can be rife with inaccurate and harmful media about Native Americans and Alaska Natives, making the presence of Turning Points Magazine all the more important for Native students. We encourage our readers to check out Turning Points Magazine and find ways to support Native youth organizations like this one.



are growing nationwide. These programs allow Native youth who remain in their home communities to gain professional experience and build their resumes and abilities while staying deeply tied to their communities. Conversely, for those Native youth who move away for college or other reasons, tribally operated virtual internship programs can allow them to stay connected to their communities from afar. Although few tribes provide programming for such internships, these arrangements have the great potential to make a lasting impact in the lives of Native youth who wish to serve their tribes while they are away from home.

In 2017, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Health Service started virtual internship programs designed to help provide youth with greater access to career and professional opportunities. These internship opportunities are an important step in the right direction and help Native youth gain professional experience without the burdens of moving away from their communities.

IN CLOSING

When provided with the support systems, professional opportunities, and the resources they need, advocates like Damien Carlos, Jess Bradby, and the Ivy Native Youth Council are proof that Native youth are capable of creating a better world for their communities and our country as a whole. Promoting the social, emotional, and academic development of Native youth from a young age will help them achieve their educational goals and live healthy lives – the staple of any successful education system. However, without the support of allies from across the country and from a diversity of communities, Native youth will not gain the resources and attention they need from government officials, foundations, and the general public. We can all help support Native youth in their professional and academic well-being, and we all have a role to play in the advancement of tribal sovereignty.

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Former Newman’s Own Foundation Fellow and artist Del Curfman, with youth from Mandaree High School on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation after a water color exhibition.



CHAPTER FOUR
SACRED SITES, LANDS, AND WATERWAYS

IN RECLAIMING THE PLACES AND SPACES THAT ARE TRADITIONALLY CONSEQUENTIAL TO THEIR LIVES, NATIVE YOUTH ARE ACTIVELY EXERCISING THEIR RIGHTS AND USING CULTURE AS A MEANS OF CONSERVATION, PREVENTION, AND ADVOCACY. Ceremonies, histories, and traditions are what connect Native people to sacred sites, lands, and waterways. By practicing culture and traditions, Native youth are working to reclaim and decolonize lands and spaces and, in turn, are revitalizing traditional ways of life. This is what it means to decolonize space. Through decolonization advocacy, Native youth are leading the effort to change the legacy of colonialism, to continue with the momentum of Standing Rock and No Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) movements, to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change, and to use the law to protect sacred sites and challenge the status quo surrounding these issues.

LEGACY OF COLONIALISM
& RECLAMATION OF SPACE

The legacy of colonialism is still present in sacred sites, lands, and waterways. One way Native youth are addressing this is by taking ownership of this legacy and creating positive change within their communities. Programs like Fresh Tracks, which brings Native and non-Native youth together to create cross-cultural movements through outdoor leadership trainings, are examples of youth taking ownership of this space.

Paddling over a series of days and even weeks and hundreds of miles, the Tribal Canoe Journeys is an annual gathering of tribes along the west coast. Celebrating over 20 years of reclamation of sacred waterways, Canoe Journeys has been a place of navigating traditional water routes, healing, song, dances, and potlatch. Native youth have been heavily involved with Journeys and are now in positions of leading dances and songs, skippering canoes, and leading their own youth canoes to their destination. “Canoe Journey is a way of life. We are carving, paddling, and breathing the way of our ancestors back to life with each stroke of the paddle we take. Traveling on the sacred waterways of our ancestors is healing for both the people and Mother Earth,” says

Shavaughna Underwood of the Quinault Indian Nation.

Today’s borders between the United States and surrounding countries are not reflective of Native American history, but rather are the result of colonization, relocation, and forced assimilation to the first inhabitants of the land. Borders influence how Native peoples view their homeland, the network of relationships from past and present, and natural and cultural resources. Additionally, the United States federal government “owns”

“Imagine having to cross two separate Customs checkpoints to go from one end of your community to the other, multiple times a day. This is an example of the restrictions put on Native American communities by non-Native regulations and part of the ongoing systemic inequality that is forced upon our lands.”
– Madison White, Mohawk of Akwesasne

and manages 635-640 million acres of land, with two percent of it held in trust, managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.¹

SPOTLIGHT
GENERATION INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT BUILDERS
FELLOWSHIP (GEN-I MBF)



THE GEN-I MOVEMENT BUILDERS FELLOWSHIP provides support for Native youth activists working toward social justice. The six-month fellowship connects fellows to social justice stakeholders, institutions, and other resources to amplify the Native youth voice within broader movements.



The system regarding borders between land involves complex processes of titles, restrictions, obligations, statutes, and regulations that all affected entities must work through. The Turtle Mountain Band of the Chippewa Indian Reservation is located just 10 miles south of the Canadian border.² Because of this geographic location, issues related to border and jurisdiction policies include law enforcement support. When crimes are committed, a lack of clarity regarding which agency will be dispatched (Bureau of Indian Affairs, Sheriff Department, Tribal Police Department) delays justice. The Turtle Mountain Youth Council works to promote a stronger Native presence in these systems and to ensure better processes.³

Native peoples do not believe that land and water can be possessed by people, clearly conflicting with jurisdictional law mentioned above. Youth continue to come together with the awareness and wisdom that even though borders exist, Native people can practice and protect their cultures.

It is inspiring to have Native youth at the forefront of re-indigenizing land and waterways. Youth in urban communities find this effort central to their work. The Chi-City Youth Council, located in Chicago, is a Native group that thrives in an urban setting. The youth council provides a Native presence in a setting where many do not believe indigenous people exist. The youth council has studied plants through nature walks and has consulted with elders to create

a garden within the city, with plants that hold significant medicinal purposes. The Chi-City Youth Council is dedicated to re-indigenizing space by reintroducing traditional plants into the city of Chicago.⁴

Due to mining, the Coeur d’Alene tribe’s waterways have long been contaminated, causing the amount of endemic wildlife to be minimal.⁵ The tribe’s Fish & Wildlife Department has worked to restore traditional waterways. For the past 10 years, the Coeur d’Alene Tribe’s Fish & Wildlife Department has worked to bring awareness to tribal schools for a program called “Trout in the Classroom.”⁶ This year, salmon curriculum was added to the studies, teaching 300 youth the life cycle and the cultural significance of salmon. “Reintroducing our salmon was bringing justice to our ancestors and giving our tribe the power to fight for our rights as Indian people. For me, it was eye opening to see the resilience of our tribe and it gave me strength,” says Coeur d’Alene youth Jordyn Nomee. A celebration was held at Hangman Creek, where after more than 100 years, Chinook salmon have been reintroduced into traditional waterways of the Coeur d’Alene people with tribal youth at the forefront of this movement.

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE
CHANGE

It is essential to address the undeniable impacts of climate change. The policies of the current administration and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are having negative effects on Native communities, including dangers to water sources, land being misused or used without permission, and general ecocide. Native youth are studying impacts and creating opportunities in their youth programs to address climate change, creating a new

perspective. This perspective is critical to future national discourse about land and water systems and must be honored. With their understanding and reclamation, Native youth are working towards helping create and implement safer practices for a brighter future.

“I hope that my work lifts the voices of indigenous people and protects our frontline warriors defending our water, our air, and other gifts from Mother Earth.”

– Michael Charles, Diné (Navajo)

Felicité Robichaux, a United Houma Nation member at the forefront of climate change advocacy, works to restore traditional plant knowledge and reintegration within her South Louisiana tribal community. In her life, she has seen her traditional land disappear into the ocean. “The relationship between the Houma People and our lands is fundamental to our existence as an Indian nation. The medicines we use to prevent illnesses and heal our sick are all tied to these lands, and without it, our traditional medicines and way of life will disappear. The medicinal plants that my great-grandfather used and that my grandfather grew up with are nowhere to be found because of coastal erosion, toxins, and hurricanes. My grandfather and I worry about how the remaining plants will fare, so we began replanting them to higher ground. It is our hope that our traditional medicines and way of life will be restored and passed down to the next generation.”

From Barrow, Alaska, to the Everglades in Florida, indigenous communities have experienced climate change. Seasons are coming at different dates, often lasting

longer and creating harsher elements. These changes impact plants, when and if they will grow, as well as animal migration, mating, and hibernation seasons.⁷ Examples are seen in the Pacific Northwest and plateau regions (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana), where snow in mountains melts at a rapid rate down to the basins, causing game to follow the water streams to places where animals have previously not been, often in populated cities and spaces.⁸

Native youth are aware that the effects of climate change are real and threatening their ways of life and culture. Climate change impacts the livelihood of Native peoples regarding fishing, hunting, gathering, ceremonies, and access to land and water. For a more in-depth look at this, please look at last year's State of Native Youth Report.

USING THE LAW TO PROTECT SACRED SITES

The United States government is in alignment with Native youth and the desire to protect the sacred sites, lands, and waterways their ancestors once inhabited. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) obligates museums and federal agencies to return to lineal descendants certain Native American cultural items.⁹ This is important in the reclamation efforts that youth are often leading. Additionally, in 2017 Senator Martin Heinrich of New Mexico proposed the introduction of the Safeguard Tribal Objects of Patrimony (STOP) Act.¹⁰ This act concentrates on protection and repercussions for violating sacred sites. The STOP Act was written in consultation with tribes seeking protection from exploitation of cultural items and heritage.¹¹ Sacred objects play a fundamental role in the connection of culture and identity, and this critical aspect is at the forefront of youth voices. Congressional

support in the efforts to protect sacred lands and properties of indigenous peoples enhances the government-to-government relationship. It is important for Native youth to continue to work with allies in Congress, to ensure that laws to protect their cultural items are passed and effective.

Kaden Jeray, Northern Cheyenne, was raised to protect sacred sites. Kaden was raised with a traditional upbringing, influenced by his elders. Kaden is passionate about bringing home cultural items and remains of his ancestors which have been displaced by historical massacres including Sand Creek. Kaden has worked in this space since he was 15 years old. Leading healing runs to the Sand Creek massacre site helps the community heal and bring awareness to the history of the massacre. Kaden has participated in government consultation meetings related to NAGPRA; he is often the only youth voice in these meetings. He is dedicated to ensuring that remains and cultural artifacts be returned to Indian peoples.

CONTINUING THE MOVEMENT OF ACTIVISM

To date, the media coverage of Standing Rock has all but disappeared. Though it is not at the forefront of national discussions, the momentum of advocacy continues, and Native youth are leading the movements.

Michael Charles, Navajo, Gen-I Movement Builder Fellow, is committed to increasing indigenous representation in higher education and climate activism.¹² Michael is a PhD student in the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at The Ohio State University. As an activist, he is addressing the current climate change negotiations and the impact on Native peoples. He has provided a powerful voice for Indian Country at the United Nations Climate

CREATIVE NATIVE ARTWORK



The concept behind this piece is to reflect intertribal unity and emphasize the bright future indigenous people have if we continue to work together. I use traditional and urban native imagery to reflect strength in solidarity. The wording is a brief message that reflects the indigenous philosophy of reciprocity and the responsibility of people as stewards of the land. The message attempts to emphasize the fact that it is important for us Native folks to share some of our traditional knowledge and experience with others in order to create a more just/caring society.

RIVER GARZA

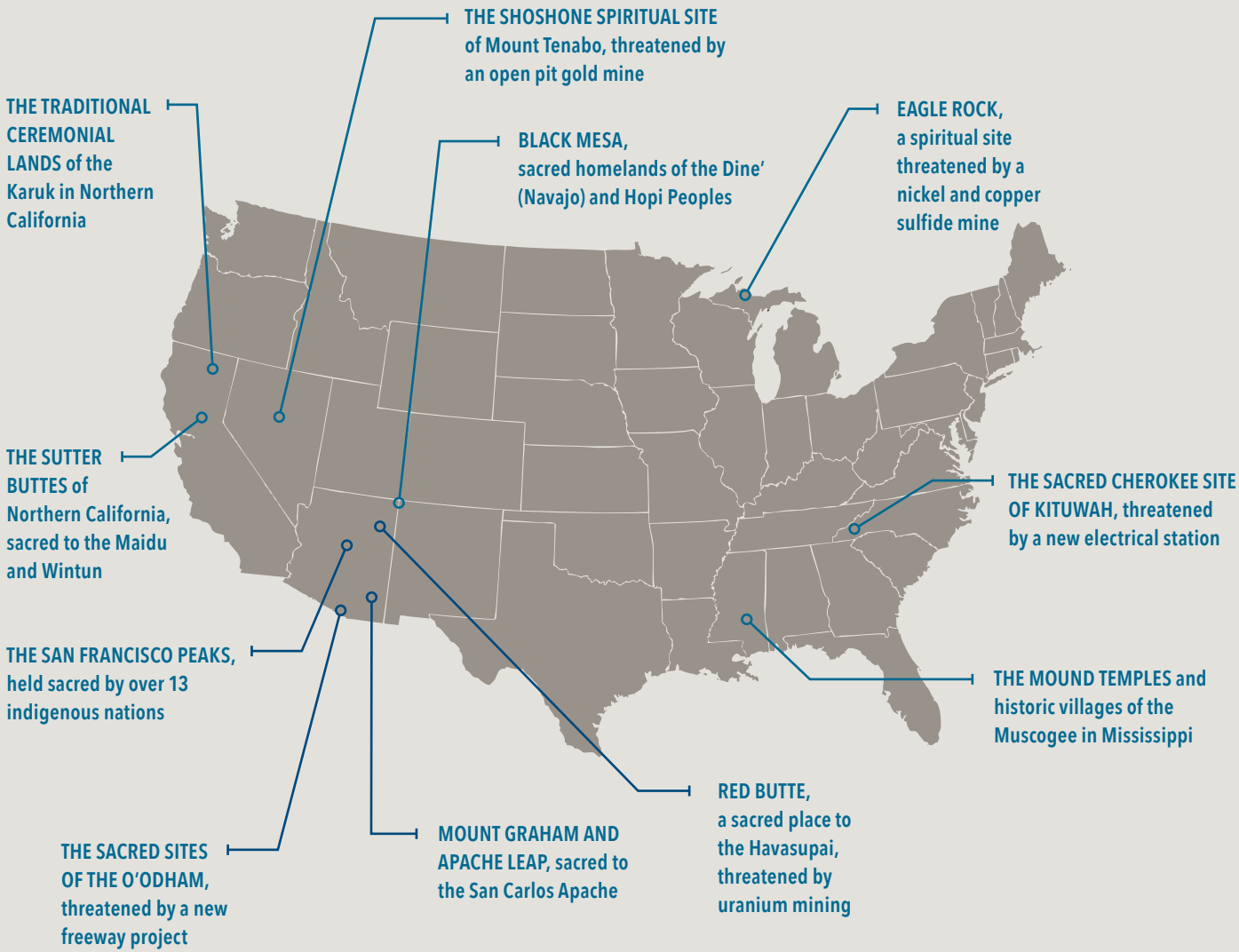
23 years old, (Category 20-24 yo)

Tribal Affiliation: Tongva

Negotiations, the American Indian Science & Engineering Conference, and other platforms. Michael is rooted in indigenous values and is dedicated to bringing together western science and traditional ways of knowing to address climate change. “I hope that my work lifts the voices of indigenous people and

protects our frontline warriors defending our water, our air, and other gifts from Mother Earth. In honor of the difficult battles my ancestors fought to enable my existence, I will stand up for our Mother Earth with the same spirit, tenacity, and love that I have experienced within my (tribal) community.”

SACRED SITES IN DANGER



SPOTLIGHT
FRESH TRACKS



FRESH TRACKS WAS INSPIRED by a call from President Obama in 2015 for new programs that use the outdoors to address opportunity gaps facing young Americans. Led by the Center for Native American Youth in partnership with the Children & Nature Network, Fresh Tracks brings diverse indigenous, rural, and urban youth together for three-day regional cross-cultural trainings that rely on the outdoors as a safe and supportive platform for leadership development and community action. You can learn more about Fresh Tracks at FreshTracksAction.org



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CHAPTER FIVE CITIZENSHIP



BY LAW, AMERICAN INDIANS AND ALASKA NATIVES ARE CONSIDERED BOTH CITIZENS OF THEIR TRIBAL NATIONS AND OF THE UNITED STATES.¹ For most individuals, citizenship comes with certain civic responsibilities and duties, like jury duty or voting. But for many tribal citizens, being civically engaged and socially responsible isn't just a matter of duty – it is an inherent part of their indigenous culture and identity. Native youth especially are playing an important role in efforts to ensure current and future generations understand and exercise their rights as tribal and U.S. citizens. Across the country, youth as young as 14 are joining youth councils, organizing protests and petitions, and getting involved in other civic actions to protect aspects of their culture and sovereignty they hold sacred for themselves, their communities, and the people who will come after them. This youth-driven civic engagement touches on some of the most pressing issues confronting the entire country, including the protection of cultural practices and languages, the distribution of political power, and the policies surrounding immigration and borders.

CULTURE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

A case study by Emerson College, in partnership with two Canadian universities, of Canada's Idle No More (INM) campaign, supports the notion that for Native peoples, civic engagement and cultural engagement go hand in hand.² On the surface, the #IdleNoMore campaign may seem like many other social media protest movements; however, INM is deeply rooted in 500 years of indigenous resistance. It "brings attention to indigenous peoples in Canada and their culture, struggles, and identities while advocating for political change."³ In the United States, hundreds of youth are altruistically taking action in their communities with the same goals in mind. The Generation Indigenous (Gen-I) National Native Youth Network is comprised of nearly 2,000 youth who are committed to preserving their cultural identities through civic actions. Within our network, about 50 percent of youth applicants to our top leadership programs, like Champions for Change, said they were passionate about culture and language preservation. Nearly all those youth who said culture and language was a focus area also mentioned other passions, including

mental health, the environment, and education – evidence that culture permeates through every aspect of life.

Take the example of Vanessa Goodthunder, a Native youth from the Lower Sioux Indian Community in Minnesota. While working as the tribal liaison for the Governor's office, she organized the first-ever state tribal youth gathering, the Minnesota Tribal Youth Gathering (MTYG). MTYG was fashioned after the Obama Administration's White House Tribal Youth Gathering (WHTYG), which convened tribal leaders, key political decision makers, and Native youth for discussions about culture and civic engagement. Vanessa's passion for language revitalization brought her to the White House in 2015 as a Gen-I Ambassador for WHTYG and was later recognized as a 2016 Champion for Change. Some of her efforts include becoming a Dakota language instructor and founding Daunkotapi, a program that connects and supports youth from the four Dakota communities. In December 2017, Governor Mark Dayton proclaimed December 8 "Vanessa Goodthunder Day" for this remarkable young woman's commitment and efforts to support her community and the state of Minnesota.⁴

SPOTLIGHT
UDALL FOUNDATION NATIVE AMERICAN
CONGRESSIONAL INTERNSHIP



2011 Udall Congressional Interns in front of Capitol Hill.

THE UDALL FOUNDATION'S NATIVE AMERICAN CONGRESSIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM provides American Indian and Alaska Native students with the opportunity to gain practical experience with the federal legislative process to understand firsthand the government-to-government relationship between tribes and the federal government. Twelve AI/AN college, graduate, and law students are selected every summer to live and work in Washington, D.C., for about three months. Selected program participants receive housing, a living allowance, and transportation to and from D.C., as well as an additional education stipend of \$1,200. Interns additionally join an alumni network of over 2,000 students and professionals committed to serving Indian Country.



The fight to allow traditional regalia and eagle feathers at public events, especially high school and college graduation, is another effort to preserve culture through civic action. Student protests and petitions have forced local and state governments to take legislative actions and introduce bills that would allow students to wear items of cultural significance and make it illegal for schools and government agencies to create discriminatory policies. Montana passed its regalia bill in April 2017, while similar bills have been introduced in California and Kansas.⁵

ASSERTING POLITICAL
POWER

U.S. citizenship comes with certain privileges, including the ability to seek political representation and run for political office. Currently, there are only two Native

Americans in Congress. But this year saw a record number of Native Americans running for political office for the midterm elections.⁶ Some of the most notable candidates include Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) who ran for Congress in New Mexico, Paulette Jordan (Coeur d'Alene Tribe of Indians) for governor in Idaho, Peggy Flanagan (White Earth Band of Ojibwe) for lieutenant governor in Minnesota, and Sharice Davids (Ho-Chunk Nation) for Congress in Kansas.⁷ For many youth, these Native women serve as important role models, showing young Native Americans that they, too, have a place in government. Gen-I Ambassador Megan LaRose (Navajo Nation) – whose own mother, Debbie Nez-Manuel, ran for State Senate in Arizona – says, “It took my mom to run for office to get me to believe in this political system. Familiar faces and culture have the power to spark a movement of diversity within our government.” She goes on, saying: “As I observed her work day after day, I noticed a huge shift in my

political awareness. It used to be a system that I thought didn't include me, so I didn't pay attention. That all changed when my mother ran for state Senate. The process became personal. I knew my mom would be a great candidate. But the question that I kept asking was how does an indigenous woman become a state-elected official? It all seemed so far-fetched. I think that's what many Native youth feel. How could they not feel disconnected with a system that is so minimally diverse? The process...was stressful, and it took a lot of work...[since] my mom decided to run later in the race [but] still managed to make it such a close race. There was no bit of regret in her voice as she spoke to friends and family about the results. She wasn't ashamed or embarrassed. She was proud for unapologetically representing her family and Dine' people.”

In Washington, D.C., there is a movement within Congress to help increase representations on Capitol Hill. Currently, there are only 36 American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiians out of 9,000 staffers working in Congress. Programs like George Washington University's Native American Political Leadership Program (NAPLP) and the Udall Foundation Congressional Internship empower youth to get involved in political life. Both NAPLP and the Udall Internship programs bring youth from across the country to spend a few months in the nation's capital to learn about the inner workings of the federal government. These programs, and others like them, have been beneficial for many Native youth professionals working in policy and law. Eric Reimers, an NAPLP alumnus, serves as a legislative correspondent for Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski's office, and he credits the program for helping him pursue a career in public service. “Programs like these are incredible because you're going to be exposed to so many important people – policy makers, advocates, community leaders – and

they are all committed to making Indian Country better. The education and insight you get from these programs will help you make positive changes in your communities.”

Native youth are also getting involved in civic life within their own communities. The United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY), Inc., a national association of Native youth councils across the United States, currently has 222 affiliated youth councils in 32 states as part of their network.⁸ Their annual national conference is the largest gathering of Native American youth in the country, with 2,000 attendees expected each year.⁹ Champion for Change Sarah Schilling (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians) is one of the thousands of youth in UNITY's networks. In 2009, Sarah founded her tribe's very first youth council at the age of 18. With the help of her community, they established a constitution, bylaws, and code of conduct. Under her leadership, the youth council became affiliated with UNITY.

“It's extremely important to get involved in politics because the Native perspective, voice, and vote matter! We have the right to cast our vote, run for office, and speak our truths to shape American history. ”

– TaNeel Filesteel (White Clay and Nakoda Tribes of the Fort Belknap), Gen-I Ambassador

With over 70 percent of AI/ANs living in metropolitan areas, urban Native youth are similarly engaging in civic action.¹⁰ The Chi-Nations Youth Council, for example, serves Native youth in the Chicago's tribally diverse urban area. Founded in 2012 by Co-Presidents

Naomi Harvey-Turner and 2018 Champion for Change Anthony Tamez, the Chi-Nations Youth are involved in civic actions around the country, traveling to other cities to advocate for environmental protection as well as to petition to stop the use of racist mascots like the Chicago Blackhawks and Washington’s NFL team. The Chi-Nations youth are a prime example of how Native American youth are civically engaged not just in their local and tribal community, but nationally and, for some, even across borders

IMMIGRATION, BORDERS, AND INDIGENEITY

As discussed in the “Systems Involving Youth” chapter, indigenous youth and their families are at the center of ongoing debates and policies around immigration and border patrol – often literally. Several tribal communities straddle the borders between the United States and neighboring countries. The borders negotiated between the United States, Canada, and Mexico have had a long history of adversely impacting indigenous peoples in these countries, and this continues to be the case to this day. However, as with other issues youth experience in their communities, young people are stepping up to advocate for positive change.

The Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne is one community in the north that straddles international borders. Known as the St. Regis Mohawk Reservation on the New York side, Akwesasne sits on the border of the United States and Canada.¹¹ Because of this geographic positioning, the community has two sets of elected governing bodies, one on each side of the border, and citizens are granted dual American and Canadian citizenship (as well as being citizens of the tribe).¹² Having two governing bodies secures representation for Mohawk people

on both sides and establishes government-to-government relationships with both the United States and Canada.¹³ However, their unique status is not enough to mitigate the challenges of the border. Akwesasne residents must go through checkpoints with passports, sometimes several times a day, just to get to their jobs or a doctor’s appointment on the other side of the border.¹⁴ Stricter border policies have also meant increased law enforcement, which recently prompted the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne in Canada to provide “Know Your Rights” pocket guides to protect its citizens.¹⁵

In the south, the Tohono O’odham Nation, which is the second-largest tribe by landholdings, spans the Arizona Sonora Desert into the state of Sonora in Mexico.¹⁶ Due to borderlines, 2,000 of the 34,000 tribal members live in Mexico, isolated from the rest of the community.¹⁷ Unlike Akwesasne Mohawks, Tohono O’odham citizens are not granted dual citizenship. Currently, Tohono O’odham citizens can only legally cross the border at the San Miguel Gate with their tribal IDs; however, with the proposed southern wall, many fear that this passage will be closed off and the community divided.¹⁸ Not only that, the wall would also desecrate sacred sites.¹⁹ Unsurprisingly, the resounding sentiment for many Tohono O’odham citizens around the border wall has been negative, and the tribal government has been adamant about its opposition. Earlier this year, the Tohono O’odham Nation released a video asserting “There’s No O’odham Word for Wall,” and the Legislative Council issued a resolution in opposition to Executive Order 13767, which called for the immediate construction of a southern border wall.²⁰ According to Tohono O’odham citizen and Champion for Change Damien Carlos, “Since the election in 2016, there has been an increase in O’odham working to stay informed about decisions being made in D.C.” He observes that “there

CREATIVE NATIVE ARTWORK



My art piece is called Hesaketv Encehvllvetv (Struggle to breath/survive). The late Wilbur Chebon Gouge once made a speech called “The Struggle to Survive” and it is about the strength of the Muscogee (Creek) woman. Today, being a young Creek woman, I believe in being strong and understanding where we come from is what Generation Indigenous is. Our women are leaders, mothers, sisters, artists, soldiers, and keepers of traditions. My submission is a traditional ribbon dress that I sewed and painted. The red and yellow represent the fire and strength of our women. Being proud of your culture is survival!

LOUISA H.

15 years old, (Category 15-19 yo)

Tribal Affiliation: Muscogee Creek

has been a great amount of effort being put into registering O’odham to vote and in getting these members to the polls on election days. A community organization here at home, Indivisible Tohono, has hosted town halls allowing O’odham to meet and listen to candidates running to represent Arizona in Congress.”

A great irony in the discourse over immigration is that those who are often found to be crossing the borders – those who are often labeled “undocumented” aliens – are, in reality, the original inhabitants of the land. As Betty Lyons (Onondaga Nation), president of the American Indian Law Alliance, writes: “Many so-called ‘undocumented’ people are in fact indigenous Peoples, children of Original

Nations with a millennial history of travel across the continent to trade and engage in ceremonial obligations at sacred sites of their traditional territories before the United States existed.”²¹ The current international borders between the United States and Canada, the United States and Mexico, and the rest of the Americas are arbitrary borders established by colonizers who had no regard for existing nations and communities. The mass detention and deportation of these so-called “undocumented” individuals violates indigenous rights, including the right to have access and mobility to cultural sites and traditional lands, and to exist as a family unit.²² In response to the deportation crisis and the border wall, Native youth from border and non-border tribes have been speaking

SPOTLIGHT
CHI-NATIONS YOUTH COUNCIL



CHI-NATIONS YOUTH COUNCIL IS AN URBAN-BASED NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH COUNCIL IN CHICAGO, IL. It was founded in 2012 and is comprised of a diverse group of youth and adults with a mission to create a supportive open environment for Native youth, to raise awareness of cultural identity, and to promote a healthy lifestyle through arts, activism, and education. The Youth Council works toward this goal by strengthening community through avid volunteerism, fundraising, educating, and traditional values. Using culturally based programs and curricula, the Chi-Nations Youth Council educates their local community on causes related to land and social issues that arise from being urban Natives. They aim to build strong relationships with each other, the land, and other communities, both Native and non-Native.



out against the separation of communities and families. Gen-I Ambassador and 2015 Champion for Change Rory Taylor compares the current crisis to the experience of his grandparents being put into boarding schools. “This land has been my family’s home since time immemorial. We believe that we were created from the land that America rests on today. We, like our new indigenous, and non-indigenous, neighbors from Central America, have encountered countless familial traumas to be here.”²³

THE POWER OF NATIVE
YOUTH AS CITIZENS

The concept of citizenship can be a complicated one for tribal members. It is only recently that progress has been made in asserting more political and civic power within the structures of the U.S. government. There are still many barriers – both literal with the border wall and figurative with policies and practices – that need to be overcome, but Native youth around the country are stepping up to spark necessary change.

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2018 STATE OF NATIVE YOUTH GLOSSARY

1. **American Indian (AI)/Alaska Native (AN)**, as used in the United States Census, is a person “having origins in any original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.” This term is often used in reference to collected data about the population.
2. **Generation Indigenous (Gen-I)** is a cross-sector initiative launched by President Obama in 2014 to focus on strengthening resources for Native youth and building new platforms where they can share their voice, recognize one another, and inspire positive change. As part of the initiative, CNAY manages the National Native Youth Network of Gen-I. For more information about the Gen-I Network, visit www.cnay.org.
3. **Indian Country** legally refers to “(a) all land within the limits of any Indian reservation under the jurisdiction of the United States Government, notwithstanding the issuance of any patent, and, including rights-of-way running through the reservation, (b) all dependent Indian communities within the borders of the United States whether within the original or subsequently acquired territory thereof, and whether within or without the limits of a state, and (c) all Indian allotments, the Indian titles to which have not been extinguished, including rights-of-way running through the same.”
4. **Indian Reservation** “is an area of land reserved for a tribe or tribes under treaty or other agreement with the United States, executive order, or federal statute or administrative action as permanent tribal homelands, and where the federal government holds title to the land in trust on behalf of the tribe.”

5. **Native American** refers to “all Native peoples of the United States and its trust territories.” This includes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Chamorros, American Samoans, and U.S. residents from Canada First Nations and indigenous communities in Central and South America. For the purposes of CNAY, Native American refers to any self-identifying individual of indigenous ancestry in the Americas.
6. **Sacred Site** refers to “any specific, discrete, narrowly delineated location on Federal land that is identified by an Indian tribe, or Indian individual determined to be an appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion, as sacred by virtue of its established religious significance to, or ceremonial use by, an Indian religion; provided that the tribe or appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion has informed the agency of the existence of such a site.”
7. **Tribe**, otherwise called a “federally recognized (Indian) Tribe,” refers to any American Indian or Alaska Native tribal entity with a government-to-government relationship with the U.S. that is entitled to federal trust obligations. There are currently 567 federally recognized tribes in the United States. Each tribe is distinct, with its own culture, traditions, language, and community. CNAY, however, also represents state-recognized tribes and tribes not recognized by state or federal governments. When using the word tribe in our work, we are referring to all tribes in the United States unless specifically outlined as a federally recognized tribe.

8. **Tribal Consultation** “is a process that aims to create effective collaboration with Indian tribes and to inform Federal decision-makers. Consultation is built upon government-to-government exchange of information and promotes enhanced communication that emphasizes trust, respect, and shared responsibility.”
9. **Trust and Treaty Obligation** refers to the federal government’s responsibility “to protect tribal treaty rights, lands, assets, and resources, as well as a duty to carry out the mandates of federal law with respect to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages.”

10. **Two-Spirit** is a contemporary term primarily used as an organizing strategy for people who identify as both indigenous to the area now known as North America and somewhere along the sexual orientation and/or gender identity spectrum(s). This includes Native American lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) individuals. Two-Spirit identities are tribe- and culture-specific, meaning that roles vary according to each tribal nation’s historical and cultural understandings of sexuality and gender-diverse persons.
11. **Youth** refers to people under the age of 25 years.

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ABOUT THE COVER ART



ABOUT THE ART

THIS PIECE IS A PORTRAIT OF MY BROTHER who, to me, embodies the hope and strength that Generation Indigenous represents. I created his portrait with three patterns, embodying different characteristics of Gen-I. The leftmost is a vibrant and energetic saddle blanket design representing the initiative and persistent energy that Gen-I has to uplift its communities. The middle is a traditional banded design, representing the respect, and thoughtfulness that Gen-I possesses by being grounded in their elders’ teachings. The rightmost design is a storm-pattern design representing the leadership and dedication that Gen-I will continue to provide to their communities.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

DARBY RAYMOND-OVERSTREET is a Diné digital artist who was born in Tuba City, AZ, grew up in Flagstaff, AZ, and currently lives in Santa Fe, NM. All of her work is heavily inspired by and derived from Traditional Navajo textiles woven in the late 1800’s-1950’s. Through her practice of working with these designs through portraiture, she translates the artistry of the traditional woven rugs into the format and medium of digital drawing, in an effort to reflect the concept reconciling the values of indigenous traditionalism and current society’s modernity by virtue of the condition of being a product of both.

ABOUT US

THE CENTER FOR NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

The Center for Native American Youth believes all Native American youth should lead full and healthy lives, have equal access to opportunity, and draw strength from their culture and inspire one another. As a policy program of the Aspen Institute founded by former U.S. Senator Byron Dorgan (ret.), we work to improve the health, safety, and overall well-being of Native American youth. We do this through youth recognition, inspiration, and leadership; research, advocacy, and policy change; by serving as a national resource exchange; and by connecting Native youth with strengths-based media opportunities.

GENERATION INDIGENOUS

Generation Indigenous (Gen-I) was launched by President Obama in 2014 as an initiative and call to action to improve the lives of Native youth by removing barriers to opportunity and providing platforms for advocacy.

The Center for Native American Youth leads the Gen-I National Native Youth Network, a platform to connect, engage, and provide opportunities for Native youth. The Network provides leadership development opportunities, a national resource exchange, professional network-building, and opportunities for community action. It also provides a platform to elevate Native youth voices into the national dialogue. To join the Network, youth the ages of 24 and under take the Gen-I Challenge, a pledge to create positive change in their community. Those ages 14-24 who complete the Challenge may elect to become Gen-I Native Youth Ambassadors. These Ambassadors serve as community representatives for the values, resources, and partnerships that are the foundation of the Gen-I initiative.

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, D.C. Its mission is to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. The Institute has campuses in Aspen, Colorado, and on the Wye River on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. It also maintains offices in New York City and has an international network of partners.

2018 STATE OF NATIVE YOUTH REPORT
GENERATION INDIGENOUS

