



NATIONAL CENTER FOR AMERICAN
INDIAN ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

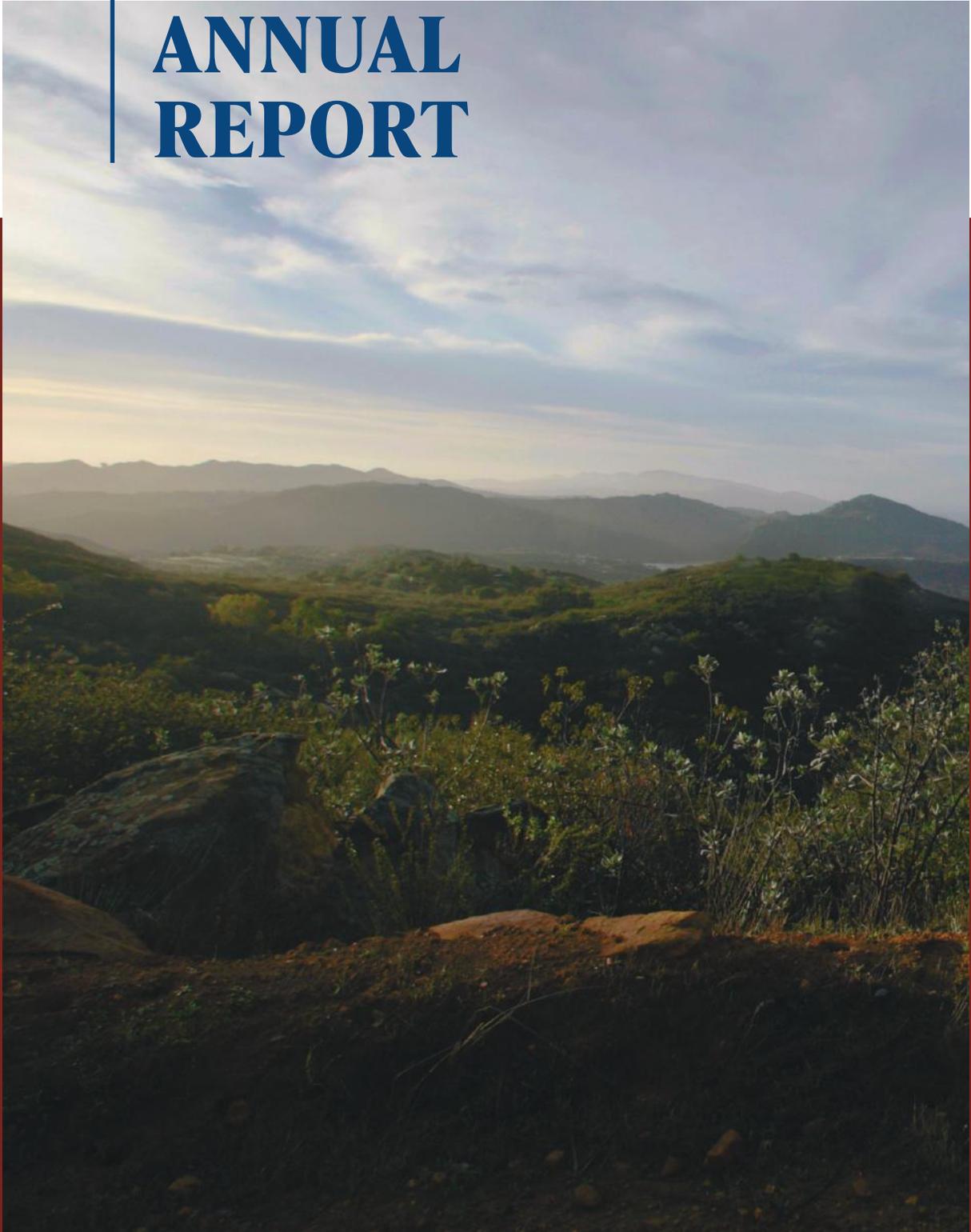


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“*The National Center continues to be a leading force for economic development across Indian Country. Collaboration with The National Center encourages the intent of our original charter and activates the Navajo contribution to the flourishing development of Indian Country's economy. DDC is proud to partner with the National Center and work closely with its talented team to move our communities forward.*”

Austin Tsosie (Diné)
CEO, Diné Development Corporation





Laying the Foundation for Current and Future Success

In 2023, The National Center for American Indian Enterprise continued to thrive, demonstrating that even in its sixth decade, an organization can remain vibrant and progressive. It marked a year of expansion, as our organization achieved unprecedented milestones and surpassed its objectives.

Our annual report catalogs some of the ways in which The National Center has met its mission of “meaning business.” It also details how we “Empower for Generations,” which was the theme at the 2023 Reservation Economic Summit (RES). This theme serves as a poignant reminder that the choices and investments we make today should always contribute to a higher purpose, extending beyond momentary success. Our ultimate aim should always be to create a lasting legacy for our children and the generations that follow.

I am confident that the strategic investments we made in 2023 will have a lasting impact, paving the way for sustained business development, growth, and organizational success. Whether it's our ongoing commitment to international trade, which holds vast potential for opening new markets for Native-owned businesses, the transformation of our American Indian PTAC into a dynamic APEX Accelerator, or the establishment of new partnerships with businesses

and organizations, our organization's foundation is solid—and expanding. This foundation will empower us to continue building for the future with unwavering focus and determination.

RES is our annual flagship event. In 2023, RES exceeded all reasonable expectations, hosting more than 4,100 people in Las Vegas. Even more noteworthy is the continuous enhancement of the event's depth and scope. This ongoing improvement ensures that RES functions as a year-round catalyst for Native business, supporting and promoting it every single day of the year.

As I mark my seventh year at the helm of this remarkable organization, I want to express my deep pride in our accomplishments. However, I strongly believe that our greatest achievements are still ahead. Your steadfast support of The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development has been instrumental in our journey. We simply would not be where we are today without you by our side. For that, I extend my heartfelt gratitude.



Chris James
President and CEO

How The National Center Empowers for Generations



Our focus on the future sets us apart from many other organizations. Here at The National Center, we know the investments made today not only help tribes and businesses take the next step in their development; these are down payments for future generations. “Empowering for Generations” is central to everything we do at The National Center.

This was true when a small group of visionaries based in Los Angeles joined together to form the Urban Indian Development Association in 1969, and it remains true today for our 20-person organization spread out in nine offices across the United States. Our commitment to empowering for generations is at the heart of all of our events and services, whether it’s the weeklong RES, a one-day Native Edge Institute (NEI), or the year-round support provided by our APEX Accelerator. And naturally, we play our part to mentor and promote tomorrow’s leaders through the Native American 40 Under 40 program.

Empowering ... for Generations. It’s at the heart of everything The National Center does.





- ◆ **675** new clients
- ◆ **\$1.1 billion** in contracts awarded to clients in FY 2023
- ◆ **9** offices
- ◆ **20** Employees
- ◆ **134** sponsors, from small tribes to Fortune 500 companies
- ◆ **\$6.9 million** in annual revenue
- ◆ **4,100+** attendees at RES

Our work is laying the foundation for an even better tomorrow in Indian Country.

The Pillars Supporting The National Center

In 2021, we developed three areas of organizational focus—three pillars that provide the foundation for The National Center’s work. And while the materials that compose the pillars may change, their strength does not.

“*The team at The National Center APEX Accelerator has been absolutely monumental in Bull Bear Defense Solutions’ success entering into the Federal and DoD contracting markets. I know, without a doubt, when I need clarification, contact information, or to get additional information about an opportunity, I can reach out to my National Center APEX advisor and get an answer within the same or next business day.*”

Jessica McKinley (Caddo Nation),
President of Bull Bear Defense
Solutions, LLC.

Helping Native-Owned Businesses Grow

If there were one word to describe The National Center, it's business. We are here to ensure Native businesses and entrepreneurs grow and meet their goals while continuing to play an essential role in the American economy. We serve as a connector, whether it's between tribes, large suppliers, or the government.

At RES—2023 was our largest ever—**buyers and suppliers are connected** for new partnerships and business opportunities.

Our **Native Edge Institutes** program continues to grow, bringing one-day business programming from experts in their fields to all corners of the country.

Our **APEX Accelerator**—formerly PTAC—continues to provide unmatched services to its growing list of clients, helping them earn billions in contracts and create thousands of jobs.

Serving as a Powerful Voice in Washington

Indian Country must have a strong voice in Washington. We remain a trusted resource for policymakers and staff and continue to advocate for legislation and policies that move our communities and their businesses forward.

Legislation supported by The National Center that would elevate the **Office of Native American Affairs at the Small Business Administration** is moving through Congress.

The National Center is an **uncompromising force for tribal economic sovereignty.**

We partner with allied organizations to ensure **Indian Country is strong and united.**

Expanding Markets at Home and Abroad

Trade does not end at borders, whether reservation, state, or national. That's why international trade has become an increasingly important part of our work at The National Center. It's even led to multiple trade missions and speaking engagements abroad and close partnerships with foreign governments and international organizations.

We have expanded the services of our **Arizona MBDA Export Center** to serve the ground market for cross-border Indigenous trade, including helping a client secure its first international contract.

We established a **new partnership with the International Trade Administration** through a memorandum of agreement signed at the Select USA Investment Summit.

Our team **participated in international forums and dialogues**, including the World Economic Forum sponsored by the World Trade Organization.



Programs at the Core of The National Center's Work

The National Center does not complete its work over four days in Las Vegas. We operate year-round through programs and services for businesses, entrepreneurs, and people just getting started in their career. We boast unmatched training and support opportunities for Indian Country.

In 2023, our American Indian Procurement and Technical Assistance Center underwent a rebrand and is now **The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development APEX Accelerator**. It may have a new name, but the APEX Accelerator continues to help businesses reach the next level.

We formally opened our Washington, DC office in FY 2023, which serves as an **MBDA Business Center**. The office gives us a physical presence in our nation's capital, as well as a resource for businesses to get the assistance they need.

324 active clients

125 clients

1,371 contracts awarded, worth more than **\$1 billion**

1 international event that connected Canadian First Nations with National Center clients.





In 2022, we launched the **Arizona MBDA Export Center**—the first Native organization to operate one of these centers. The Center continues to grow, helping businesses reach new markets.

133 total clients

22 events hosted

We understood that Indian Country often fails to tell its story—its positive story. That was the primary driver behind the creation of **NC Magazine**. We have now issued three editions of NC Magazine, with features on topics ranging from Native fashion to federal policy.

4,000 copies distributed

17 feature stories





40 Under 40 Awardees Continue to Impress

Started in 2009, The Native American 40 Under 40 program is our way of recognizing and cultivating our future generation of leaders. Now boasting 600 alumni, members of this increasingly close-knit community are leading Indian Country to new heights. It is our honor to celebrate them every year at RES and offer continuing networking and professional development opportunities.

**Tribal leadership. Politics.
Business. The Law. Medicine.
Academia. Journalism. Culinary
Arts. Nonprofits. Arts and
Entertainment. Sports.**

The fields represented by our 40 Under 40 winners are as diverse as Indian Country itself.

“*It just means the world. I am so beyond honored to be included in such a powerful group of leaders who have been doing such incredible work in the world and for their communities. I feel so inspired and thankful to be a part of this. It’s amazing.*”

Activist and model **Quannah Rose Chasinghorse (Hän Gwich’in and Sicangu-Oglala Lakota)** on being honored as a 2023 Native American 40 Under 40 Awardee

Recognizing Indian Country Leaders

The 40 Under 40 program is not the only way we recognize those doing great work across our community. We also honor businesses, individuals, and tribes through our annual Business Awards. Winners have made—and continue to make—significant contributions to Indian Country.

2023 American Indian Business Award Winners Were:

Native Woman Business Owner Of The Year Award
Jade Blankenship (and co-founder Jensen Peone)
Indigenous Boutique & Spa

Tim Wapato Public Advocate of the Year Award
John Echohawk
Executive Director of the Native American Rights Fund
and Board Member of The National Center

American Indian Leadership Award
Morongo Band of Mission Indians

American Indian Business of the Year Award
The Akana Group

Corporate Advocate of the Year Award
Amazon

Tribal Gaming Visionary Award
EBCI Holdings, LLC (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians)

Congressional Achievement Award
Representative Ruben Gallego (D-AZ)



A Record-Setting Gathering at RES 2023

4,100. That's the number of people who made the journey to Las Vegas in April of 2023 for the 37th annual Reservation Economic Summit. RES 2023 was a record-setting gathering, and not just because of the impressive top-line number. Our lineup of speakers, networking and business matchmaking opportunities, in-depth discussions at breakout sessions, and entertainment options made it an event for the ages.

"Empowering for Generations" was not just the theme for RES 2023. It was a call to action for everyone who came to RES to

take the next step in their career journey and a reminder that the investments made today have an impact on tomorrow. While it can be easy to only think about immediate problems, something that makes Indian Country unique is our firm belief in a higher purpose—laying a foundation not merely for ourselves, but also for future generations. For our grandkids and their grandkids. For seven generations and beyond.

RES is not just about four great days in Las Vegas. It empowers for the months and years that follow.



“ I just really love some of these larger conferences, and this one pulls in people from all over the place. There’s so much work that has to happen right, and I’m just excited to network, share what we’re doing, and learn about other projects. The networking ability at this particular conference is huge.

Renowned chef, author, and Indigenous food leader **Sean Sherman (Oglala Lakota)** on the value of the Reservation Economic Summit







NEIs Bring The National Center to a Community Near You

In 2018, we hosted our first Native Edge Institute (NEI) at the Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In the following five years, this program has expanded to all corners of the country, ensuring that you don't have to travel to Las Vegas or one of our regional offices to get the services offered by The National Center. From Alaska to South Florida, San Diego to Maine, and even Hawaii, NEIs have taken place within a short drive, flight, or boat ride for everyone in the country.

Some things have changed—thanks to our generous sponsors, NEIs are now free of charge—but NEIs still offer great insights and training in diverse business fields, taught by some of the top practitioners in their fields. What's more, we've adapted to our virtual world and livestream our NEIs so attendees don't have to attend in person.

NEIs occur throughout the year, with team members traveling to facilitate them. NEI locations for FY 2023 are listed on the map on the following pages.



“ *Native Edge Institutes provide important information that helps tribes and individual entrepreneurs get a better understanding of the opportunities available in the government contracting. It also helps companies that are further along in the process by sharing the stories of other successful companies, creating great partnering and mentoring opportunities.*”

Lance Morgan (Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska),
CEO of Ho-Chunk, Inc.

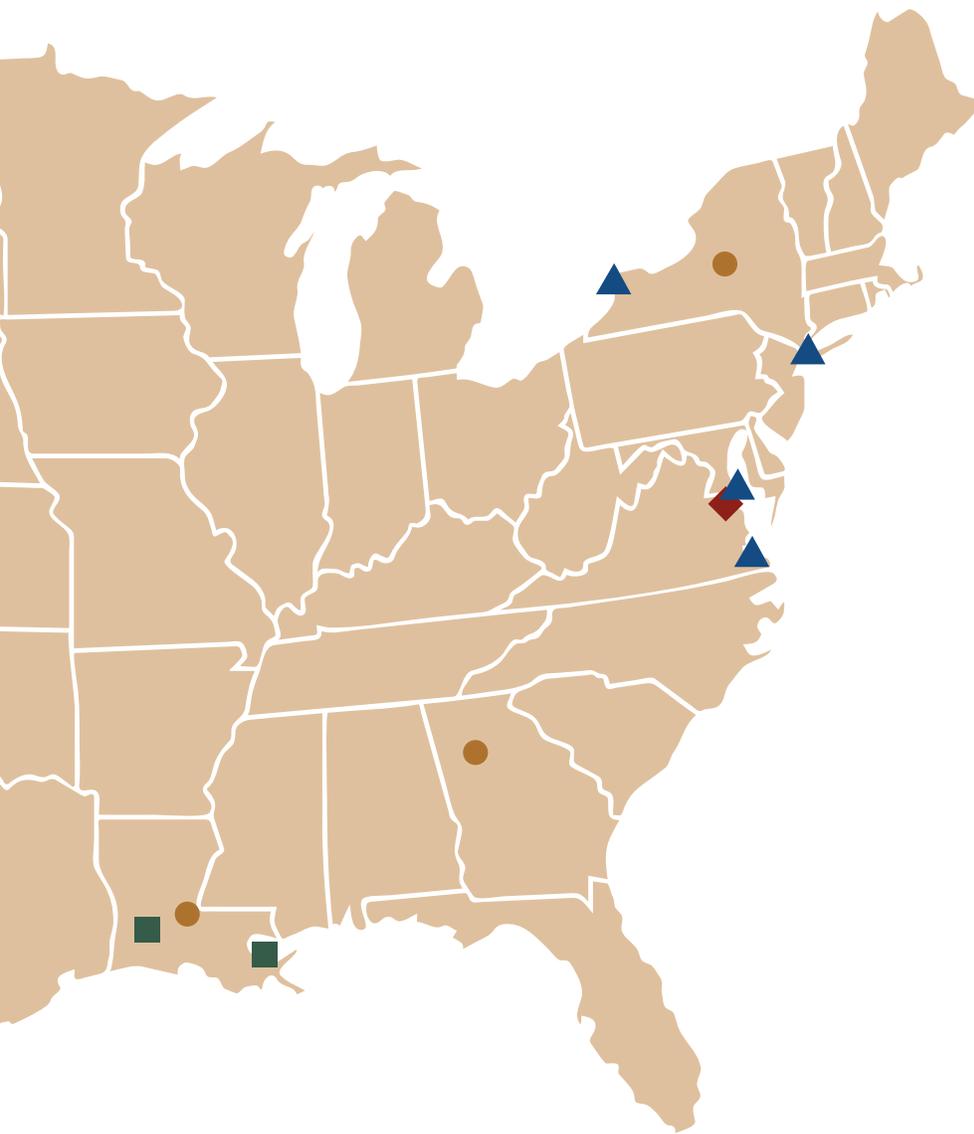


A National Footprint for a National Organization

Though we have called Arizona home since the 1980s, our footprint is national. Between our primary and APEX Accelerator offices, we have a presence throughout most regions of the United States. And if we don't have a permanent presence, there's a good chance we'll make an appearance near you through an NEI, site visit, or other event.

Check out where we were in FY 2023.





◆ Office Locations

Mesa, AZ (Headquarters)
Washington, DC
Las Vegas, NV

● APEX Accelerator Offices

Marietta, GA (Headquarters)
Window Rock, AZ
Denver, CO
Marksville, LA
Albuquerque, NM
Liverpool, NY

▲ NEIs

San Diego, CA
Washington, DC
Albuquerque, NM
New York, NY
Niagara Falls, NY
Portland, OR
Norfolk, VA

■ Other Events

Bethel, AK
(Calista Corporation Site Visit)
Valley Center, CA
(San Pasqual Band of Mission
Indians Site Visit)
Elton, LA
(Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana Site Visit)
Las Vegas, NV (RES 2023)

A Strong Financial Foundation Supports Our Work

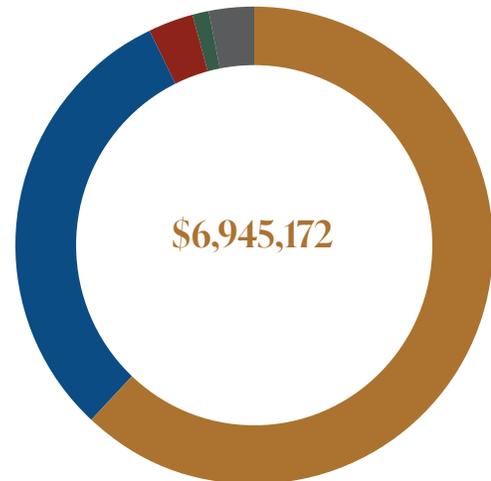
The National Center remains in incredibly strong financial shape. The year-over-year revenue decline is entirely a product of RES 2021 and RES 2022 both taking place in FY 2022. Our annual revenues have actually increased by more than \$2 million compared to FY 2020—the last fiscal year with minimal COVID-19 disruptions.

The incredible success of RES 2023 is one of the primary reasons for our financial strength in FY 2023. RES 2023 generated nearly \$4.5 million, a 25% increase from RES 2022. A record-setting number of people gathering in Las Vegas not only makes for a better event; it helps us perform important work year-round.

Beyond RES, other sources of income remained steady in FY 2023, and our sound balance sheet increased slightly. Our current fiscal health provides the organization with a strong foundation on which we hope to build.

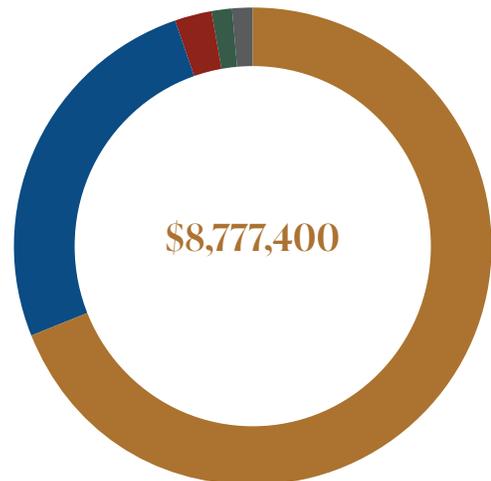
NOTE: The National Center’s Fiscal Year 2023 Spans July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023.

FYE 2023



- 61.8% | Conferences
- 30.8% | Government Grants
- 3.2% | Contributions
- 1.0% | NC Ad Sales
- 3.2% | Other

FYE 2022



- 69.2% | Conferences
- 25.8% | Government Grants
- 2.5% | Contributions
- 1.4% | NC Ad Sales
- 1.2% | Other

FYE 2023 Balance

ASSETS

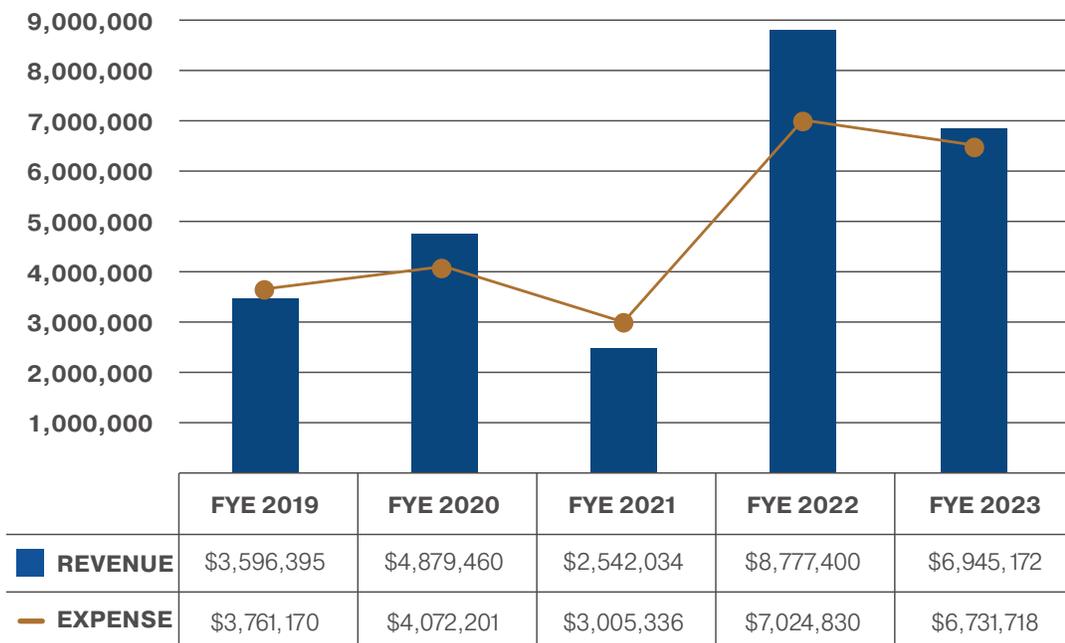
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$3,978,982
Grants and Contributions Receivable	\$403,747
Prepaid Expenses	\$87,132
Fixed Assets	\$292,980
TOTAL ASSETS	\$4,762,841

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Current Liabilities	\$1,484,192
Long Term Liabilities	\$412,917
Net Assets	\$2,865,732
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$4,762,841



5-Year Revenue Over Expense



Our Dedicated Team



CHRIS JAMES
President & CEO



ERIN ABRAHAMSON
Chief of Staff



RICH YEHLING
Chief of Finance



EMERALD SKYE BYRD
Business Development Director



CHARMAYNE CHARLIE
Administrative Specialist



AMBER CHILDS
Business Development Specialist



YVETTE FIELDER
Program Director



CARLA GHAFARI
Multimedia Assistant



KYIA JACKSON
AZ MBDA Export Center
Business Development Specialist



TRICIA GROSSMAN
Staff Accountant



CHRIS JEANSONNE JR
APEX Accelerator
Procurement Specialist



LAURYN ROSS
Accounting Clerk



CRYSTAL PIERCE
APEX Accelerator
Procurement Specialist



JOAN BEGAY NOTAH
AZ MBDA Export Center
Project Director



STANLEY SAMS
APEX Accelerator
Procurement Specialist



ADOLFO VASQUEZ
APEX Accelerator
Procurement Specialist



MABEL TSOSIE
APEX Accelerator
Procurement Specialist



JESSAMYN TRACY
Grants Manager



KATHLEEN WEEKS
APEX Accelerator
Office Manager



GEORGE WILLIAMS
APEX Accelerator
Program Manager

Board of Directors



DERRICK WATCHMAN
Chairman
Navajo



BURTON WARRINGTON
Vice-Chairman
Prairie Band Potawatomi



HELVI SANDVIK
Treasurer
Inupiaq



KIP R. RITCHIE
Secretary
Forest County Potawatomi



JOHN ECHOHAWK
Director
Pawnee



MARGO GRAY
Director
Osage



WILLIAM LOWE
Director
Muscogee Creek



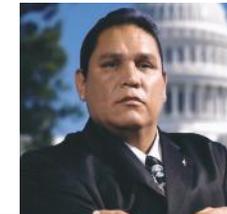
LYNN DEE RAPP
Director
Oglaala Sioux



CHARLIE GALBRAITH
Director
Navajo



LILLIAN SPARKS ROBINSON
Director
Rosebud Sioux



ERNIE STEVENS, JR.
Director
Oneida



RONALD J. SOLIMON
Director
Laguna Pueblo



JOAN TIMECHE
Director
Hopi



JANA TURVEY
Director
Alutiiq/Sugpiaq

The Sponsors That Make Our Work Possible

AIANTA	Cayuse Native Solutions	Ho-Chunk Capital	Legacy Bank
Akhiok-Kaguyak, Inc.	CBC BevCo dba	Ho-Chunk Farms	Lockheed Martin Corporation
Akiptan	CBC Mortgage Agency	Ho-Chunk, Inc.	Lone Tipi
Alaska Airlines	Cedar Band Corporation	Holland & Knight	Lumbee Tribe Holdings, Inc.
Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce	Cedar Band of Paiute Indians	Horizon Fuel Center	Marathon Petroleum Corporation
All Native Group	Change Labs	IBEW Local Union 611	Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science
Amazon.com	CKP Insurance	ImagiNative Inc.	MGM Resorts International
Association on American Indian Affairs	Command Holdings	Indian Land Capital Company	Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)
ATCO	Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana	Indige Design Collab / euniQue LLC / Cahokia LLC	MudHead Soap & SkinCare Co.
BAE Systems, Intelligence & Security	Delta Resource Group - Government Relations	Indigenous Economic Well-Being Alliance	National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)
BAE Systems, Platforms & Services - CMS	Diné Development Corporation	Indigenous Food & Agriculture Initiative	Native American Agriculture Fund
BAE Systems, Platforms & Services - OSI	Dynamic Homes	IndigenousCC & CahokiaPhx	Native American Bank
Bank of America	Dynamic Systems	Industrial Solar Consulting	NativeFitness.org
Bank of America/Merrill Lynch	Enterprise Community Partners	Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada, Inc.	NCGrowth (CREATE)
Big Fire Law & Policy Group LLP	Flatwater Group	Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska	New Mexico Community Capital
Blue Earth Marketing	Gathering of Nations	John Deere	Nimiiipuu Energy
BluStone Architecture	Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses ICIC	JPMorgan Chase & Co.	NITEC
Boston Consulting Group	Google Cloud	Junior Achievement USA	Northrop Grumman Corporation
Caesars Entertainment	GovContractsPros	Kalispel Metal Products	NVE, Inc.
California Indian Nations College	Government of British Columbia	KeyBank	Office of Indian Economic Development
Calista Corporation	Grey Snow Management Solutions	Koniag Government Services	
Canadian Trade Commissioner Service	Grid Electric Corporation	Kyndryl	
	Grow with Google		



- One Nevada
- OpenSesame
- Palm Mortuary
- PilieroMazza
- Potawatomi Business Development Corporation
- Raytheon Technologies
- Raven Indigenous Capital Partners
- Sacred Path + Tribal Border Alliance
- Salt River Project
- San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
- Scale Microgrids
- Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt
- ServiceNow
- Sister Sky
- Sky Bear Media
- Softek Global Services
- Sovereign Resiliency Partners
- SPBMI
- SPEDC
- Strategies 360
- Square
- Strategic Growth Advisors
- Suh'dutsing Contracting Services
- Sunsinger Consulting
- SweetGrass Trading Company
- The Akana Group Inc.
- The Joy Therapist
- The Navajo Nation
- The Project Team
- Three Affiliated Tribes
- Top Drawer Strategies
- Trane Technologies
- Tribal Homeownership Coalition of the SW
- Tribal Tech, LLC
- Tunica-Biloxi Industries, LLC
- Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana
- Twisted Cedar Wine
- United National Indian



- Tribal Youth, Inc. (UNITY) Center
- U.S. General Services Administration Wild Horse Pass Development Authority
- U.S. Small Business Administration Ziggis Coffee
- Walmart
- Walmart Business
- Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
- Wells Fargo
- Western Resources Legal



The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development

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