NORTH DAKOTA



NAAF GRANTEE IMPACT AND STATE AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK



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NORTH DAKOTA AGRICULTURE

Agriculture drives about 25% of North Dakota's $162 billion economic output. The state generates $25.1 billion from crop and livestock production and $16.2 billion from commodity handling, transportation, processing, and manufacturing. Farms and ranches occupy close to 90% of the state's land.

Native producers hold roughly 2% of that farmland and generate about 0.6% of the state's agricultural sales. Even inside reservation boundaries, they are roughly 1 in 5 producers. Across Fort Berthold, Spirit Lake, Standing Rock, and Turtle Mountain, the resident population is 80.59% American Indian and Alaska Native, 16.26% White, and 2.30% two or more races.

That gap is what the Native American Agriculture Fund's (NAAF) investment aims to address. Between 2019 and 2026, NAAF invested more than $3 million across 19 awards to seven Tribal governments, Tribal colleges, and non-profits in North Dakota. Those grants contributed to more than 23 miles of rebuilt fence so far, with numerous active grants funding additional fence upgrades, a 5,000-square-foot four-season greenhouse, an irrigation system, and controlled-environment growing capacity, alongside enhanced infrastructure, a veterinary technician degree program, and much more.

North Dakota has five federally recognized tribes. Since 2019, NAAF has funded organizations serving four of them.

Tribal Nation	Reservation	Enrolled members (approx.)
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians	Turtle Mountain	~33,200
Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nation (Three Affiliated Tribes)	Fort Berthold	~17,800
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (ND/SD)	Standing Rock	~16,000
Spirit Lake Nation	Spirit Lake (Fort Totten)	~7,900
Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate (ND/SD)	Lake Traverse	~13,000



NORTH DAKOTA

WHERE THE WORK BEGAN, THE HARVEST COMES IN

A Look at Native Agricultural Impact in North Dakota

On a fall afternoon at Spirit Lake, 500 people gather to celebrate a pumpkin patch that almost never happened. The corn meant to become a maze had failed in a multi-year drought, barely reaching knee height, so the team at Cankdeska Cikana Community College improvised and built a small carnival around what they had — pumpkins. The PumpkinFest is now an annual gathering where families visit, play carnival games, and watch their children fall in love with the land and its gifts. This is what resilient Tribal agricultural growth looks like on the ground in North Dakota.

For decades, Native ranchers and farmers, including families from North Dakota, experienced barriers to lending, watching their homes foreclosed on and their agricultural operations stall. North Dakota producers were among the first to seek remedies that provided real, tangible change for their agricultural operations, through the historic Keepseagle class action lawsuit. After a negotiated settlement agreement and claims process, the Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF) continues to invest in solutions that address barriers to capital access for farmers and ranchers while also investing in a future where agricultural communities can thrive on their own terms.



Between 2019 and 2026, NAAF's investment of more than $3 million has reached more than 1,240 students and young people, over 400 farmers, ranchers, harvesters, and fishers through events, Tribal agritourism enterprises, and outreach.

NAAF's funded programs across North Dakota are focused on access to capital. At Cankdeska Cikana Community College, tuition and laptops carry Native students through a farm business planning course, and by the end they are eligible for USDA loans and programs. On the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, Wozu Inc. pairs hands-on holistic farming with agricultural finance training, walking community members from interest to readiness so they can borrow responsibly and leverage capital for growth.



Students attending United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) in Bismarck within the college's Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems degree receive stipends that let them focus on school, sell produce at the city farmers market, and travel to national conferences to present their own research. UTTC's new 5,000-square-foot, four-season greenhouse now anchors a seed bank that sustains culturally important plants for Tribes across the region.

At Sitting Bull College on Standing Rock, NAAF funding helped launch the only Tribal veterinary technician program in the Northern Plains, whose students run equine clinics for local ranchers.



For the Fort Berthold Land and Livestock Association, investment takes the shape of fence, with more than 23 miles rebuilt across rugged range, including lines destroyed by a catastrophic fire. Active grants are supporting further fencing development, which allows ranchers to practice rotational grazing that keeps grassland healthy and supports compliance. On the same reservation, a grant to the Three Affiliated Tribes, the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara (MHA) Nation, helped power Native Green Grow (NG2), greenhouse agriculture modeled on the Netherlands that grows produce year-round through North Dakota winters and builds a food system the Nation owns and controls.

Grant periods end, but the impact does not. The greenhouses will grow food through North Dakota winters for years to come, the veterinary program will keep graduating students into a well-paid trade, and the lending programs will keep expanding capital and opportunity for Tribal producers. It began with producers in North Dakota, and it continues with the next generations, caring for the same land, walking through doors that are finally open.







NAAF'S NORTH DAKOTA GRANTEES

NORTH DAKOTA NAAF GRANTEES:

2019
- Cankdeska Cikana Community College

2020
- Cankdeska Cikana Community College (Rapid Response Funds)
- Cankdeska Cikana Community College
- Sitting Bull College
- Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa

2021
- Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa

2022
- United Tribes Technical College
- United Tribes Technical College (Special Emphasis)
- United Tribes Technical College (Special Emphasis)
- Sitting Bull College

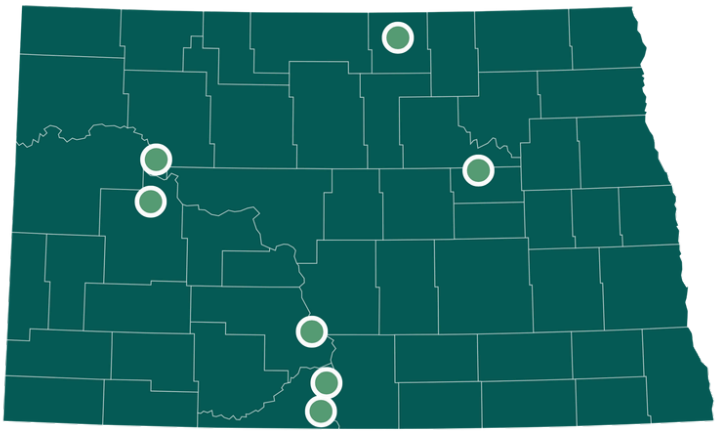
2023
- United Tribes Technical College
- United Tribes Technical College
- Fort Berthold Land and Livestock
- Three Affiliated Tribes

2024
- Wozu Inc
- Fort Berthold Land and Livestock

2025
- Fort Berthold Land and Livestock
- United Tribes Technical College

2026
- Fort Berthold Land and Livestock

GRANTEE LOCATIONS:



GRANTEE PRODUCER IMPACT NUMBERS:

19 PROGRAMS FUNDED

122 HARVESTERS SERVED

72 FARMERS SERVED

1,242 STUDENTS & YOUTH SERVED

204 RANCHERS SERVED

2 FISHERS



CANKDESKA CIKANA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Overview:
Cankdeska Cikana Community College (CCCC) is the Tribal college of the Spirit Lake Nation. Its land-grant program grows Native agriculture through classroom and garden work, community food access, and Tribal agritourism.

TOTAL FUNDING: $207,248

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NAAF GRANTS
CANKDESKA CIKANA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

2020 General Grant - $113,660
NAAF funding supported the CCCC's *Training Producers of Healthy Foods* project, providing nutrition, cooking, and food preservation workshops, which inspired students to help pass a Tribal resolution requiring healthy options at public gatherings. The college completed building its hydroponic system, and as of its final report, CCCC planned to utilize harvested produce in its café, Head Start kitchen, and elders program.

2020 Rapid Response - $18,750
CCCC leveraged Rapid Response Funds to help farmers and ranchers attend online Farm Beginnings Courses, covering registration, tuition, laptops, and childcare assistance. The courses taught students farm business planning skills in budgeting, marketing, and funding sources that make them eligible for USDA Farm Service Agency loans. The additional mini-grants helped participants get their small farms off the ground.

2019 Traditional Foods - $74,838
NAAF funding supporting CCCC's efforts to advance food sovereignty across the Spirit Lake Reservation and inspire the next generation of farmers by installing a plumbed irrigation system at its community garden, expanding the garden's use by farmers, hosting food sovereignty workshops, and immersing Head Start children and families in hands-on agriculture through garden visits, family nights, and a fall festival with a corn maze and pumpkin patch.



SITTING BULL COLLEGE

Overview:
Sitting Bull College serves students on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. With NAAF support, it launched the only Tribal veterinary technician program in the Northern Plains, building a pipeline into a well-paid trade that keeps skills in the community.

TOTAL FUNDING: $610,000

Includes 2022 FRTEP grant of $360,000

NAAF GRANT

2020 General - $250,000
Sitting Bull College developed and launched a Veterinary Technician Associate of Applied Science degree program, designed to meet American Veterinary Medical Association accreditation standards. Licensed veterinarians and a veterinary technician oversee the program, which offers a fully equipped laboratory for hands-on learning. It is the only Tribal College in the Northern Plains to offer a pathway into veterinary science, while also delivering equine clinics that provided castrations, dental floats, hoof trims, and other care to the Standing Rock ranching community.



TURTLE MOUNTAIN BAND OF CHIPPEWA

Overview:
The Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa weaves agriculture, language revitalization, and community food distribution into a single effort, growing food and culture together.

TOTAL FUNDING: $243,673

NAAF GRANTS

2021 General - $195,073
With NAAF funding, the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa began forming the foundation of its emerging Tribal Agriculture Department. Efforts included tilling 40+ community gardens, teaching youth and elders through hands-on garden work, canning, and bread-making classes that paired cultural knowledge with financial education, producing a bilingual Three Sisters garden book and a 13 Moons agricultural calendar, and certifying Veterans to launch agriculture and small businesses.

2020 Youth - $48,600
The Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa leveraged NAAF funding to engage students and community members in hands-on agriculture and cultural education through community gardens, youth workshops on gardening and the financial side of agriculture, and a Fall Harvest event. The Tribe's first-time food distribution reached 1,000 people via purchases from local Native harvesters and producers.



UNITED TRIBES TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Overview:
United Tribes Technical College is an intertribal college in Bismarck. Its Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems degree pairs classroom learning with real production, research, and enterprise.

TOTAL FUNDING: $835,524

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NAAF GRANTS
UNITED TRIBES TECHNICAL COLLEGE

2025 General - Active - $110,525
NAAF funding supports the development of a customer-friendly farm stand integrated into the college's agriculture courses and programs. The stand gives students hands-on experience across every aspect of running an agribusiness while serving as a public-facing hub that advances UTTC's food sovereignty and food security goals by bringing fresh, healthy food to the community.

2023 General - $299,999
UTTC provided support to students within its Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems (SAFS) degree program, including subsistence support, academic stipends tied to GPA and attendance, and agriculture-focused travel to conferences and site visits that reinforce access to capital and risk management.

2022 -General and Special Emphasis - $425,000
With NAAF funding, UTTC established its SAFS degree program and built a 5,000-square-foot, four-season greenhouse on its campus, expanding hands-on agricultural education for students.



FORT BERTHOLD LAND AND LIVESTOCK

Overview:
The Fort Berthold Land and Livestock Association (FBLLA) is a cattle growers' association for landowners and livestock producers of the Three Affiliated Tribes (MHA Nation). NAAF funding supports the FBLLA efforts to rebuild the infrastructure ranchers need to steward the land and grow their herds on the Fort Berthold Reservation.

TOTAL FUNDING: $900,000

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NAAF GRANTS
FORT BERTHOLD LAND & LIVESTOCK

2026 General - Active - $250,000
FBLLA's re-grant program gives producers access to fencing materials for range unit improvements across the Fort Berthold Reservation. By delivering funds as direct re-grants, the program expands access to capital, lowers improvement costs, and helps producers stay compliant with grazing ordinances.

2025 General - Active - $250,000
FBLLA's Infrastructure Relief for Range Land Improvement project strengthens agricultural policy and livestock management on the Fort Berthold Reservation through three objectives: running a small grant program for fencing materials to improve livestock safety and pasture management; enhancing fencing infrastructure to promote rotational grazing and reduce overgrazing; and fostering collaboration between neighbors to keep livestock from straying and resolve issues caused by aging fencing.

2024 General - $200,000
NAAF funding enabled FBLLA to build approximately 12 miles of new fence, directly serving 30 ranchers and advancing grazing compliance. This work supports infrastructure development that protects members, land, livestock, and motorists across a system of roughly 100 range units, the largest spanning 11,121 acres.

2023 General - $200,000
Funding supported ranchers with repairing and replacing aging fencing across the reservation. The project completed approximately 11.5 miles of boundary fence across 9 range units.



THREE AFFILIATED TRIBES (MHA NATION)

Overview:
The Three Affiliated Tribes, the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara (MHA) Nation, lead an ambitious food-sovereignty projects in Indian Country: Native Green Grow (NG2).

TOTAL FUNDING: $100,000

NAAF GRANT

2023 - $100,000
MHA Nation leveraged NAAF funding to purchase vine-crop equipment supporting Native Green Grow (NG2), a large-scale controlled-environment greenhouse on the Fort Berthold Reservation. NG2 began development of an on-site market, experience center, and classroom, with the goal of bringing fresh produce, such as peppers, strawberries, lettuce, cabbage, and cucumbers, to the community while employing Tribal members as growers and student interns.



WOZU, INC

Overview:
Wozu Inc. works on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, pairing hands-on holistic farming with agricultural finance training, helping community members connect food sovereignty and financial access.

TOTAL FUNDING: $200,000

NAAF GRANT

2024 General - $200,000
Wozu, Inc.'s 12-month *Standing Rock Project* paired hands-on programming and instruction including community gardening, egg production, beekeeping, greenhouse growing, and Lakota-guided buffalo stewardship, with agricultural finance training. The program also stewarded 400 acres of conventional farmland back to native grassland and established a buffalo herd of roughly 35 head. The project distributed 29 garden boxes plus community food (vegetables, eggs, and buffalo meat) reaching an estimated 500+ households, and trained 55 participants through an Agriculture Financial Literacy seminar funded by $27,500 in scholarships.

BEYOND THE GRANT

Taking a deeper dive into investment in Native agriculture in North Dakota.

How can we begin to address access to capital needs? Grants that move producers toward capital did so by adapting to what each community needed.

- At Cankdeska Cikana Community College, tuition, laptops, and childcare assistance helped six producers through Farm Beginnings, and mini-grants helped them get small farms off the ground.
- Wozu, Inc. pairs hands-on holistic farming with agricultural finance training, helping producers leverage capital for growth.
- The Fort Berthold Land and Livestock Association delivers re-grants for fencing materials, a structure that expands access to capital, lowers improvement costs, and keeps producers compliant with grazing ordinances.

What kind of infrastructure is needed? Fencing, irrigation, greenhouses, and growing equipment, all capital-intensive infrastructural foundations for everything built on top of them.

- At United Tribes Technical College, a new 5,000-square-foot, four-season greenhouse anchors a seed bank sustaining culturally important plants for Tribes across the region.
- The Native Green Grow (NG2) controlled-environment greenhouse grows produce through North Dakota winters.
- Spirit Lake irrigation system expanded the community garden's use by Native farmers.
- Fort Berthold's rebuilt fencing allows ranchers to practice rotational grazing that keeps grassland healthy, protects livestock and motorists, and supports grazing compliance.

How does Tribal governance support economic development? Investments that sit inside Tribal institutions contribute to robust local and regional economies. North Dakota's five Tribal Colleges added $169.5 million to the state's economy in FY 2022–23, the equivalent of 2,106 jobs, and alumni working in North Dakota contributed another $104.4 million in income. Roughly half of NAAF's North Dakota investment ran through three of those colleges.

- The Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa built the foundation of a Tribal Agriculture Department.
- Native Green Grow is a food system the MHA Nation owns and controls.
- At Spirit Lake, nutrition and food preservation workshops led students to help pass a Tribal resolution requiring healthy options at public gatherings.
- At Fort Berthold, restored fencing is what makes the Nation's grazing ordinances practically enforceable.

How do we go beyond the grant? And how does investment scale? In North Dakota, NAAF's grantees scaled by building on what previous grant awards produced, and by shifting delivery from direct service to mechanisms that put capital in producers' hands. Assets, institutions and mechanisms persist, and Tribal sovereignty is exercised through them. Seven years produced a degree program, a Tribal agriculture department, a regional seed bank, a buffalo herd, fencing infrastructure, and agritourism.

North Dakota is where this work began, and what is built here is what carries it forward.

APPENDIX A: COMPLETE GRANT TABLE

Year	Grantee	Grant Type	Amount Funded
2019	Cankdeska Cikana Community College	Traditional Foods Special Emphasis	$74,838
2020	Cankdeska Cikana Community College	General Fund	$113,660
2020	Cankdeska Cikana Community College	Rapid Response Fund	$18,750
2020	Sitting Bull College	General Fund	$250,000
2020	Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa	Youth	$48,600
2021	Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa	General Fund	$195,073
2022	United Tribes Technical College	General Fund and Special Emphasis	$425,000 *
2022	Sitting Bull College	FRTEP Funding	$360,000
2023	United Tribes Technical College	General Fund	$299,999 *
2023	Fort Berthold Land and Livestock	General Fund	$200,000
2023	Three Affiliated Tribes (MHA Nation)	General Fund	$100,000
2024	Wozu Inc.	General Fund	$200,000
2024	Fort Berthold Land and Livestock	General Fund	$200,000
2025	Fort Berthold Land and Livestock	General Fund	$250,000
2025	United Tribes Technical College	General Fund	$110,525
2026	Fort Berthold Land and Livestock	General Fund	$250,000

**UTTC's grant award amounts for 2022 (three awards) and 2023 (two awards) are combined for each year.*

APPENDIX B: AI/AN FAST FACTS FOR NORTH DAKOTA

475
American Indian/
Alaska Native Producers

792,178
Acres Farmed by AI/AN

399
AI/AN Farms

$95,844,000
Market Value of AI/AN
Products Sold

SHARE OF SALES TYPES:

62%
CROP PRODUCTION

38%
LIVESTOCK, POULTRY, AND
PRODUCTS PRODUCTION

SOURCES:

NAAF grant records and grantee reporting, 2019–2026.

2022 Census of Agriculture, USDA NASS.

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North Dakota Tribal College System. 2024 Economic Impact Study. Conducted by Lightcast. Bismarck, ND: North Dakota Tribal College System, February 2025. Data reflect fiscal year 2022–23. https://ndtcs.org/north-dakota-tribal-college-system-releases-2024-economic-impact-study/

Spirit Lake Tribal Nation website: https://www.spiritlakenation.com/our-tribe/

MHA Nation Tribal website: https://www.mhanation.com/

North Dakota Tribal Affairs website: https://www.indianaffairs.nd.gov/


NATIVE AMERICAN
AGRICULTURE FUND