



May 5, 2026

Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Brian Schatz, Vice Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Bruce Westerman, Chair
U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Jared Huffman, Ranking
U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Jeff Hurd, Chair
Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs
U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Teresa Leger Fernández, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs
U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Requesting Immediate Reauthorization of Social and Economic Development Strategies (SEDS) and SEDS-Alaska Programs of the Administration of Native Americans

Dear Members of Congress:

We, the undersigned national Native organizations representing and serving hundreds of Tribal Nations across the country, hereby **request that the 119th Congress immediately reauthorize the Social and Economic Development Strategies (SEDS) and SEDS-Alaska (SEDS-AK) Programs. As you know, these are invaluable grant programs administered by the Administration of Native Americans (ANA) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).** In particular, your committees held hearings and developed reauthorizing legislation that strengthened and prioritized the SEDS grant programs as part of the Indian Community Economic Enhancement Act (the “ICEE Act,” [Public Law 116–261, 134 STAT. 3314](#)). As their authorization expired in 2025, we urge your committees to reauthorize these programs immediately – through a simple stand-alone bill or as an amendment to other legislation moving through your committees. This will ensure that ANA continues to issue SEDS and SEDS-AK grants that have proven so effective in fostering economic growth across Indian Country and not have them displaced by proposed new ANA programs that don’t share that same critical focus (see below).

The SEDS and SEDS-AK Programs have long been among the most effective federal investments in Tribal self-determination and economic sovereignty. SEDS-based funding is unique in its flexibility, allowing Tribal Nations and Native organizations to define priorities and design projects based on locally identified needs. Elimination of these programs due to lapsed authorization would be abandoning a proven, community-driven model that has supported hundreds of successful projects across Indian Country. The SEDS programs’ broad eligibility and adaptability are essential to meeting the diverse needs of Tribal communities, and they provide a critical mechanism for the federal government to meet its trust and treaty obligations.

In operation for more than three decades, these transformative programs appropriately place primary emphasis on (1) supporting Indian Country’s self-determined “development of stable, diversified local economies that provide jobs and business opportunities, promoting economic well-being in Native American communities”; and (2) enhancing the governance and administrative infrastructure and capacity of Tribal Nations, Native organizations, and Alaska Native village governments “to develop and enforce laws, regulations, codes, and policies that benefit” those communities and advance their building of those economies.¹

¹ HHS-2024-ACF-ANA-NA-0050 (<https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/349761>).

The ICEE Act directed that ANA prioritize SEDS funding for key initiatives and activities centrally designed to advance these core economic development goals, including:

- developing the legal infrastructure necessary to support economic development (such as Tribal court systems and commercial and other codes);
- supporting the creation and growth of Native community development financial institutions (CDFIs) to increase the flow of desperately needed affordable capital for Native small business owners, Native homeowners, and economic and community development infrastructure projects on Tribal lands; and
- developing Tribal master plans for community and economic development and infrastructure.²

These priority provisions for ANA’s SEDS and SEDS-AK programs are in grave jeopardy as the ANA now proposes – [without proper government-to-government consultation with Tribal Nations](#) – to dispense with these programs in favor of two new programs that limit funding to five very narrowly focused project areas. Two of these project areas have *no* explicit economic development focus in whole or part (Tradition in Action and Indigenous Designs to Empower and Advance Self-Determination), and the other three project areas (Seventh-Generation Greenhouses, Microgrids, and Welders to Elders) would be better suited to management by the better-funded Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs of the Department of Energy. By narrowing the range of activities that will qualify for ANA funding, the proposed changes are bound to render Tribal Nations and Native organizations ineligible for ANA funding if their long-range economic development plans do not include these activities. By contrast, preserving the SEDS programs would enable Tribal Nations and Native organizations to continue pursuing ANA dollars for vital, locally determined economy-building strategies.

Given these facts, **we call on Congress to pass legislation that does the following:**

(1) Amend subsection (a) of Section 816 (“Authorization of Appropriations”) of the Native American Programs Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 2992d, as [amended](#)) by striking “2021 through 2025” and inserting “2026 through 2030”;

(2) Direct HHS and ANA to preserve the SEDS and SEDS-AK Programs as core funding initiatives of ANA, with the total annual funding for economic development-focused grants under these programs to meet or ideally exceed the total funding level allocated for FY 2026.

We appreciate your consideration of this request, and we thank Congress in advance for its continued bipartisan support of these vital programs.

Sincerely,

Amber Schulz-Oliver
Executive Director
**Affiliated Tribes of Northwest
Indians**

Cory M. Blankenship
Executive Director
NAFOA

Pete Upton
CEO
Native CDFI Network

Ben Mallott
President
Alaska Federation of Natives

Larry Wright, Jr.
Executive Director
**National Congress of American
Indians**

Jay Spaan
Executive Director
Tribal Self-Governance

A. Gay Kingman
Executive Director
**Great Plains Tribal Chairmen’s
Association**

Chris James
President and CEO
**National Center for American
Indian Enterprise Development**

Kitcki Carroll
Executive Director
**United South and Eastern Tribes
Sovereignty Protection Fund**

² Ibid.