



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

NATIVE AMERICAN
AGRICULTURE FUND



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2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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ABOUT NAAF

The Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF) is a private, charitable trust that envisions a future where Native farmers and ranchers thrive and play a crucial role in land stewardship and the nation's economic viability. Our mission is to empower Native and rural communities with the knowledge, resources, and support to foster robust agricultural practices, resilience, and economic self-sufficiency.

We believe that by investing in Native agriculture we can strengthen rural America's infrastructural development and create jobs, benefiting everyone.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Trust's Mission shall be to make grants to Eligible Grant Recipients to fund business assistance, agricultural education, technical support, and services to farmers and ranchers to facilitate and promote their continued engagement and success in agriculture.

ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

- 501c3 organizations
- Tribal governments
- Educational organizations
- Community Development Financial Institutions



A LETTER FROM OUR CEO



The Native American Agriculture Fund was established through the Keepseagle settlement, a pivotal moment that reshaped the landscape of Native agriculture. NAAF directs resources toward expanding access to capital and credit servicing for farmers and ranchers, stewarding that responsibility with a forward-looking commitment. This focus is rooted in a simple reality: agriculture runs on capital. Producers need access to financing and operating loans for priorities such as livestock purchases, equipment repair, irrigation, infrastructure, and weathering difficult seasons. When credit systems function equitably, operations grow, and rural economies expand. When they do not, opportunity narrows. Our work strengthens those financial systems and removes unnecessary barriers so producers can focus on production and growth.

In 2025, NAAF invested \$10 million across Indian Country, supporting Tribal Nations, producers, lenders, educational institutions, and nonprofit partners providing essential technical assistance. These grants advanced economic development, job creation, and diversified rural businesses while strengthening Tribal governments' capacity to oversee and manage agricultural lands and resources.

NAAF's funding empowers grantees to respond to varied landscapes, production systems, and community priorities through tailored, on-the-ground programs that reflect the needs of the regions they serve.

Agriculture in Indian Country reflects extraordinary diversity. It includes cattle and bison operations across the Plains; salmon fisheries and shellfish restoration in coastal regions; controlled-environment agriculture and greenhouse production in arid communities; maple syrup and traditional harvesting in the Great Lakes; food hubs, grain storage, value-added enterprises, and cooperative businesses that anchor rural economies. Whether we support farmworker housing, agricultural law education, regenerative grazing, or emerging technologies, our grantmaking responds to the breadth of agriculture and centers on expanding access to capital so producers can thrive.



A LETTER FROM OUR CEO



In 2025, national momentum also affirmed the importance of Tribal Departments of Agriculture, which are institutions that align agricultural development under Tribal governance. These departments meet producers where they are, strengthening both sovereignty and rural economic resilience.

As we close the year, nearly \$86 million invested across 590 projects reflects meaningful progress. Yet the deeper measure of impact lies in stronger credit systems, enhanced Tribal capacity, and producers positioned to lead their own agricultural futures.

As we look ahead to 2026, we move forward with continued dedication, stewardship, and understanding that access to capital, producer prosperity, and Tribal sovereignty are inseparable from long-term agricultural success. This work is made possible by our dedicated grantees and partners, by Tribal leadership, and the commitment of the NAAF Board of Trustees and staff. Together, we continue building agricultural economies that are anchored in Tribal authority and designed to endure.

Lim'limpt. Thank you.

Toni Stanger-McLaughlin
Chief Executive Officer
Native American Agriculture Fund
Citizen, Colville Confederated Tribes



FROM RIPPLES TO WAVES



The theme of 2025, From Ripples to Waves, reflects how targeted investments can grow into measurable economic impact. What begins as grant funding does not stop at the organizational level; it moves through lending programs, technical assistance providers, or Tribal governments, ultimately reaching individual producers. **When capital flows effectively, small ripples of investment become waves of agricultural economic growth across Indian Country.**

In 2025, NAAF funded 30 projects designed to strengthen the foundations of Native agriculture. These grants supported 501c3 organizations, Tribal governments and instrumentalities, Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), and educational institutions, each playing a defining role in expanding producer opportunity and capacity.



Grants meet the unique needs of producers and as these investments compound, the effect grows beyond individual operations and begins to reshape regional agricultural markets. That is the movement from ripples to waves.



FROM RIPPLES TO WAVES

At the producer level, impact is tangible. CDFIs deploy direct operating loans and equitable financing options to farmers and ranchers. Lending programs pair capital with financial coaching, credit education, and loan servicing that increase long-term stability and sustainability of loan programs. Access to credit allows operations to generate revenue and build equity. Tribal-led projects strengthen the infrastructure that supports local and regional economies, from processing facilities and storage capacity to land management systems that make agricultural expansion and environmental stewardship possible. Educational partners expand community practice by equipping future producers with the business skills and agricultural knowledge.

Across all entity types, the emphasis remains consistent: capital must reach the ground and create opportunities providing greater access for producers. NAAF's grant structures aim to reduce barriers, improve financial systems, and ensure producers have both resources and the support necessary to operate profitable agricultural businesses. Grants meet the unique needs of producers and as these investments compound, the effect grows beyond individual operations and begins to reshape regional agricultural markets. That is the movement from ripples to waves.

PROJECTS SPANNING 13 STATES AND WASHINGTON DC

TOP PROJECT FOCUS AREAS ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS:

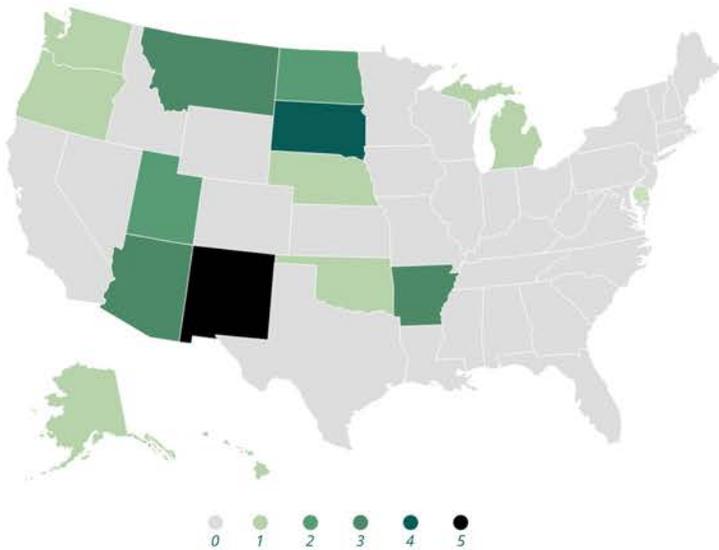
- Access to Capital
- Youth Education & Agricultural Training
- Food Sovereignty & Traditional Foods Systems
- Infrastructure Development
- Financial Education & Business Development

\$10,000,000
IN TOTAL FUNDING

30
GRANTS
TOTAL

27
GRANTEES
AWARDED

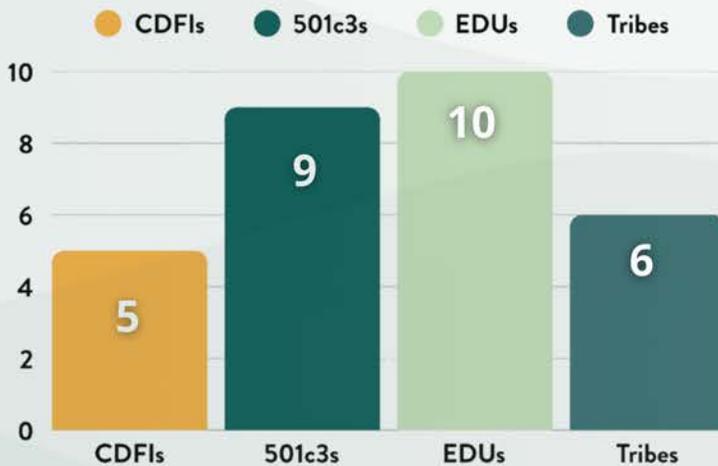
2025 NAAF FUNDED PROGRAMS BY STATE



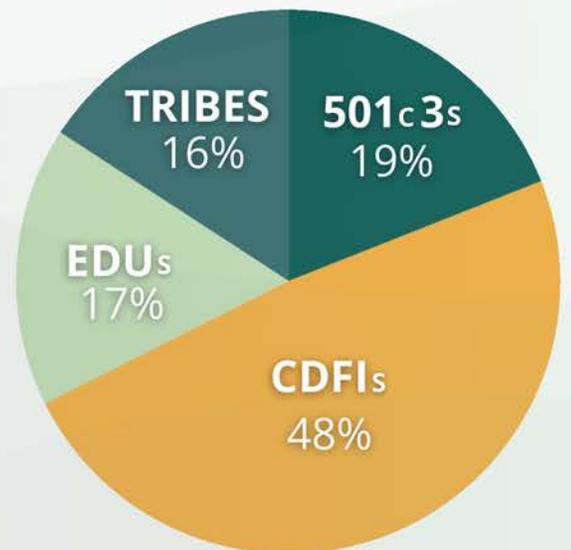
POTENTIAL DIRECT IMPACT:

FARMERS	RANCHERS	HARVESTERS
1,210	1,048	674
FISHERS	YOUTH COMMUNITY MEMBERS	SCHOOL-AGE YOUTH
199	545	1,671

FUNDED PROGRAMS BY ENTITY TYPE



FUNDING BREAKDOWN BY ENTITY TYPE



GRANTEE SUMMARIES

501c3

501c3 - \$1,901,377

TOTAL PROJECTS: 9

TOP PROJECT FOCUS AREAS:

- ACCESS TO CAPITAL
- FOOD SOVEREIGNTY & TRADITIONAL FOODS SYSTEMS
- ENTREPRENEURSHIP & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

EXPECTED IMPACT:

75 FISHERS

610 FARMERS

358 RANCHERS

125 HARVESTERS

2025 501c3 GRANTEES BY STATE:



501c3 GRANTS: CAPITAL MEETS COMMUNITY

NAAF funded nearly \$2 million to nine 501c3 organizations to strengthen the delivery systems that connect capital, technical expertise, and business development directly to farmers and ranchers on the ground. 501c3 organizations are uniquely positioned to serve rural and Tribal communities. Many operate within or alongside the communities they serve, ensuring resources are responsive, practical, and rooted in lived realities.

Across these nine organizations, funding supports financial infrastructure, producer training, and business incubation services that expand access to capital and strengthen enterprise viability. Grants support initiatives such as agricultural underwriting training to increase lending capacity, business planning assistance, and financial literacy education that prepares producers to secure and manage financing. At the producer level, impact is tangible: improved credit readiness, stronger business plans, expanded production capacity, and enhanced financial management skills. By investing in 501c3 organizations, NAAF reinforces the systems that support capital to reach producers effectively and build capacity that extends well beyond the single grant cycle to position producers for sustained growth and profitability.



INTERTRIBAL AGRICULTURE COUNCIL

“Our efforts are rooted in promoting the use and enhancement of Indian ag resources for the benefit of Indian peoples. We believe that our work in meeting Native communities where they are, helping them to self-determine their pursuit toward food sovereignty is a successful model of technical assistance that contributes to the rebuilding of resilient and robust food systems for all Native peoples: urban, rural, and reservation communities alike.”

The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture is developing and launching a new Purple Plow Challenge focused on Native American student interests such as resilience and food security. The program provides authentic, hands-on learning opportunities that connect science, technology, and agriculture. Through this project, students identify real agricultural issues, design and test solutions, and present their findings, building critical skills in leadership, problem-solving, and financial literacy. The Foundation is training educators, developing resources, and conducting broad outreach to Native schools, after-school programs, 4-H clubs, and other community groups. By inspiring young Native learners to engage with agriculture in ways that are both culturally relevant and academically rigorous, the Foundation strengthens their connection to food systems, opens pathways to future careers in agriculture and STEM, and contributes to more resilient Native communities.



Indian Pueblo Cultural Center

Albuquerque, New Mexico
 \$191,911

The Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (IPCC) in Albuquerque supports Pueblo food entrepreneurs through business seminars, farm and garden trainings, and stipends for 90 Native entrepreneurs. The project addresses gaps in mentorship, funding, and market access by providing training in financial planning, sales strategies, and technical support that helps participants become investment-ready. By reducing early financial risks and promoting regenerative agriculture, IPCC builds sustainable food businesses, diversifies revenue, and strengthens access to capital in alignment with NAAF's mission. The project addresses access to capital by providing financial support to cover startup costs and educational workshops. It reduces early financial risks, enabling entrepreneurs to focus on business growth without the burden of immediate debt. The initiative also incorporates agricultural risk management training to build sustainable operations and diversify revenue sources.



Intertribal Agriculture Council

Billings, Montana
 \$198,866

The IAC Young, Beginning & Small Capital Enhancement Project expands access to capital for Native producers through a partnership between the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) and Native Agriculture Financial Services (NAFS). Together, they combine education, flexible lending, and technical assistance to support young, beginning, and small (YBS) producers across Indian Country. IAC awards grants to Native youth, ages 14–26, to launch agriculture or food systems projects, along with tools like budget templates, resume support, and one-on-one help with loan applications. After completing training, participants apply for NAFS YBS loans, which offer lower interest rates, streamlined approval, and flexible terms for equipment, livestock, or operational needs. The project provides regular check-ins, targeted coaching, and a calendar of learning opportunities on topics such as business planning, conservation, and value-added production. This approach builds financial skills, strengthens operations, and connects producers to mentors and markets.

Michigan State University's project, Co-Creating Seed Saving Spaces to Develop Native Food Sovereignty and Seed Entrepreneurship, partners with Native communities in Nebraska to establish seed saver accelerator spaces that strengthen food and seed sovereignty. The project equips these spaces for cleaning, storing, and sharing rare and culturally significant seeds. The project also funds internships for college students and young adults in Nebraska. Interns assist coordinators in developing seed saver spaces and organizing related programs, while the project team mentors them to advance their education and career pathways.



Native Agriculture
Financial Services

Native Agriculture Financial Services – General

Fayetteville, Arkansas

\$200,000

The Native Agriculture Financial Service (NAFS) serves as a trusted lender, supplying capital and technical assistance to support agriculture production, rural business development, and infrastructure specifically for Native American farmers, ranchers, and agricultural communities. The 501c3's project Lending and Credit Enhancements for Native Agriculture Infrastructure and Land Stewardship Borrowers tackles one of the most significant barriers in Native agriculture, access to credit, while also enhancing the quality and reach of services available to producers. By fostering opportunities for more Native agriculturalists to enter and thrive in the field, the project invests in the next generation of food producers and land stewards. In addition, the project produces a detailed report offering actionable recommendations to decision-makers, paving the way for expanded financial pathways that support infrastructure growth and sustainable land management across Native communities.



Native Agriculture
Financial Services

Native Agriculture Financial Services – Infrastructure

Fayetteville, Arkansas

\$200,000

The Going the Extra Mile: Deepening Loan Underwriting and Advocacy in Native Agriculture project expands NAFS's successful underwriting training program to reach more Native-serving CDFIs and producers across Indian Country. The project delivers specialized training sessions and webinars on business incorporation, entity selection, and tax analysis to improve loan underwriting practices and expand access to capital. NAFS's team of expert advisors provides hands-on technical assistance to both CDFIs and producers, equipping them with essential financial tools that ensure sustainability and resilience. Building on strong demand from their previous underwriting school, this initiative deepens financial capacity within Native communities and strengthens pathways to capital for Native agricultural enterprises.



Pohaha I Ka Lani

Kurtistown, Hawaii

\$288,581

Pohaha I Ka Lani, a 501c3 based in Kurtistown, Hawai'i, serves Native producers across the islands. Through its project Strengthening Climate Resilience Through Indigenous Agroecological Infrastructure in Waipi'o Valley, the organization restores Native ecology and advances reforestation, building healthier soils while equipping producers with the knowledge and skills to thrive. In a region where agriculture faces unique challenges, the program weaves modern technology with traditional land stewardship to increase production, enhance sustainability, and cultivate a resilient agricultural future.



To Nizhoni Ani

Kykotsmovi, Arizona

\$250,000

Tó Nizhóní Ání (TNA), or "Sacred Water Speaks," is a Diné-led 501c3 organization in the Black Mesa region of the Navajo Nation that protects water sources from industrial exploitation while empowering Indigenous communities impacted by coal mining. The project serves rural Navajo communities by revitalizing agriculture and improving food sovereignty. The project's primary objectives include enhancing groundwater protection, restoring traditional farmland, educating new farmers, and building partnerships to strengthen community resilience. TNA responds to challenges faced by rural communities by providing training and technical support for farmers, enabling them to grow and sell healthy traditional foods while accessing necessary capital. TNA reinvigorates dry farming practices while teaching farmers how to collect and record data and facilitating pathways for proper land use permitting. The project emphasizes education, record keeping, financial literacy workshops, and infrastructure investments to restore food systems and foster economic development within their community.



Tolani Lakes Enterprises Inc

Winslow, Arizona

\$250,000

Tolani Lake Enterprises (TLE), based in Tolani Lake, Arizona, has launched a two-year training and technical assistance program to strengthen food, water, and economic systems for Native communities in the Little Colorado River Watershed. The project provides tailored technical assistance, workshops on food entrepreneurship and regenerative agriculture, and access to capital through a mini-grant system. By fostering collaboration at the Sihasin Market Garden and creating online markets, TLE expands sales opportunities, improves food access, and builds a stronger local food economy. Aligned with NAAF's mission, the project emphasizes capacity-building, advocacy, and regenerative practices that reflect cultural values to promote long-term sustainability and community resilience.

GRANTEE SUMMARIES

CDFIs



CDFIs - \$4,856,494

TOTAL PROJECTS: 5

TOP PROJECT FOCUS AREAS:

- ACCESS TO CAPITAL
- FINANCIAL LITERACY
- RISK MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS PLANNING
- YOUTH & EDUCATION

EXPECTED IMPACT:

36 FISHERS

127 RANCHERS

4 HARVESTERS

33 FARMERS

2025 CDFI GRANTEES BY STATE:



CDFI GRANTS: STRENGTHENING LENDING SYSTEMS

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) are often the primary agricultural lenders in Tribal and rural areas, filling gaps for financing that reflect the realities of Native producers. NAAF funded grants totaling nearly \$5 million for five CDFIs to expand both access and capacity. Grant funding supports agricultural loans, underwriting practices tailored to land tenure and seasonal income cycles, and loan servicing that sustains long-term portfolio health. CDFIs are also strengthening credit education, borrower readiness programs, and technical assistance that improve repayment performance and financial health. Financing options translate directly into operational growth, coupled with technical assistance and succession planning. The lending programs position producers to build equity and transition successfully across generations.

Investing in lending architecture ensures capital is structured with flexibility. CDFIs work alongside producers through both expansion and setback, providing continuity. The relationships they cultivate, the trust they develop, and the expertise they provide reinforce a financial system that is locally grounded and built to grow with Native agriculture.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST TRIBAL LENDING

“Pacific Northwest Tribal Lending aims to empower Native agricultural producers and fishers by enhancing access to capital, providing technical assistance, and supporting community projects. This initiative fosters economic growth, sustainability, and resilience within tribal communities.”





Akiptan, Inc. - General

Eagle Butte, South Dakota

\$2,500,000

Akiptan, Inc. is a proficient Tribal agricultural lender that has committed to serving Native producers across the nation. With their project Access to Capital, Access to Success, they build on their success of infusing capital into Indian Country for the advancement of Tribal producers. A chronic need for loan access persists on reservations, and Akiptan fills that niche. Agriculture is inherently a risk-laden enterprise. Akiptan leads in strategizing risk management by innovatively piloting a succession planning framework to build inter-generational wealth for producers in order to weather shorter term financial storms. With this grant, in addition to continued lending, Akiptan expands their succession planning services.



Akiptan, Inc. - Youth

Eagle Butte, South Dakota

\$100,000

Akiptan, Inc. is an industry leader in Native agriculture lending, actively implementing The Akiptan Tǎ́čake čin̄ Initiatives to empower youth within the community. The overarching goals of these initiatives focus on fostering business acumen and promoting food security. Key programs include the Youth Owozu Program, which develops a youth-centered curriculum to help participants create garden-based businesses, and the Okhichanye Scholarships, which expand educational access for high school seniors pursuing agriculture degrees. The Youth Business Plan Competition also provides practical skills through funding and technical support for young entrepreneurs to implement their business ideas. The Youth Equity Grant program ensures direct access to capital by offering grants for agricultural endeavors. Meanwhile, the Internship Program connects youth with hands-on experience in agriculture and financial literacy training. Akiptan's leadership emphasizes the importance of education, mentorship, and opportunity, ensuring these transformative programs continue to empower the next generation of agricultural leaders.



Four Bands Community Fund

Eagle Butte, South Dakota

\$1,156,494

Four Bands Community Fund is a Native-led 501c3 based in South Dakota in the heart of the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation. Through their project, Four Bands provides producers with access to loan capital to sharpen skills and expand and improve their agricultural enterprises. In addition, the program builds long-term financial stability and strengthens risk management strategies. These combined efforts enhance agricultural productivity, spark job creation, promote economic growth, and ensure lasting sustainability for Native-owned operations. By pairing direct financial investment with culturally attuned hands-on coaching, the program equips farmers and ranchers with both the resources and the practical knowledge to thrive. This model builds resilience, fosters self-determination, and advances economic sovereignty—ensuring that agriculture remains a strong, sustainable foundation for generations to come.



Pacific Northwest Tribal Lending

Bellingham, Washington

\$300,000

Pacific Northwest Tribal Lending, better known as Lummi CDFI, is a lending entity that began with the Lummi Nation but has since expanded their reach to other Tribes in Northwest Washington. With their project 2025 PNTL Services for Native Producers, Harvesters, and Fishers, this CDFI enhances the capital access infrastructure through strategic community projects and the expansion of their revolving loan fund (RLF). Lummi CDFI recognizes that mitigating the uncertain economic conditions that exist today requires strategic but flexible fiscal maneuvers. This lender addresses the dual challenges of communities that lack training to successfully navigate current financial instruments and the chronic lack of resources by providing a comprehensive suite of services leading to direct access to capital, with a focus on Tribal fishers.



The Peoples Partner for Community Development

Lame Deer, Montana

\$800,000

The Peoples Partner for Community Development (PPCD) is a CDFI located on the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation serving the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, the Crow Nation, and the Fort Belknap Reservation in Montana. With their project PPCD Agriculture Program, they deploy hundreds of thousands of dollars in loan capital to qualified Tribal producers. Access to capital remains a challenge in rural Montana and the situation is complicated by lack of financial education. To increase the number of qualified loan applicants, PPCD provides extensive financial education to the communities. To better service granted loans, PPCD provides continuous financial coaching to successful loan applicants to increase their ability to manage their loans.



EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION GRANTS: BUILDING THE BENCH

The ten educational institutions funded this year are doing something remarkable: they're ensuring that Native agriculture has a future by inspiring and preparing young people to be part of it. Walk into any of these programs, and you'll find students with their hands in soil, working with livestock, operating cutting-edge technology, and connecting with elders who share traditional knowledge. At Wingate High School on the Navajo Reservation, students are gaining real agricultural skills while strengthening their cultural identity as Diné people. Bay Mills Community College is teaching students to steward land and grow food for their community. United Tribes Technical College students are learning every aspect of running an agribusiness through their new farm stand—from seed to sale. What is most inspiring is how these programs honor both tradition and innovation. The University of Michigan's Lakota Agriculture Project weaves together traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) with STEM education. The University of Arizona is creating curriculum in Apache, Navajo, Hopi, and O'odham languages, preserving language and culture alongside agricultural skills. Little Priest Tribal College is training students in precision agriculture technology that local producers desperately need. And the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative is giving young producers the self-advocacy tools to navigate credit systems and launch their own operations. These aren't just agriculture programs—they're pathways to leadership, economic opportunity, and cultural continuity. They're showing young Native people that farming, ranching, and food entrepreneurship aren't relics of the past but viable, meaningful careers that allow them to serve their communities, honor their heritage, and build sustainable futures.

SEQUOYAH HIGH SCHOOL

"The SHS Vocational Agriculture program focuses on empowering Native American students in grades nine through twelve with the skills and knowledge to be future farmers and ranchers, work in agriculture careers, and advocate for food sovereignty in their communities."





Arizona Board of Regents, University of Arizona

Tucson, Arizona

\$149,966

The University of Arizona College of Agriculture & Life Sciences (CALs) fully utilizes its FRTEP staff to engage Tribal members throughout the state. With this NAAF grant, UA implements its project Expanding Tribal Capacity to Improve Animal/Human Health and Enhance Economic Sustainability. They expand upon their previous work with the Arizona Tribes by testing and finalizing curriculum and resources, adding emergency management training that includes a "train the trainers" strategy for program perpetuation, and building, resupplying, and distributing Tribal Agriculture Stewardship Kits (TASKs). Goals of this project include building on their large animal curriculum while increasing team focus on sheep and small stock methodologies. FRTEP staff outreach to Tribal communities to produce materials in the Apache, Navajo, Hopi, and O'odham languages, with more to follow.



BAY MILLS
Community College

Bay Mills Community College

Brimley, Michigan

\$176,192

Located on the southeastern shore of Lake Superior within the Bay Mills Indian Community (BMIC), the Bay Mills Community College (BMCC) serves as Michigan's first fully accredited, Tribally controlled college. BMCC meets the educational needs of a wide variety of students through its remote, rural Main Campus, West Campus, Waishkey Bay Farm site, off-campus sites, and online courses. BMCC strengthens food sovereignty efforts in their community through their new project titled Bay Mills Community College Mii azhigwaji-azhe-mamooyaang indakiiminaanmiinawaa endazhi-mino-ganawendamaang nimiijimaan (Land Requisition & Infrastructure). This project supports Bay Mills Community College community farm in strengthening food sovereignty through investments in land acquisition, pasture improvement, freezer storage, and year-round workshop access. These enhancements increase agricultural capacity, climate resilience, and sustainable management of traditional lands and food systems.



Cherokee Nation – Sequoyah High School

Tahlequah, Oklahoma

\$150,238

The Sequoyah High School Vocational Agriculture Program empowers Native American youth grades 9-12 through agricultural education, financial literacy, and hands-on experiences in farming, ranching, and livestock management. Located within the Cherokee Nation Reservation in Oklahoma, Sequoyah High School serves a predominantly Indigenous student population, with 99% of students being Native American. By launching a vocational curriculum, establishing a local FFA chapter, and fostering community partnerships, the program equips students with the skills, leadership, and access to capital needed for future careers in agriculture. The program empowers youth to connect with their heritage, explore agricultural careers, and strengthen their leadership for the future of Native communities.



Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative

Fayetteville, Arkansas

\$200,000

The Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative (IFAI) supports Tribal Nations through various agricultural programming and technical assistance in establishing Tribal nation-to-nation relationships with the federal government in agriculture. IFAI expands upon this through their project, Growing the Potential of Native Youth in Agriculture and Food Systems, which builds on the success of the Native Youth in Food and Agriculture Leadership Summit while growing their resources for young producers to include a Self-Advocacy Guide for accessing credit, a digital curriculum, and a peer-mentoring program for Native producers. This project focuses on building the skills and knowledge of Native youth as they establish their careers in agriculture while navigating rapidly shifting trade and regulatory environments. This project directly addresses access to capital by creating a Self-Advocacy Guide to support young, Native farmers and ranchers as they seek loans and financing, as well as through a webinar learning series, peer mentoring program and The Native Youth in Food and Agriculture Leadership Summit.



Little Priest Tribal College

Winnebago, Nebraska

\$150,000

Little Priest Tribal College (LPTC) is a TCU serving the Omaha and Winnebago Tribes in Nebraska and Iowa. The region is highly agricultural, and college leadership recognizes several technical areas that regularly have an insufficient number of trained and certified professionals to fill those positions. To provide a career path to these well-compensated positions, LPTC's project, Precisely Mapping our Students' Success into Careers and Farming, redesigns their existing coursework to integrate certification preparation and practical technology training to equip students with industry-relevant, safe, and up-to-date agricultural spray and GPS technology. These certification pathways immediately enhance student employability and interrupt local producers' reliance on seeking technical services from providers outside the area.



New Mexico State University

Las Cruces, New Mexico

\$150,000

For years, the American Indian Business Enterprise (AIBE) at New Mexico State University has worked with Tribal farmers from the New Mexico Pueblos, the Navajo Nation, and other Tribal members in the region. AIBE has identified an ongoing concern among Tribal farmers: the issue of food perishability from remote locations due to an underdeveloped packaging and shipping infrastructure. This causes significant financial losses. With this NAAF grant, AIBE provides regulatory compliance training and implements a freeze-drying regimen with a packaging process that takes Native produce to a market-ready state. Introducing lyophilization into the farm-to-market chain is an innovative approach to extend the life and market-readiness of Native-grown produce in New Mexico. AIBE builds on previous relationships with Tribal producers and high-volume markets through technical assistance and network outreach.



University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, Michigan

\$200,000

Through the Lakota Agriculture Project, the University of Michigan expands agricultural education and practices that directly support food sovereignty and sustainability, specifically for Native American youth. This initiative exclusively serves Tribal students in Rapid City and the surrounding rural counties and reservations. The project integrates traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and STEM education, providing lessons and mentoring focusing solely on Native youth. The initiative has several interconnected objectives to enhance community engagement, education, and sustainability. These include obtaining input from the Native community to refine the teaching farm and positive youth development (PYD) curriculum, facilitating the integration of western scientific perspectives with TEK, addressing access to capital for Native farmers, promoting positive youth development through culturally grounded curricula, and ensuring the program's long-term sustainability by developing a roadmap and training community members in grant writing. The project fosters deep community investment, increased youth knowledge and confidence in agroecology, and enhanced well-being, creating a unique connection between STEM and agriculture for the youth involved.



United Tribes Technical College

Bismarck, North Dakota

\$110,525

The United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) in Bismarck, North Dakota, is a Tribal land grant institution, providing post-secondary education and training to benefit Tribal students from across the nation. This project constructs a customer-friendly farm stand that becomes an integrated part of UTTC's courses and programs. Once completed, the stand offers students hands-on experience in every aspect of running an agribusiness, from production and harvest to direct-to-consumer sales. Through this work, students gain valuable skills in risk assessment and risk management, preparing them to sustain and grow their future agricultural ventures. Serving as both a learning lab and a public-facing hub, the farm stand advances the college's food sovereignty and food security initiatives, providing the community with fresh, healthy foods while connecting them to the important agricultural work and programming happening at UTTC.



Wingate High School - Infrastructure & Land Stewardship

Washington, D.C. or Wingate, New Mexico

\$209,459

Wingate High School, operated by the Bureau of Indian Education, serves students on the Navajo Reservation in New Mexico. Through the project titled Roots to Rise: Revitalizing Indigenous Agriculture Through Education, students gain first-hand experience engaging in agriculture through a living classroom and greenhouse. This hands-on learning environment equips students with real-world agricultural skills, from small-scale gardening to large-scale production knowledge, while also building their resumes with tangible work experience. Whether students choose to pursue careers in agriculture or not, they leave with a foundational understanding of food systems, sustainability, and entrepreneurship.



Wingate High School - Youth

Washington, D.C. or Wingate, New Mexico

\$162,745

Wingate High School, a Bureau of Indian Education institution located in the heart of the Navajo Nation, serves a diverse student body, including individuals from various Native communities such as Navajo, Jicarilla, Mescalero, White Mountain Apache, and several Pueblos. Many of these students come from backgrounds rich in agricultural traditions, whether through communal farming or more commercial practices like chile and cattle production, reflecting the integral role of agriculture in their Indigenous identity. The Honoring Our Roots, Growing Tomorrow's Leaders: An Agriculture Education Initiative project enhances agricultural education and community involvement among Native youth. Key objectives include hiring a full-time Agriculture Education Teacher to develop a student-centered curriculum aligned with New Mexico's educational standards while integrating financial literacy and business planning development. The initiative also supports the teacher's professional growth through conference attendance, establishes a local FFA chapter to promote student leadership, and organizes the 2nd Annual Agriculture Career Fair to connect youth with agricultural pathways. Furthermore, a community livestock sale provides students with hands-on experience while fostering agricultural entrepreneurship. The initiative launches agriculture classes, recruits and retains students, hosts educational workshops, and generates revenue to support student projects, strengthening the foundation for future Native agriculturalists and their communities.



GRANTEE SUMMARIES

TRIBES

TRIBES - \$1,583,004

NUMBER OF PROJECTS: 6

TOP THEMES:

- **FOOD SOVEREIGNTY & TRADITIONAL FOODS SYSTEMS**
- **INFRASTRUCTURE**
- **LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT & REGENERATIVE GRAZING**
- **ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

EXPECTED IMPACT:



2025 TRIBAL GRANTEES BY STATE:



TRIBAL GRANTS: INVESTING IN AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

In 2025, NAAF funded more than \$1.5 million to six Tribal governments and Tribal instrumentalities to advance Tribally-led agricultural development. NAAF investments reinforce the authority of Tribal governments to manage land, infrastructure, and agricultural resources for their community. Tribally-led projects focus on activating land, improving infrastructure, and expanding local production capacity. Grant funding supports land restoration and bringing acreage back into cultivation, fencing and range improvements, community-based growing initiatives, and the development of processing and distribution infrastructure.

Infrastructure improvements directly support producer success. Restored acreage expands production potential. Improved fencing is essential to herd management and land stewardship. Processing facilities and farm enterprises create market success, local jobs, and value-added opportunities that keep revenue circulating within Tribal economies. By investing in Tribally-led infrastructure and governance, NAAF supports food sovereignty in action. These grant projects establish durable systems — land in production, infrastructure in place, and institutions strengthened.

PUEBLO OF COCHITI

“The Pueblo of Cochiti Tribe is dedicated to the well-being and quality of life of our community. Our focus is on supporting our Tribe through agricultural projects and benefitting our community.”





Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Pablo, Montana

\$250,000

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) are located on the Flathead Indian Reservation in northwestern Montana. With funding from NAAF, the Bison Springs Project: Revitalizing Foodways through Land-Based Learning develops a Tribal farm that is culturally grounded and supports Native producers through training, technical help, capital access, and traditional foods training. This includes repairing existing infrastructure, facilitating intergenerational knowledge transfer, and creating training opportunities for financial management and agriculture production.



Crow Creek Sioux Tribe – Hunk Pati Processors

Ft. Tompson, South Dakota

\$250,000

The people of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe are the Hún̄kpati Oyáte (end of the camp circle) band, mostly descendants of the Mdewakanton Dakota Tribe of south and central present-day Minnesota. Through their new project Regenerative Range Infrastructure: Fencing Renewal for Crow Creek Livestock Sovereignty, the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe replaces outdated, deteriorating fencing on its range units to protect its cattle, buffalo, and crop fields. New fencing promotes land stewardship, herd safety, and regenerative grazing while supporting food sovereignty and economic sustainability. This grant initiative provides critical infrastructure support that enables the Tribe to reclaim stewardship of its lands, improve rotational grazing systems, enhance herd management for both cattle and buffalo, and further its food and land sovereignty goals.



Fort Berthold Land and Livestock

Mandaree, North Dakota

\$250,000

The Fort Berthold Land and Livestock Infrastructure Relief for Range Land Improvement project, spearheaded by the Fort Berthold Land and Livestock Association (FBLA), plays a vital role in enhancing agricultural policy on the Reservation while addressing pressing concerns regarding livestock management. This project includes three key objectives: establishing a small grant program for fencing materials to improve livestock safety and pasture management; enhancing the integrity of fencing infrastructure to promote rotational grazing and reduce overgrazing risks; and fostering collaboration between neighbors to prevent livestock from straying and mitigate issues previously caused by old fencing. By working closely with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Tribe's Supervisory Range Rider, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Tribal Business Council, the project reinforces accountability and promotes sustainable practices within the community of Tribal producers utilizing range units. Building on previous initiatives with NAAF, this project improves pasture health, strengthens community ties, and ensures safer livestock management across the Reservation.



Pueblo of Cochiti

Cochiti Pueblo, New Mexico

\$197,903

The Pueblo of Cochiti Agricultural Advancement Project reinstates traditional farming practices to enhance agricultural yield and expand the capacity of the Agricultural Department by developing 300 acres of currently unused reservation farmland. Managed by the Pueblo of Cochiti Natural Resources Department and the Agricultural Collective, this initiative addresses the community's food sovereignty challenges. The project's key objectives include conducting a comprehensive community needs assessment through a GAP analysis, preparing agricultural acreage with soil testing, seed and fertilizer procurement, and the establishment of a seed bank. A farming education initiative is training local youth and the Agricultural Committee in essential agricultural techniques and risk management strategies. A supply chain analysis will confirm inefficiencies in transportation and distribution, ultimately leading to the creation of a Tribal Agricultural Enterprise to foster economic sustainability and implement a circular economy that benefits the Pueblo of Cochiti community. By accomplishing these objectives, the project will support the Tribe's economy while providing community members access to fresh, local food, thereby improving overall well-being and self-sufficiency.





Sitka Tribe of Alaska

Sitka, Alaska

\$385,101

The Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA) is responsible for the health, welfare, safety, and culture of its citizens. As a leader in traditional food security and cultural stewardship, STA expands access to garden space, educational resources, and local food systems to promote food sovereignty and economic resilience for generations to come. Through their new project, Creating a Tribal Community Garden for Traditional Food Security in Sheet'ká, Alaska, STA is growing its Traditional Foods Program and strengthening Tribal food security through the construction of a Tribal Community Garden. The garden will house 50 raised beds: 23 for the Tribe to grow produce for distribution, two for students in the Sitka Native Education Program, and 25 available to Tribal citizens.



Umpqua Indian Development Corporation

Canyonville, Oregon

\$250,000

The Umpqua Indian Development Corporation pursues food, water, and land sovereignty by spearheading economic development initiatives centered on food businesses to enhance the Tribe's self-sufficiency and nutrition infrastructure. The project Feasibility Studies and Business Plan for USDA Inspected Meat Processing Facility focuses on establishing a USDA-certified meat processing facility that will serve as a cornerstone for Tribal producers. This project comprises three main goals: conducting a feasibility study to assess market opportunities and facility sizing, designing the facility's physical layout to meet operational needs, and developing a financeable business plan to include financial projections and risk analysis. Creating a safe and efficient space equipped with essential resources like commercial kitchens and cold storage will provide new producers with shared infrastructure that can mitigate individual risk and support capital access, ultimately fostering a sustainable local food economy.

GRANTEE SUMMARIES

SPECIAL EMPHASIS — INFRASTRUCTURE & LAND STEWARDSHIP

INFRASTRUCTURE & LAND STEWARDSHIP - \$1,369,858*

NUMBER OF PROJECTS: 6

TOP THEMES:

- FOOD SOVEREIGNTY & TRADITIONAL FOODS SYSTEMS
- INFRASTRUCTURE
- LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT & REGENERATIVE GRAZING
- ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

EXPECTED IMPACT:



*Funding figures included in 2025's total amount of funding.

2025 INFRASTRUCTURE & LAND STEWARDSHIP GRANTEEES BY STATE:



SPECIAL EMPHASIS GRANTS: INFRASTRUCTURE & LAND STEWARDSHIP

Funding infrastructure and land stewardship is essential in ensuring Native farmers and ranchers can adapt to growing challenges like unpredictable weather, water scarcity, and wildfire risk. Investments in land access, irrigation, energy, processing facilities, storage, transportation, and food hubs build the physical foundation needed for resilient, community-driven food systems. At the same time, supporting holistic land management and education strengthens long-term agricultural sustainability while reinforcing Native food sovereignty. Together, these investments empower Tribal governments and Native producers to protect their lands, expand economic opportunity, and ensure reliable, locally-rooted food systems for future generations.

GRANTEES

Bay Mills Community College
Native Agriculture Financial Services
Pohaha I Ka Lani

United Tribes Technical College
Wingate High School, Bureau of Indian Education



GRANTEE SUMMARIES

YOUTH

YOUTH - \$1,085,657*

NUMBER OF PROJECTS: 7

TOP THEMES:

- NATIVE YOUTH WORKFORCE & CAREER DEVELOPMENT
- ACCESS TO CAPITAL & FINANCIAL LITERACY
- ENTREPRENEURSHIP & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

EXPECTED IMPACT:

545 YOUTH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

1,172 TEEN

382 MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

62 ELEMENTARY

55 EARLY CHILDHOOD

*Funding figures included in 2025's total amount of funding.

2025 YOUTH GRANTEEES BY STATE:



YOUTH



Supporting Native youth in agriculture is essential to ensuring Tribal food systems remain resilient, innovative, and community-driven for generations to come. Investments in agricultural education, entrepreneurship training, financial literacy, and access to capital equip young people with skills and confidence. From hands-on learning and mentorship to business plan development, flexible lending, and youth equity grants, these efforts create meaningful pathways into agricultural careers and business development. At the same time, integrating cultural knowledge, leadership skills, and food sovereignty principles strengthens identity, stewardship, and long-term sustainability. Youth grant recipients are building the bench of future Native producers and agricultural leaders, expanding economic opportunity while reinforcing the strength and continuity of Tribal food systems.

GRANTEES

Akiptan, Inc.
American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture
Cherokee Nation
Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative

Intertribal Agriculture Council
University of Michigan
Wingate High School, Bureau of Indian Education

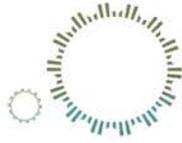


ADVANCING AGRICULTURAL OPPORTUNITY



Native agriculture endures because farmers and ranchers continue to lead on their lands and in their communities. The Trust's mission is to fund the provision of **business assistance, agricultural education, technical support, and advocacy services** to Native American farmers and ranchers, supporting their continued engagement in agriculture and reinforcing the long-term vitality of Native agricultural economies.

TRIBAL DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE



NAAF helped elevate Tribal Departments of Agriculture as a critical strategy for strengthening Tribal sovereignty, economic development, and food systems across Indian Country. In partnership with the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative (IFAI), NAAF helped advance a national conversation about the importance of Tribally led agricultural governance structures that reflect Tribal priorities, values, and legal authorities. Tribal Departments of Agriculture provide a foundation for Tribes to regulate, support, and grow agricultural activity in ways that are culturally grounded, locally responsive, and economically sustainable.

This work gained significant momentum through the passage of a resolution at the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) in December 2025, signaling broad, national support from NCAI represented Tribes across the country. This reflects a strong consensus among Tribal leaders that agriculture is not only an economic driver, but a core expression of sovereignty and self-determination. The resolution affirmed the role of Tribal Departments of Agriculture in supporting producers, stewarding land, responding to community needs, and strengthening Tribal governance over agricultural systems. Through joint outreach and education efforts, NAAF and IFAI worked to increase awareness of how Tribal Departments of Agriculture function in practice and why they matter — both within Indian Country and beyond it. TDAs offer Tribes a mechanism to coordinate programs, administer funding, develop food and agriculture codes, engage with federal and state partners, and support both Tribal and non-Tribal producers operating within Tribal jurisdictions.

Tribal Departments of Agriculture are helping Tribes respond more quickly to challenges, leverage new opportunities, and build resilient agricultural economies rooted in local control.

By supporting the growth and recognition of Tribal Departments of Agriculture, NAAF reinforced its long-term vision for Tribal agriculture: one where Tribes are fully empowered to design and govern their own agricultural systems. This work complements NAAF's broader investments in technical assistance, communications, and partnerships by helping ensure that Tribal agriculture is supported not only by programs and funding, but by durable institutions that will continue to serve communities well beyond the life of the Fund.



AG BUSINESS

NAAF invested in agricultural cooperative development across Indian Country as a strategic pathway to advance agricultural business growth. Through partnerships with organizations such as National Cooperative Business Association CLSU International (NCBA CLUSA) and the Cooperative Development Foundation, NAAF is supporting the development of culturally grounded cooperative education, technical assistance, and certification pathways that equip Native producers and practitioners with the tools to build and sustain cooperative enterprises. By fostering shared ownership models, strengthening business infrastructure, and expanding access to markets and capital, this work helps diversify and stabilize agricultural businesses in Tribal communities. Cooperative development not only create new economic opportunities for producers, but also strengthen workforces and reinforce long-term economic resilience rooted in self-determination and collective opportunity.



AG EDUCATION

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION (BIE)

NAAF partnered with the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) to strengthen agricultural education for Native youth through the development and deployment of culturally grounded supplemental agricultural materials for BIE schools. This partnership recognized a critical reality: Tribal agriculture is not only an economic driver — it was an expression of sovereignty, stewardship, and intergenerational knowledge. Ensuring Native students had access to relevant, high-quality agricultural education supported workforce development, food sovereignty, and long-term community resilience.

Purpose of the Initiative

NAAF's work with BIE focused on:

- Developing agricultural supplemental materials that were culturally relevant and reflective of Tribal food systems, land stewardship practices, and contemporary Native agricultural innovation.
- Aligning materials with existing academic standards while incorporating Tribal perspectives, history, and governance structures related to agriculture.
- Expanding exposure to agricultural career pathways — including production, agribusiness, conservation, cooperative development, policy, and emerging technologies.
- Supporting educators with tools that made agriculture accessible, engaging, and community-connected.

This initiative helped bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world agricultural opportunities within Tribal communities.



"This initiative empowers our students by giving them the skills and knowledge to succeed in agriculture while honoring and integrating our Indigenous traditions and values. This partnership will help to build a brighter, more sustainable future for Native communities. This is a significant step forward in providing our students with the tools they need to thrive in agriculture and beyond."

**-TONY L. DEARMAN,
DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION**

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

NAAF continued its commitment in 2025 to equip Tribal grantees and prospective applicants with the knowledge and skills needed to access and manage funding successfully. Central to this effort was a series of informational and technical assistance webinars tied to the 2025 Request for Applications (RFA), held while the RFA was open from March 1 through May 1, 2025. During this period, NAAF hosted multiple sessions providing applicants with clear guidance on eligibility, the online application system, and opportunities to ask questions directly of NAAF staff. These webinars were designed to demystify the application process and provide real-time clarification to strengthen submissions.

In addition to those category-specific application webinars, NAAF also hosted a webinar titled “From Application to Impact: Best Practices for Grantees.” The session provided practical strategies to strengthen grant practices across the full funding lifecycle, not only for NAAF funding, but to enhance funding proposals with other public and private funders. NAAF staff guided participants through key elements of strong proposals, including how to frame compelling community stories using data, avoid common pitfalls, build realistic and defensible budgets, and align proposals with funder mission areas. The session also addressed what happens after funding is awarded, covering reporting expectations, compliance considerations, and strategies for communicating impact through storytelling and media. The goal was to help organizations move confidently from application to implementation.

By equipping organizations with these tools, NAAF aimed to help Tribal organizations and partners develop the grant readiness and capacity for responsible grant stewardship



FLOWER HILL INSTITUTE PRESENTS

FARMWORKER HOUSING

TUESDAY JUNE 17
12:00 NOON MOUNTAIN TIME



WITH SPECIAL GUEST
MARTY MILLER FROM THE
OFFICE OF RURAL AND
FARMWORKER HOUSING



and sustained funding that supports long-term organizational growth. NAAF’s technical assistance went beyond application mechanics into broader thematic support. For example, NAAF held “AI 101 — Understanding Artificial Intelligence,” hosted by Samuel Kohn, Attorney at Kaplan Kirsch. The webinar covered AI tools designed to help participants understand how it can streamline workflows such as proposal writing, editing, and program promotion, while also covering key cautions about using AI responsibly in Tribal contexts.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT CONT.



In partnership with Flower Hill Institute, NAAF also sponsored a four-part Farmworker Housing webinar series focused on advancing solutions to one of the most persistent challenges facing agricultural communities. The series brought together housing practitioners, developers, and agricultural leaders to explore farmworker housing models, financing strategies, policy considerations, and real-world lessons learned from across the country. Designed to be both educational and practical, the webinars supported Tribal Nations, Native producers, and partners interested in developing safe, culturally appropriate housing for farmworkers while navigating regulatory and funding complexities.

Additionally, NAAF expanded agricultural communications capacity through the Native Agricultural Communicators Work Group, recognizing that effective storytelling and information-sharing are essential to advancing Tribal agriculture. The network provided a space for communicators, program staff, and Tribal leaders to learn from one another through webinars and facilitated discussions focused on media relations, social media strategy, message development, and communicating complex agricultural work to diverse audiences. NAAF staff designed these sessions to meet participants where they are, offering practical, adaptable tools that could be applied immediately, regardless of organizational size or staffing levels.

The Native Agricultural Communicators Work Group also acknowledged the reality that many people working in Tribal agriculture wear multiple hats, often serving simultaneously as Tribal leaders, grant writers, program managers, and communications staff.

With limited time and capacity, these individuals must keep constituents informed, meeting funder expectations, and elevating the visibility of Tribal agriculture efforts at the same time. By offering templates, shared best practices, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities, the network helped participants streamline their communications work, reduce duplication of effort, and focus on high-impact storytelling rather than starting from scratch each time.

Importantly, the Native Agricultural Communicators Work Group helped participants better articulate the value of Tribal agriculture not only within their own communities, but also to funders, policymakers, media, and the broader public. By strengthening how stories are told — grounded in community priorities, data, and lived experience — the network supported Tribal organizations in building credibility, increasing visibility, and attracting additional resources.

Across all of these efforts, NAAF's goal in 2025 was clear: to support past, present, and future grantees not just with funding, but with the know-how to succeed long after the grant period ends. This blend of technical assistance, communications support, and personalized guidance reflected NAAF's strategy to strengthen Tribal agricultural systems by investing in people, processes, and partnerships, not just projects.

AG GOVERNANCE AND ADVOCACY SERVICES



AMERICAN FARM BUREAU AND NATIONAL FARMERS UNION

Throughout the year, NAAF continued to build and strengthen partnerships with non-Native, national-serving agricultural organizations, including the American Farm Bureau Federation and the National Farmers Union. These organizations are long-standing leaders in the agricultural space, representing producers across the country and advocating for strong rural economies, resilient farming operations, and policies that support producers at every scale. By engaging with these groups, NAAF sought to ensure that Tribal agriculture is recognized as an integral part of the broader U.S. agricultural landscape.

These partnerships are rooted in shared values. Like NAAF, national agricultural organizations prioritize rural prosperity, working lands, producer viability, and the long-term sustainability of agriculture. While Tribal producers and agricultural enterprises often operate within distinct legal, cultural, and historical contexts, they face many of the same challenges as producers nationwide — including access to capital, markets, infrastructure, and supportive policy frameworks. Building relationships with organizations such as Farm Bureau and National Farmers Union helps surface those shared priorities while also creating space to better understand and address the unique realities of Tribal agriculture.

NAAF's role within these partnerships is intentionally connective. By serving as a bridge between Tribal agriculture and national agricultural organizations, NAAF helps foster dialogue, awareness, and collaboration that might not otherwise occur. These relationships provide opportunities to elevate Tribal perspectives within national conversations, reduce misunderstandings, and encourage more inclusive approaches to agricultural policy, programming, and advocacy. In turn, national organizations gain a deeper understanding of Tribal sovereignty, governance, and agricultural innovation, strengthening the agricultural sector as a whole.

Ultimately, these partnerships support NAAF's broader mission to position Tribal agriculture as a vital contributor to rural America. By building trust and collaboration with influential, non-Native agricultural leaders, NAAF helps open doors for Tribal producers and organizations to access networks, resources, and platforms that extend beyond the life of the Fund. These relationship-building efforts ensure that, even after NAAF sunsets, Tribal agriculture remains connected, visible, and engaged within the national agricultural community.



2025 IN THE FIELD





NAAF ON THE MOVE



TRAVEL, OUTREACH, AND SITE VISITS

In 2025, NAAF prioritized travel and in-person outreach as a core part of its commitment to understanding and supporting Tribal agriculture on the ground. Through site visits and convenings, NAAF staff had the opportunity to see grantee work firsthand, deepen relationships, and better understand the diverse regional contexts in which Native agriculture operates. These visits reinforced the importance of meeting communities where they are and grounding funding and technical assistance strategies in lived experience rather than assumptions.

NAAF conducted site visits with grantees across Arizona and Minnesota, spending time with Tribal staff, producers, and community members to learn how grant-funded projects were being implemented and adapted to local needs. Additional visits included Fort Lewis College, Haskell Indian Nations University, and the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry, where NAAF engaged with students, faculty, extension partners, and agricultural professionals working at the intersection of education, workforce development, and food systems. These visits highlighted the critical role that Tribal colleges, universities, and enterprises play in building the next generation of Native agricultural leaders and strengthening regional agricultural economies.

Beyond site visits, NAAF's outreach extended nationwide through educational presentations, with staff traveling from New York to Hawaii and from Alaska to Florida. These opportunities allowed NAAF to engage with Tribal agricultural departments, economic development professionals, lenders, producers, and national organizations such as the National Farmers Union and American Farm Bureau. Through panels, presentations, and informal conversations, NAAF shared lessons learned, elevated grantee successes, and contributed a Tribal perspective to broader agricultural and policy discussions.

Across all of these engagements, what stood out most was the energy, innovation, and commitment of the people advancing agriculture — from producers and entrepreneurs to youth, students, extension agents, and community advocates. Seeing grantee projects in action and hearing directly from those doing the work reaffirmed NAAF's belief that strong relationships and consistent presence are essential to meaningful impact. These travel and outreach efforts not only informed NAAF's work in 2025, but also strengthened the trust, collaboration, and shared vision that will continue to guide NAAF's support of agriculture in the years ahead.







BOARD OF TRUSTEES



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(Cherokee Nation)

Board Chair
Dean of Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, Arizona State University; Former Professor Emeritus, University of Arizona College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; producer



SYBIL BULLARD

(Lumbee Tribe)

Board Vice Chair
Co-Owner, JR Jones Grains, Inc; grain merchandiser; Board member, Lumbee Guaranty Banks Corporate; Vice-Chair, Scotland Healthcare System; Board member, ComTECH Business Park



JACKSON S. BROSSY

(Navajo Nation)

Vice President, Native American Financial Services at Huntington Bank, Principal of Native Management Partners, LLC, and a recognized leader in economic development, access to capital, and government contracting.



JUANITA COLE CRASCO

(Gros-Ventre Tribe)

Rancher with more than 40 years of experience on one of the largest Native-owned operations in Montana; Additionally, she has held leadership positions in agriculture both within the State of Montana and her Tribe.



AJA DECOTEAU

(Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Cayuse, Nez Perce and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians)

Executive Director, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
Board Member for: National Park System; Yale Center for Environmental Justice; Earthjustice; American Rivers



ZACH DUCHENEAUX

(Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe)

Rancher, Consultant, Founder of 5th C; Former FSA Administrator; Former Executive Director, Intertribal Agriculture Council



MICHELLE FOX, JD

(Aaniiih – Gros Ventre, Amskapi Piikani – Blackfeet)

Associate Attorney, Big Fire Law; Managing Director for NDN Collective; Fifth Generation cattle rancher



BLAKE JACKSON

(Choctaw)

Attorney, Food/Agricultural Policy Professional, and Tribal Governance Specialist



KRISTEN KIPP

(Blackfeet)

Tribal cattle producer, ag advocate, and ag professional; Piikani Lodge Health Institute FSA Producer Outreach Manager, Regenerative Grazing Specialist



SANTANA NEZ-COLEMAN

(Navajo Nation)

Agriculture specialist and scientist; rancher; Tribal Agriculture Fellowship (TAF) fellow



TYLER PEARSON

(Cherokee)

VP Strategic Investments at Cherokee Nation Businesses; Former Vice President of Apis Holdings/Intertribal Holdings; Executive Director of Intertribal Health Innovation Center; and Board of Member of Certemy



NAAF STAFF



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WHITNEY SAWNEY
(Cherokee Nation)
Director of Communications and Policy



LUCAS SHERILL
(Choctaw Nation)
Investment Officer



MARIA WAKAN
(Fort Peck Sioux Tribes)
Grants Manager



CHRISTY TUCK, MA^{CC}
Controller



MARY BELLE ZOOK
(Citizen Potawatomi Nation)
Communications Officer & Data Specialist



ABOUT NAAF

THE NATIVE AMERICAN AGRICULTURE FUND (NAAF) IS A PRIVATE, CHARITABLE TRUST THAT ENVISIONS A FUTURE WHERE NATIVE FARMERS AND RANCHERS THRIVE AND PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN LAND STEWARDSHIP AND THE NATION'S ECONOMIC VIABILITY. OUR MISSION IS TO EMPOWER NATIVE AND RURAL COMMUNITIES WITH THE KNOWLEDGE, RESOURCES, AND SUPPORT TO FOSTER ROBUST AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES, RESILIENCE, AND ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY. WE BELIEVE THAT BY INVESTING IN NATIVE AGRICULTURE, WE CAN STRENGTHEN RURAL AMERICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND JOB CREATION, BENEFITING EVERYONE.



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