



# TRIBAL DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE

## 2026

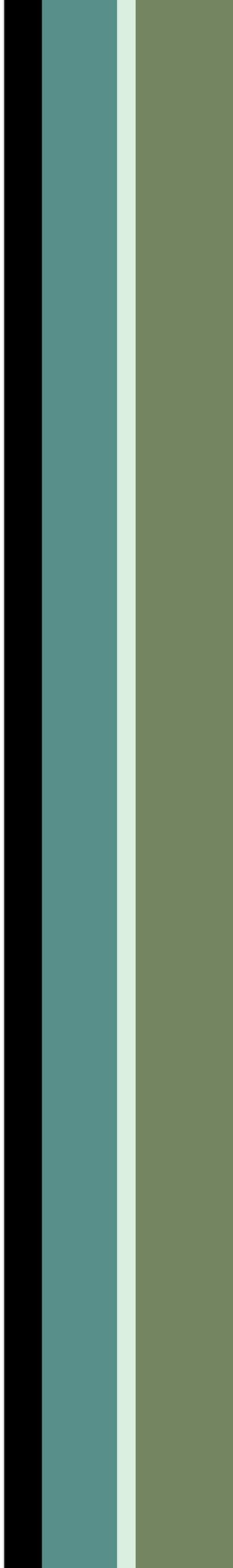
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# TRIBAL DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE

*BRAND GUIDE /  
MEDIA TOOLKIT*



## INCLUSION STATEMENT

Tribal Departments of Agriculture serve diverse Tribal Nations across the United States. This brand does not represent one Tribe, region, or agricultural practice. Instead, it reflects many food systems shaped by distinct lands, waters, cultures, and governance structures, all led locally by Tribes.

## AUDIENCE

- Tribal leaders & governments
- Tribal producers
- Non-Native producers living on Tribal lands
- Federal, state, and philanthropic partners
- Food system and ag organizations



## BRAND OVERVIEW

Tribal Departments of Agriculture represent Tribal-led systems that steward land, water, and food systems across Tribal Nations in the United States. This brand supports the development, recognition, and strengthening of Tribal Departments of Agriculture as centers of governance, coordination, and collaboration. The brand is designed to be inclusive, flexible, and nationally representative, reflecting the diversity of Tribal Nations while centering Tribal sovereignty and leadership.

## BRAND PURPOSE

To support Tribal Nations in building and strengthening Tribal Departments of Agriculture that advance food sovereignty, steward land and water, and bring communities and partners together around locally defined food systems.

## TAGLINE

***From Native lands to shared tables: Building Tribal Departments of Agriculture***

### **Meaning:**

- Native lands affirms Tribal sovereignty, jurisdiction, and stewardship
- Shared tables symbolize collaboration, nourishment, and collective responsibility
- Building Tribal Departments of Agriculture emphasizes governance, capacity, and long-term systems



## WHAT IS TRIBAL AGRICULTURE?

Tribal agriculture encompasses the land- and water-based food systems defined and practiced by each Tribe. This may include farming, ranching, fishing, hunting, gathering, forestry-based foods, and other culturally grounded stewardship practices that sustain communities and local economies.

No single model defines Tribal agriculture. Practices vary across regions, cultures, and landscapes and may include commercial, subsistence, and mixed approaches.

## BRAND VALUES/5 PILLARS

### **Tribal Sovereignty**

Tribes define their own food systems, priorities, and governance structures.

### **Stewardship**

Land, water, and food systems are cared for with responsibility to future generations.

### **Collaboration**

Strong food systems are built through partnership—led by Tribes and strengthened through respectful collaboration.

### **Inclusivity**

The brand welcomes Tribal and non-Native producers, partners, and organizations who live and work on Tribal lands.

### **Local Definition**

Solutions are place-based and locally determined, not one-size-fits-all.



# LOGO DRAFT



## FROM NATIVE LANDS TO SHARED TABLES: BUILDING TRIBAL DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE

The TDA is written in strong “institutional” font. The inside of the A represents an arrow pointing up. The ring of lines around the logo represents corn rows, sun rays, lines flowing in and out. Like Tribal Departments of Ag are exuberating energy and resources. The circles in the lines – which also make it look more like sun rays – represents seats at the table, to reflect our tagline.



# BRAND GUIDE

## PRIMARY



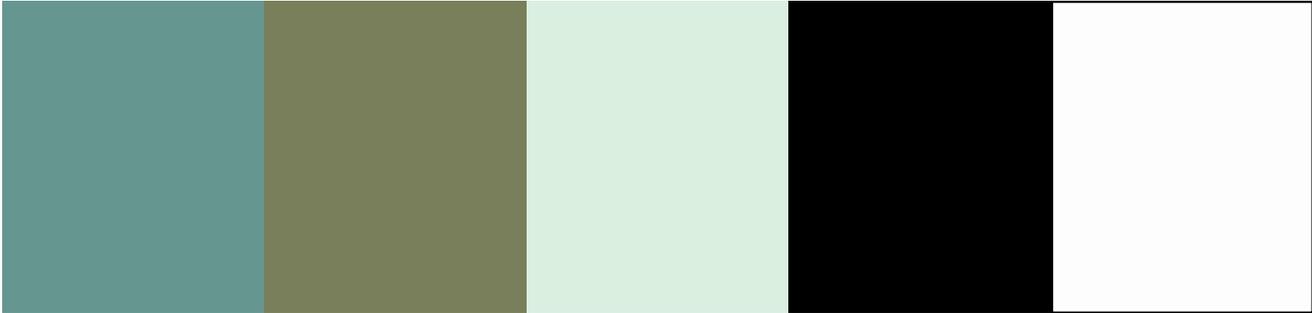
## SECONDARY



# BRAND GUIDE



## COLOR PALLETTE



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# MEDIA TOOLKIT



## **Headline:**

**Largest Gathering of Tribes Supports New Pathways for Food Sovereignty through Tribal Departments of Agriculture**

## **What happened:**

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) passed a resolution supporting the establishment and empowerment of Tribal Departments of Agriculture.

## **Who developed it:**

The resolution was developed in partnership with the Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF) and the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative (IFAI).

## **Why it matters:**

This action affirms Tribal sovereignty in agriculture, food systems, land stewardship, climate resilience, and economic development—placing Tribal Nations on equal footing with states.

## **Direct link to resolution:**

<https://ncai.assetbank-server.com/assetbank-ncai/assetfile/5809.pdf>

## **Direct link to press release:**

<https://nativeamericanagriculturefund.org/tribal-departments-of-agriculture/>

# MEDIA TOOLKIT

## Key points in this announcement:

- Tribal Nations have the sovereign authority to create and operate their own Departments of Agriculture, just as every state does.
- Tribal Departments of Agriculture serve as centralized hubs for agricultural governance, policy, economic development, and food systems planning.
- Strengthening Tribal agricultural governance supports food sovereignty, economic opportunity, and long-term stewardship of land and resources.
- This resolution reflects years of advocacy and growing national momentum across Indian Country.
- Tribal Departments of Agriculture allow each Nation to move forward at its own pace, grounded in local priorities and culture.

# MEDIA TOOLKIT

Quotes from organizations and key players:

## **NCAI President Mark Macarro**

“The movement to establish Tribal Departments of Agriculture reflects a national recognition of Tribal leadership in agriculture, food systems, and land stewardship.”

“Essential infrastructure that allows Tribes to govern their agricultural systems, invest in their producers, and plan long-term and generationally is paramount.”

Link to org’s website: <https://www.ncai.org/>

## **NAAF CEO Toni Stanger-McLaughlin**

“Agriculture has always been central not only to our cultures, but to how Tribal Nations govern and operate as economic systems.”

“Tribal Departments of Agriculture are a core expression of sovereignty, and NAAF will continue to support this work in the year ahead.”

Link to org’s website: <https://nativeamericanagriculturefund.org/>

## **IFAI Executive Director Carly Griffith Hotvedt**

“Tribal sovereignty requires food sovereignty, and Tribal Departments of Agriculture are conduits to accomplish that goal.”

Link to org’s website: <https://indigenousfoodandag.com/>

# MEDIA TOOLKIT

## »» SOCIAL MEDIA CAPTIONS

### **X / Twitter**

Tribal Nations took a major step forward for food sovereignty.

At its annual convention, NCAI passed a resolution supporting Tribal Departments of Agriculture—affirming Tribal authority over food systems, land stewardship, and economic development.

🔗 Read the full release: <https://nativeamericanagriculturefund.org/tribal-departments-of-agriculture/>

### **Instagram / Facebook**

Tribal leadership is shaping the future of agriculture.

At its annual convention, the National Congress of American Indians passed a resolution supporting Tribal Departments of Agriculture—recognizing agriculture as a core expression of Tribal sovereignty, self-governance, and long-term economic development.

This action reflects growing momentum across Indian Country to strengthen food systems rooted in community priorities, land, and culture.

🔗 Read the full release: <https://nativeamericanagriculturefund.org/tribal-departments-of-agriculture/>

### **LinkedIn**

A significant milestone for Tribal agricultural governance.

The National Congress of American Indians passed a resolution supporting the establishment and empowerment of Tribal Departments of Agriculture, developed in partnership with the Native American Agriculture Fund and the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative.

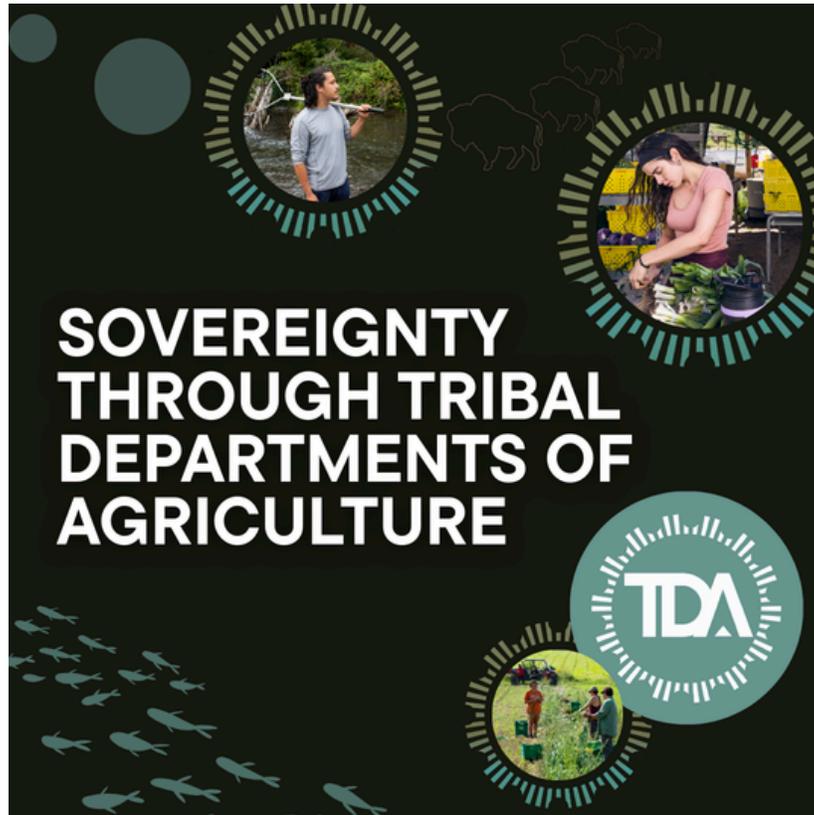
This action affirms Tribal sovereignty, strengthens agricultural governance, and advances food systems, land stewardship, and rural economic development nationwide.

🔗 Read the full release:  
<https://nativeamericanagriculturefund.org/tribal-departments-of-agriculture/>

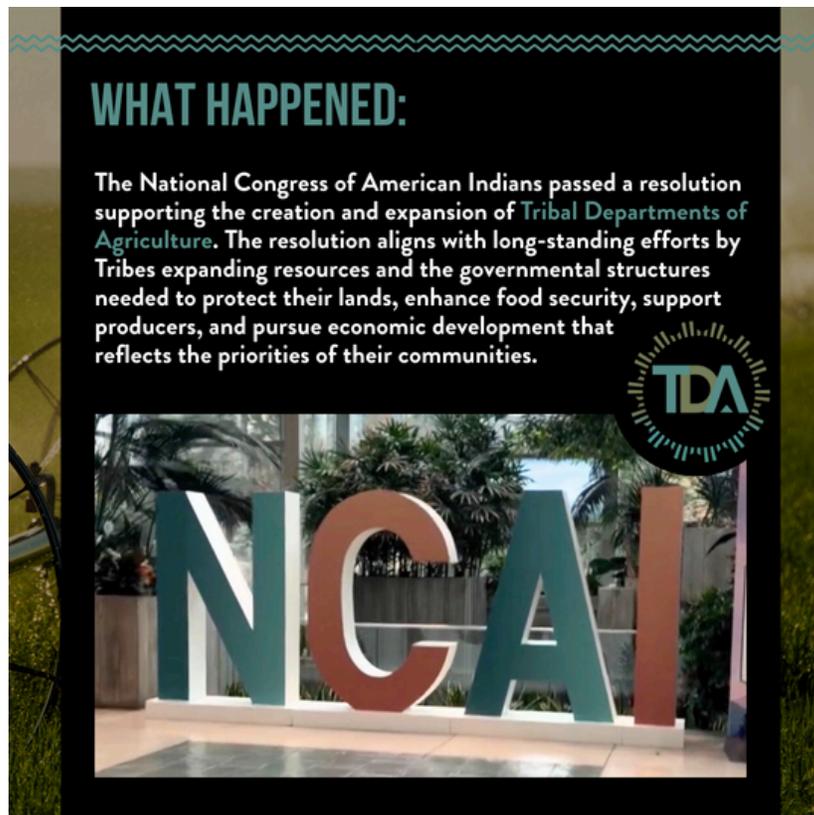
# MEDIA TOOLKIT

## »» SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGES

CAROUSEL POST



SLIDE 1



SLIDE 2

# MEDIA TOOLKIT

## »» SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGES

### WHAT IT MEANS FOR INDIAN COUNTRY:

This resolution reflects the growing national recognition of the critical role that Tribal governments play in agriculture, natural resources, and food systems. Every state in the country operates a department of agriculture, which serves as the centralized authority for agricultural policy, regulation, economic development, and program implementation. Tribal Nations have the same sovereign authority to create and operate their own agricultural departments



SLIDE 3



TO READ MORE, HEAD TO THE LINK  
IN BIO OR VISIT:

[NATIVEAMERICANAGRICULTUREFUND.ORG/  
TRIBAL-DEPARTMENTS-OF-AGRICULTURE](https://NATIVEAMERICANAGRICULTUREFUND.ORG/TRIBAL-DEPARTMENTS-OF-AGRICULTURE)

INDIGENOUS FOOD AND AGRICULTURE WEBSITE:  
[INDIGENOUSFOODANDAG.COM](https://INDIGENOUSFOODANDAG.COM)

[NATIVEAMERICANAGRICULTUREFUND.ORG](https://NATIVEAMERICANAGRICULTUREFUND.ORG)

SLIDE 4

# FULL PRESS RELEASE

  
 DIRECT LINK:  
[HTTPS://NATIVEAMERICANAGRICULTUREFUND.ORG/TRIBAL-  
DEPARTMENTS-OF-AGRICULTURE/](https://nativeamericanagriculturefund.org/tribal-departments-of-agriculture/)

## The Next Big Agriculture Story You're Not Covering Yet: Tribal Departments of Agriculture

After years of collaborative work to expand opportunities for Tribal agricultural development, the Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF), in partnership with the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative (IFAI), successfully worked with the members of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) to advance and pass a resolution supporting the establishment and empowerment of Tribal Departments of Agriculture.

“This effort reflects a shared commitment to strengthening Tribal sovereignty through agriculture and ensuring Tribes have the institutional authority and infrastructure necessary to guide, regulate, and grow agricultural economies within their own communities and regions,” said Toni Stanger-McLaughlin, NAAF CEO. “Tribal Departments of Agriculture are a core expression of sovereignty, and NAAF will continue to support this work in the year ahead.”

According to Stanger-McLaughlin, agriculture is not only central to Native cultures, but to how Tribal Nations govern and operate as economic systems.

“Bringing those two realities together ensures that agriculture and Tribal sovereignty remain at the center of long-term economic development in pursuit of resilient food systems,” she said.

Every state in the country operates a department of agriculture, which serves as the centralized authority for agricultural policy, regulation, economic development, and program implementation. Tribal Nations have the same sovereign authority to create and operate their own agricultural departments. Establishing and expanding these entities places Tribes on equal footing with states and strengthens self-governance in food systems, land management, climate resilience, and rural economic development.

“The movement to establish Tribal Departments of Agriculture reflects a national recognition of Tribal leadership in agriculture, food systems, and land stewardship,” said NCAI President and Tribal Chairman of the Pechanga Band of Indians, Mark Macarro. “Essential infrastructure that allows Tribes to govern their agricultural systems, invest in their producers, and plan long term and generationally is paramount. Strengthening these departments ensures Tribes can build the capacity to steward their lands, support their people, and ensure agriculture leads to healthy food on tables, income for producers, and futures for our next generation.”

...CONTINUED

# FULL PRESS RELEASE

## »» CONTINUED

As Tribal Nations consider departments of agriculture, it is important to acknowledge the range of perspectives across Indian Country. Tribal Departments of Agriculture provide a balanced and sovereign pathway for each Nation to move forward at its own pace. They allow Tribes to create systems that reflect their community priorities without forcing a single approach on every Nation.

“Departments of Agriculture are critical tools for Tribes developing food systems and making investments in agricultural economic development,” said IFAI Executive Director Carly Griffith Hotvedt. “They support the retention of institutional knowledge, the preservation and proliferation of cultural knowledge and practices, advocacy and service delivery not only for tribal agricultural interests, but also for Tribal producers, Tribal entrepreneurs, and anybody who eats. Tribes with Departments of Agriculture also occupy regulatory space, which prevents encroachment from external jurisdictions attempting to regulate food systems that don’t belong to them. Tribal sovereignty requires food sovereignty, and Tribal Departments of Agriculture are conduits to accomplish that goal.”

The passage of this resolution affirms a shared commitment among Tribal Nations to expand agricultural engagement and strengthen Tribal authority in this space. It reflects growing national momentum and honors years of collective advocacy by Native American agricultural organizations working to advance Tribal Departments of Agriculture.

Central to this momentum has been the leadership of Janie Simms Hipp, co-founder of IFAI, whose decades-long advocacy has championed Tribal self-determination through food and agricultural policy, capacity-building, and governance.

“Her work has consistently emphasized the importance of well-structured, well-resourced Tribal Departments of Agriculture as critical tools for advancing economic development, protecting natural resources, and enabling Tribes to exercise greater control over agricultural development in ways that reflect their cultural values, legal authority, and long-term community priorities,” Stanger-McLaughlin said.

Find out more on how NAAF, IFAI, and NCAI support Tribal Departments of Agriculture at [www.nativeamericanagriculturefund.org](http://www.nativeamericanagriculturefund.org).



# MORE INFORMATION ON TDA/FAQ

## **What is a Tribal Department of Agriculture?**

A Tribal Department of Agriculture is a Tribal government–led entity that oversees, supports, and advances agriculture, food systems, and natural resource priorities within a Tribe’s reservation and/or jurisdiction.

While the structure and scope vary by Tribe, as each are sovereign and have unique governance structures, these departments function much like state departments of agriculture but are established through Tribal laws and governance rather than federal or state authority.

## **What do Tribal Departments of Agriculture do?**

- Develop and implement Tribal agricultural policy and law, including food safety, land use, and natural resource management
- Support producers, ranchers, farmers, fishers, and food businesses through technical assistance and coordination
- Strengthen food systems and food sovereignty, including traditional foods, local supply chains, and nutrition access
- Coordinate federal, state, and private investments to ensure resources flow directly to Tribal priorities
- Protect and steward land, water, and natural resources using both Traditional Tribal Ecological Knowledge and modern agricultural science
- Set standards and regulatory frameworks that reflect Tribal authority and community needs.
- 

## **Why the National Congress of American Indians resolution matters:**

- An [NCAI resolution](#) serves as a collective statement from participating member Tribes. By supporting Tribal Departments of Agriculture, the resolution reinforces that agriculture, food systems, and land stewardship are matters of Tribal governance and is a shared priority for many Tribes across the United States.
- It also informs policymakers, giving Tribes and partners a clear, unified policy signal when engaging the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of the Interior, and other federal agencies and decision-makers.
- Many Tribes have been building agricultural governance and food systems for years, often without national visibility. The resolution:
  - Recognizes those efforts
  - Amplifies successful models
  - Signals that this work is not isolated, but part of a growing national movement



## MORE INFORMATION ON TDA/FAQ

### **Examples of Tribal success stories:**

#### Infrastructure, Youth Programming, and Technical Assistance – Muscogee (Creek) Nation

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Agriculture demonstrates how Tribal Nations can harness agricultural governance to strengthen local economies, support producers, and steward land in ways that reflect cultural values and long-term Tribal priorities. Serving one of the largest Tribal reservations and jurisdictions in the country, the department coordinates agricultural policy, land use, producer engagement, technical assistance, and youth-focused programs that cultivate the next generation of Tribal agricultural leaders across rural and Tribal communities.

MCN's agricultural strategy includes investments in infrastructure and producer support, such as expanding access to a Tribal meat processing facility and other processing capacity that helps producers bring products to market, capture more value locally, and meet food safety standards. The department also provides technical assistance to Tribal and local producers, helping them with business planning, compliance, resource management, and access to markets, reinforcing the link between production, processing, and economic opportunity.

Conservation and land stewardship are central to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation's work, with the department promoting practices that sustain soil, water, and wildlife while supporting agricultural productivity. This holistic approach reflects the Nation's commitment to responsible land use: balancing economic activity with natural resource protection in ways that honor traditional relationships with the land.

A distinguishing element of the Nation's approach is its investment in youth engagement, creating pathways for the next generation of agricultural leaders. The MCN offers hands-on educational opportunities that introduce youth to farming, ranching, land stewardship, and food systems, building practical skills and opening career pathways. By preparing young people to participate in and lead Tribal agricultural initiatives, the MCN is ensuring continuity, preserving knowledge, and strengthening long-term food sovereignty.



# MORE INFORMATION ON TDA/FAQ

## **IFAI work funded by NAAF for TDA development – Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin (Emergency Response/Regional Food)**

The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin's Department of Agriculture and Food Systems (DAFS) is a great example of using Tribal governance to transform food systems and health outcomes. Since its establishment, DAFS has implemented community-centered programs such as plant and seed giveaways, raised garden bed installations, agriculture demonstrations, and community kitchen operations, all anchored in Menominee cultural values and food sovereignty goals.

One of the most impactful initiatives connected to state and Tribal agriculture work is the Tribal Elder Food Box Program, which delivers nutritious, culturally meaningful foods to Tribal elders across the Great Lakes region. The program creates markets for Native and local producers and reinforces intertribal food networks while addressing food insecurity in rural and reservation communities.

DAFS's system-wide work also included zoning and food code updates that support long-term agricultural planning and policy alignment, fostering infrastructure that uplifts both the Menominee Nation and its intertribal partners. By leveraging the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative's [Model Tribal Food and Agriculture Code](#), the Menominee Nation was able to establish a strong legal and regulatory framework that guides its operations, ensures safety and compliance, and provides the flexibility to adapt programs in ways that best serve Tribal citizens and the diverse Native and non-Native producers it partners with.

Menominee Nation's infrastructure and agricultural investments proved even more impactful during the 2024 disruptions to the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR). Tribes with established agricultural infrastructure and regional producer networks were better positioned to navigate supply challenges, ensuring vulnerable members of their communities continued to have access to food. The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin's long-standing investments in local agriculture, food systems coordination, and intertribal partnerships helped create resilience that reduced reliance on distant or disrupted supply chains, highlighting the value of Tribal-led food system governance.

Menominee Nation's DAFS serves as a replicable model for other Tribal Nations seeking to strengthen their food systems and local economies. By building coordinated, Tribal-led agricultural systems, Tribes can reduce vulnerability to external disruptions while expanding opportunities for producers, improving community health, and reinforcing self-determination. Tribal Nations cannot be truly sovereign unless they are food sovereign, and Menominee's Department of Agriculture and Food Systems demonstrates how agricultural governance can serve as both an economic driver and a risk-mitigation tool for generations to come.



## MORE INFORMATION ON TDA/FAQ

Who are NAAF and IFAI?

- [The Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative \(IFAI\)](#) serves as a leading Tribal agricultural law and policy research organization based at the University of Arkansas School of Law. IFAI works to strengthen the food and agriculture systems of Tribal Nations through legal and policy research as well as technical expertise to help Tribes establish robust agricultural governance, develop market opportunities, and implement sustainable and culturally grounded food systems.

One of IFAI's signature contributions is the Model Tribal Food and Agriculture Code, a comprehensive and adaptable legal framework designed to guide Tribal Nations in developing or updating laws, regulations, and policies that govern agricultural production, food safety, and land use. The Model Tribal Food and Agriculture Code support Tribal sovereignty by offering tools that Tribes can tailor to their unique cultural, legal, and economic contexts.

Beyond legal guidance, IFAI works directly with Tribal governments, producers, and stakeholders to provide training, technical assistance, and resources that strengthen local economies, expand market access, and promote food sovereignty. By bridging law, policy, and practice, IFAI helps Tribes create sustainable agricultural systems that support both current and future generations.

- [The Native American Agriculture Fund \(NAAF\)](#) is the largest philanthropic organization in the United States dedicated exclusively to supporting Native agriculture, serving Native American farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers across Indian Country. Established in 2018 as a private charitable trust, NAAF was created as a result of the landmark *Keepseagle v. Vilsack* class-action settlement, which addressed decades of discriminatory lending and servicing practices by the U.S. Department of Agriculture against Native producers. The creation of NAAF transformed a legacy of inequity into a long-term investment in Native agricultural strength, sovereignty, and opportunity.

Guided by this history, NAAF's mission is to support the success and sustainability of Native agriculture through strategic grantmaking that funds business assistance, agricultural education, technical support, and advocacy services. NAAF recognizes that agriculture is deeply tied to Tribal cultures, economies, and land stewardship, and that strengthening Native food and agricultural systems is essential to advancing self-determination and community well-being.

Since its inception, NAAF has injected more than \$85 million across more than 500 programs, supporting Tribal governments, 501c3s, educational institutions, and Native-serving Community Development Financial Institutions working directly with producers on the ground. These investments expand access to capital and technical resources, strengthen food security and local food systems, and support youth and workforce development.



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