

---

## DEVELOPING INNOVATIONS IN NAVAJO EDUCATION, INC.

---



<b>Project Title:</b>	Navajo Nation Traditional Agriculture Outreach
<b>Award Amount:</b>	\$707,834
<b>Type of Grant:</b>	Social and Economic Development Strategies
<b>Project Period:</b>	Sept. 2007 – Sept. 2010
<b>Grantee Type:</b>	Native Nonprofit

---

### PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 33 jobs created
- 18 businesses created
- 150 crop farmers
- 560 elders involved
- 284 youth involved
- \$158,750 in resources leveraged
- 1,405 individuals trained
- 26 partnerships formed

### BACKGROUND

The Navajo Nation covers approximately 26,000 square miles of rugged high desert in northeastern Arizona and parts of New Mexico and Utah, and is divided into five agencies. The agencies are subdivided into 110 chapters. Each chapter has a chapter house serving as a local administrative center and communal meeting place.

The Navajo Nation has a long history of socio-economic challenges, including high levels of unemployment and poverty. The Navajo are traditionally an agricultural and pastoral people, and many tribal leaders believe creating a food-system network based on sustainable agriculture and value-

added food production can contribute to the tribe's economic revival.

Developing Innovations in Navajo Education, Inc. (Diné, Inc.) is a federally funded nonprofit organization assisting the southwestern region of the Navajo Nation to return to traditional means of living through agricultural support and agro-vocational training. Diné's mission is to preserve and strengthen the cultural and traditional agricultural infrastructure of the Navajo people "by cultivating inspiration and celebrating diligence." Diné's service area includes nine chapter houses located in the Western and Fort Defiance Agencies of the Navajo Nation, extending 40 miles from Flagstaff to the Hopi Nation. Services include plowing fields for farmers; providing local access to a corn grinder (which helps minimize farmers' travel costs and other expenses); and starting drip irrigation gardens at nine chapter houses.

### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Navajo Nation Traditional Agriculture Outreach (NNTAO) project was to encourage sustainable farm agriculture and value-added food production, thereby creating jobs, economic

opportunity, and high-quality food for local consumption in nine communities of the Western and Fort Defiance Agencies.

Direct services include: plowing, planting, packaging, marketing, and labeling; farm and business financial management training; microenterprise development training; and value-added food production opportunities through access to a full service commercial community kitchen.

The first objective was to establish nine drip-irrigation community gardens, one for each of the nine target communities. To accomplish this, project staff recruited 20 farmers to participate each year, totaling 60 over three years. To enhance the efficiency of this process and facilitate cooperation among community members, project beneficiaries who began participating early in the project worked and shared knowledge with those who joined later, assisting them in their learning process.

The second objective was to train a total of 80 value-added producers, utilizing commercial kitchen facilities to produce value-added, Navajo-themed products. To carry out this objective, the project team worked with a local high school whose kitchen met legal commercial kitchen standards. Next, they taught classes in how to process produce, which then was sold at farmers' markets and at roadside stands. Diné staff also provided free use of two corn grinders, to allow individuals to grind and process corn. In year three, this objective included distribution to markets and identification of new markets. The third objective was to train farmers in agricultural best practices, electronic resources, communication, and agricultural software management. It also involved training youth in microenterprise management methods, including business technical support; developing individual business plans for each garden; using electronic resources to

catalog program activity; and creating mutually beneficial partnerships. In the first year, project staff and partners trained 70 farmers in marketing and labeling at the Taos Economic Development Corporation. Each participating farmer received a laptop for use in his/her agricultural business endeavors. The project utilized a full-time teacher, who taught 104 classes in the use of financial management software. The project team also provided classes and experiential learning opportunities to 10 local youth, enabling the youth to devise value-added products and to market one of the products. The project team recruited 40 youth and secured funding for their summer employment through a local partnership.

#### **OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT**

The project resulted in the creation of nine community gardens. Participants included 150 crop farmers and value-added food producers, 284 youth, and 560 elders. The youth microenterprise component included: creation of a 4-H club in Tuba City; 40 full-time summer jobs to work in the community gardens; and marketing classes offered as part of the high school curriculum. Students at DINE Southwest High School in Winslow developed their own small business and label, and 17 micro-businesses were also developed by community members. These included several roadside Indian taco stands and several businesses selling value-added products created by sheep herders.

Project staff stated a significant percentage of participants will continue with project activities, utilizing the sustainable agricultural practices and value-added food production techniques they learned during the project. Diné, Inc. will continue to operate the nine community gardens, providing Navajo youth and community members the opportunity to continue learning about and practicing traditional, sustainable agricultural methods.

---

## NATIVE AMERICAN CONNECTIONS, INC.



**Project Title:** Creating a New Home in Our Native Neighborhood – Uniting as One to Build & Grow an Urban Native Health and Wellness Community

**Award Amount:** \$63,289

**Type of Grant:** Social and Economic Development Strategies

**Project Period:** Sept. 2009 – Sept. 2010

**Grantee Type:** Native Nonprofit

---

### PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 2 jobs created
- 1 Native American consultant hired
- \$24,910 in resources leveraged
- 7 partnerships formed

### BACKGROUND

Native American Connections (NAC) is a native nonprofit founded in 1972 to provide drug, alcohol, and mental health treatment to Native Americans in the greater metropolitan area of Phoenix, Arizona. For almost 40 years, NAC has been the only agency in the region providing intertribal, culturally-appropriate residential substance abuse treatment to both men and women. Services are provided in two facilities; one serves women and is equipped with 32 beds, and the other serves men and contains 16 beds. Both facilities are over 50 years old and have excessive maintenance costs that impede program expansion and enhancement. Additionally, both facilities are overcrowded and in need of renovations.

As a result of these conditions, Native Americans in need of services often experience significant waiting times to gain access to already overcrowded facilities. Once admitted, clients often find it difficult to secure transportation to these facilities, due to their distant locations. It has become clear to NAC staff members that the growing urban Native American community of over 100,000 in Greater Phoenix needs greater access to culturally-appropriate residential treatment programs located closer to other Native American culturally-centered health and community services.

### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this project was to assess the practicality of consolidating NAC's two existing facilities into one larger facility. The proposed facility would be centrally located to the target population and have greater capacity, enabling NAC to shorten its wait-lists, serve a greater number of people, and be more easily accessible to clients. The sole objective of the project was to conduct a feasibility study and

market study that would delineate the costs and benefits of relocation, consolidation, and expansion, providing guidance for future endeavors. NAC hired a native owned contracting company, American Indian Health and Management Policy (AIHMP, Inc.), to conduct both studies under NAC's guidance.

The market study provided an analysis of market demand for continued expansion of behavioral health services in a defined geographic boundary considered a "catchment area" for urban Native Americans in the Greater Phoenix area. Specifically, the study analyzed: 1) demographic, economic, and real estate trends; 2) customer demand for services and type of services being offered; 3) estimated costs of various business expansion scenarios, and; 4) estimated savings from product/program consolidation.

The feasibility study provided analysis of the following considerations: 1) start-up and operating costs related to business expansion in a new facility; 2) market projections and revenue forecasts; 3) risk assessment; 4) personnel and staffing requirements; 5) potential size and square footage of a new facility, and; 6) estimated construction costs for building a new expanded health care facility. Both studies were completed in a timely manner and fully addressed all areas of consideration.

#### **OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT**

At the end of the project, findings of both studies were presented formally to NAC's Board of Directors. As a result, NAC's Board, staff, and community stakeholders now possess the information necessary to make decisions and recommendations regarding the extent of program expansion that can be sustained by the organization and supported in the community.

Some of the key findings of the studies were as follows: the cost of consolidating/moving facilities would be approximately \$5 to \$8 million dollars; the resultant savings would be \$700,000 to \$800,000 in NAC's annual operating budget in the first year alone; new efficiencies would be realized from the move, such as savings on staffing, energy consumption, and transportation expenditures; and a new facility of 35,000 square feet could accommodate 60 beds comfortably, representing a 20 percent increase from NAC's current capacity of 48 beds. Ultimately, the results indicate consolidating/moving facilities would yield positive, sustainable impacts for NAC, its clients, and the community served, by increasing capacity, providing greater accessibility, and enhancing efficiency.

Additionally, the project had some positive unexpected results. AIHMP went beyond the requirements of their contract to produce a pro-forma 10-year budget and a set of three-dimensionally rendered building design options for the proposed new facility. Furthermore, AIHMP provided insight on how NAC could become a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), which could enhance the earnings potential of the facility significantly.

NAC plans on using the knowledge gained and deliverables produced from this project to begin the next phase of expansion, which will entail acquisition of a property site, creation of architectural blueprints, and a request for proposal for construction bids. NAC staff members expressed confidence that this project was an unqualified success and the next phase of expansion will be equally successful.