



NAAF Highlights Grassroot Level Grantees Exemplary Response to COVID-19

In the face of a global pandemic, with orders to socially distance, Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF) grantees are initiating innovative solutions through adaptable leadership. While staying the course with their original missions to strengthen our Native food systems, grassroots efforts from all corners of Indian Country are mobilizing to support tribal communities, despite the Covid-19 shelter in place restrictions. This series intends to share these stories of resilience and illuminate the ingenuity of our collective food champions.

Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board Portland, OR



The Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (NPAIHB) joined eighty other grantees for the Native American Agriculture Funds 2019 awards. For 48 years, the NPAIHB has been committed to collaborative partnerships with tribal health systems in Idaho, Oregon and Washington tribes. Serving all 43 federally recognized Tribes across these three states, they lead informed care and assist in health policy, health promotion, data sovereignty, public health and research through their Northwest Tribal Epidemiology Center (NWTEC). The NWTEC's WEAVE-NW project in collaboration with, and guidance from, the Tribes they serve, founded the NW Tribal Food Sovereignty Coalition (NTFSC) in 2017. Its purpose is to help create resources and regional strategies that strengthen and generate an equitable food system for the communities they serve.

With NAAF funds, the NPAIHB proposed to hold trainings and assessments with food sovereignty champions representing Northwest Tribes. Due to travel restrictions put in place because of the COVID-19 pandemic, their grant deliverables would have been difficult to achieve. However, recognizing that their greatest strength is the cooperative of tribal community gardeners and food access points, they promptly requested to reallocate a portion of their budget to support food sovereignty projects and activities.

Nora Frank-Buckner, MPH (Nez Perce/Klamath) serves as the Food Sovereignty Initiatives Director and has worked for NPAIHB for more than five years, leading the food sovereignty activities and the NTFSC. Ms. Frank-Buckner says, "Supporting action-based food sovereignty projects like tribal community gardens, is important now more than ever. With a strain on the

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nation's food supply, we must act now to bolster efforts of the tribes we serve to assist in ensuring their people have access to good food and nutrition." Through her efforts, opting to re-grant their funding, a minimum of 15 Tribes can increase food access, food security and sustainability in their communities, immediately.

NAAF is inspired by our grantees and their ability to showcase adaptable leadership in the face of a global pandemic. Staying healthy and feeding our communities has never been more important. We are so encouraged by the work organizations like NPAIHB sustain and continue to uphold despite the adversities we face. Thank you for all you do!

Learn more about the NPAIHB Food Sovereignty Coalitions efforts here:

<http://www.npaihb.org/ntfs-coalition/>

You can follow the NW Tribal Food Sovereignty Coalition on social media here:

<https://www.facebook.com/NW-Tribal-Food-Sovereignty-Coalition-2069039186524553/>