

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

STRENGTH IN UNITY



TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Word from Chris James3

Strength in Unity4

The National Center by the Numbers.....5

Our Programming.....6

Honoring the Past, Preparing for Tomorrow8

RES 2024: Better – and Larger – Than Ever10

40 Under 40 at 1511

Annual Business Awards.....14

The Native Edge Podcast15

A National Footprint.....16

Financial Outlook.....18

Our Team.....20

Board of Directors.....21

Partners and Supporters.....22

The content of the 2024 annual report encompasses The National Center’s fiscal year: July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024.

“The Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana is a proud supporter of The National Center. We believe in its mission and have experienced first-hand the value of an organization focused solely to advancing tribal economies across the United States. Indian Country continues to benefit from the skill, dedication, and tireless work of The National Center and its team.”

— Crystal Williams,
Vice-Chair of the Coushatta
Tribe of Louisiana



A Year of **EXPANSION**
and **NEW PARTNERSHIPS**

The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development celebrated its 55th anniversary in 2024. Though those who gathered in Los Angeles in 1969 to form the Urban Indian Development Association (UIDA) were visionary leaders with an eye to the future, I’m sure many of them would be surprised at the enduring success of the organization they founded – six decades, a new century, and a new millennium later.

Indeed, our 55th year was a fitting tribute to our founding mission to “mean business for Indian Country.” To explore every opportunity for economic development with a zeal that matches the gravity of the task at hand. To be a go-to resource for tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, and Indigenous people seeking to strengthen their economic sovereignty. To provide the strength needed for unity across our community. Our country. The world.

I am proud to say we accomplished our goals. Our longstanding programs and signature event remained the gold-standard for Indian Country. Our APEX Accelerator helped its clients earn more than \$700 million in contracts. Eight NEIs took place from coast-to-coast, delivering unequaled programming to people no matter their location. The 38th-annual Reservation Economic Summit (RES) set attendance records, and provided countless opportunities for networking, business partnerships, and economic empowerment.

Exciting initiatives at The National Center offered something new, too. Utilizing our unique perspective and relationships, the Native Edge podcast shares stories of Indigenous business and how they move our community forward. We expanded our international work and relationships, further solidifying Indian Country’s place in the global economy. And we were selected to lead one of our most ambitious projects to date – a tourism technical assistance center, supported by a cooperative agreement with the Department of Interior that could reach a total of \$9.5 million over five years, pending Congressional appropriations.

The National Center has a storied past, but I know we have only scratched the surface of our potential. I look forward to continuing to lead this great organization on its long – and sometimes winding – journey. Thank you for your support at every twist and turn.

Chris James
President & CEO



STRENGTH IN UNITY

The theme for RES 2024 is an idea The National Center has embodied since its humble beginnings: Strength in Unity. While most have a good understanding of “strength,” unity is such a simple and common word that it can be very easy to overlook. But unity is more than just a word; it’s a force that binds us together, helping us overcome differences and divisions.

In Indian Country, our most enduring victories are not individual conquests, but collective endeavors, where the strength of unity propels us to imagine something bigger.

While the concept of Strength in Unity has always been central to The National Center, it was only in the last several years that we created organizational pillars to hold us accountable for living up to it and reaching our goals.

Helping Native-Owned Businesses Grow.

Serving as a Powerful Voice in Washington.

Expanding Markets at Home and Abroad.

These pillars guide everything we do. And while there are many ways to measure success, our strength can be seen in the countless people our programming has reached, the hundreds of millions in contracts earned by our clients, and our ability to reach our community wherever they are.



The NATIONAL CENTER by the NUMBERS

“The National Center’s work has helped countless tribes, Native entrepreneurs and businesses, and tribal communities from Connecticut to California. The National Center also understands that Indian Country is much stronger united rather than divided. I look forward to continuing this close partnership for many years to come.”

— Rodney Butler,
Chairman of the Mashantucket
Pequot Tribal Nation and President
of the Board of NAFOA

\$840 million in
contracts awarded
to clients

4,600 + attendees
at RES

1,516 new clients

118 sponsors

89 events hosted or
trainings facilitated

23 states + **4**
countries traveled

22 employees

9 offices

1 mission



MEETING THE NEEDS OF INDIAN COUNTRY

The National Center APEX Accelerator

The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development APEX Accelerator provides unmatched technical assistance and training to Indigenous-owned businesses located in three Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) regions, helping them win approximately \$7 billion in contracts over the last two-plus decades. George Williams, a dedicated National Center employee of 24 years, and his talented and experienced team work across seven offices, 33 states, and 61 tribes.

- *372 total active clients*
- *\$704 million in contracts awarded to clients in FY 2024*

“Interior applauds the professional excellence of Mr. George Williams and will continue to encourage all small businesses to leverage the many education and training resources available through the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development APEX Accelerator.”

— Colleen Finnegan,
Director of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization



Native Edge Institutes

Now in their seventh year, Native Edge Institutes (NEIs) offer targeted, one-day business trainings tailored to the unique needs of entrepreneurs. Supported by the MBDA, SBA, and KeyBank, NEIs empower Indigenous-owned businesses. In 2024, the team hosted eight events across the country, including a virtual option to eliminate geographical barriers. Each NEI engages with local businesses, showcasing their inspiring success stories. This hands-on approach fosters community and provides valuable insights, equipping entrepreneurs with the tools they need to thrive in a competitive landscape.

- *855 businesses trained in FY 2024*
- *443 active clients*

Arizona MBDA Export Center

The Arizona MBDA Export Center is the driving force for our growing focus on international trade and investment. Whether through strategic advice for entering the export market, the promotion of Indigenous-owned companies to international buyers, or participating in trade missions, the team at the Export Center is your go-to for doing business abroad. Services are easily accessible through regular Trade Talks webinars and exhibits at trade gatherings throughout the country – and even the world.


- *289 total clients*
- *\$135,000,000 in contracts awarded to clients in FY 2024*

HONORING the PAST, PREPARING for TOMORROW

OUR HISTORY


For our 55th anniversary, we made it a priority to tell share our history. We wanted to recognize the visionary leaders that united in 1969, at a tumultuous time in America's history. Amid the chaos, this group of Native American businessmen in Los Angeles came together with a singular goal: to create job opportunities for young Native Americans.

What began as UIDA has evolved over the years, but that early vision set the stage for what would become a pioneering force in Native American business development.



1973: UIDA becomes the first grantee for an Indian development center.

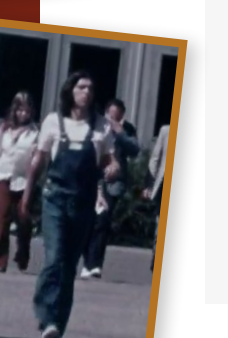
1974: UIDA launches a small business loan program with support from Bank of America.



1981: Indian Progress in Business Awards (INPRO) begin.

1985: The Defense Logistics Agency funds what would eventually become The National Center APEX Accelerator.

1987: UIDA organizes the first Reservation Economic Summit.



1989: UIDA rebranded as the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development.

1990: The National Center purchases its current Mesa, AZ office.

2001: RES relocates to Las Vegas.


2009: The National Center launches the Native American 40 Under 40 program.

2012: Regional RES conferences begin.



2016: Board Chairman Derrick Watchman testifies before Congress on the Indian Community Economic Enhancement Act.


2018: Launch of Native Edge Institutes.



2020: The National Center quickly adapts to the COVID-19 pandemic, shifting much of its operations to a virtual format and creating a guide and database for tribal PPE procurement.



2022: Arizona MBDA Export Center opens; first Export Center run by a Native American non-profit.



2024: At 4,600 registrants, RES 2024 sets attendance records.

As The National Center builds on its storied past, it remains dedicated to creating lasting impact and empowering future generations.



To find
out more,
scan here.

“The National Center will be an instrumental partner in ensuring this Clean Communities Investment Accelerator award provides transformative and enduring clean energy benefits to Native communities.”

— Pete Upton, CEO and Board Chair of the Native CDFI Network

OUR FUTURE

2024 was a fitting tribute to The National Center's history. We stayed true to our mission, while also investing in and preparing for new initiatives that expand our reach and impact. Though much of this work will take place in FY2025 and beyond, below is a preview of what's in store.

Native Edge Tourism Technical Assistance Center.

Near the end of FY2024, we were selected by the Office of Indian Economic Development (OIED) under the Department of the Interior to run a new program called the Native Edge Tourism Technical Assistance Center (NETTAC). The award is a five-year cooperative agreement that could reach a total of \$9.5 million in funding and will greatly expand our staff, footprint, and work by promoting tourism across Indian Country.

Native Edge Finance.

The National Center's CDFI, Native Edge Finance, was proud to partner with the Native CDFI Network (NCN) on its application for a Clean Communities Investment Accelerator (CCIA) program award. In April, NCN was awarded \$400 million to invest in clean energy project development across Indian Country. This funding could lead to Native Edge Finance's first investment in 2025.

NC Magazine.

In March, we released the fourth edition of NC Magazine, telling the story of the people, tribes, and businesses making a difference across our community. Between distribution at RES and a broad mailing list, NC Magazine reaches more than 10,000 people. Its first special edition will be released in FY2025, celebrating 15 years of the 40 Under 40 program.





“We give you the opportunity to sit down and meet with a company or with a federal government to talk about a potential opportunity. We expect over \$1 billion worth of contracts will be given out this year.”

— **Chris James to Marketplace**, which covered RES 2024 and broadcast a segment on NPR affiliates

RES 2024:

BETTER – AND LARGER – THAN EVER

A record setting 4,600+ people joined us at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas for the 38th Annual Reservation Economic Summit. While the numbers are impressive, the real story of RES is its impact on the businesses and entrepreneurs that return every year.

Business matchmaking sessions connected qualified suppliers with buyers from Fortune 500 companies and the federal government. Hundreds of subject-matter experts shared their knowledge with attendees. A massive trade show featured businesses from all sectors of the economy. Keynote speakers from the highest levels of the federal government, tribal leadership, business, and entertainment shared their stories.

Though The National Center is more than just RES, the event lays the foundation for the work we do year-round. It provides the strength needed to achieve unity. Thanks to everyone who made it a success – we'll see you in March 2025 for number 39.

40 UNDER 40 AT 15

The Native American 40 Under 40 awards program turned 15 in 2024. Since 2009, more than 600 deserving Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and First Nations members have been honored through the program. In recent years, 40 Under 40 alumni have become an increasingly close-knit community and have taken on even greater roles and responsibilities, including four current Board members and The National Center's Chief of Staff. Their accomplishments are more than deserving of their own magazine.

The sky is the limit for these incredibly talented and committed Indigenous leaders.

2024 Native American 40 Under 40 Honorees

Andrew Alejandre (Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians)

George Henry Alexander II (Muscogee Creek Nation)

Morningstar Angeline (Chippewa Cree Tribe of Rocky Boy)

Tina Archuleta (Jemez Pueblo)

Justin Barrett (Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma)

Zachariah Ben (Navajo Nation)

Kendra Bennett (Cherokee Nation)



“As a reconnecting Native, I found it so meaningful to be honored as part of the 2024 40 Under 40 class. It feels like such a welcoming embrace by the Indigenous community at large, and I truly couldn't be prouder to be recognized alongside such impactful emerging luminaries who are bringing about crucial change across Indian Country and blazing a bright trail into our collective future.”

— **Kate Nelson**, 2024 Native American 40 Under 40 Honoree





2024 Native American 40 Under 40 Honorees

- Edwin Bifelt** (Huslia Village)
- Quinn Buchwald** (Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana)
- Quinton Carroll** (Native Village of Barrow)
- Joel Chastain** (Chickasaw Nation)
- Danielle Culp** (Cherokee Nation)
- Matthew Dannenberg** (Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa)
- Kathy DeerInWater** (Cherokee Nation)
- Stephanie “Pyet” DeSpain** (Prairie Band of Potawatomi)
- Kyle Foster** (Native Village of Unga)
- Leanne Kealoha Fox** (Kanaka Maoli Native Hawaiian)
- Derek Red Arrow Frank** (Nez Perce Tribe)
- Lily Gladstone** (Blackfeet Nation)
- Alexis Harris** (Forest County Potawatomi)
- Tyler Hogan** (Cherokee Nation)
- Kim Ironroad** (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe)
- Caitlin Johnson** (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa)



- Carly Johnson** (Chickasaw Nation)
- Anthony Jones** (Port Gamble S’Klallam)
- Jordan Kanuho** (Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma)
- Aaron LaPointe** (Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska)
- Logan Lewis** (Cherokee Nation)
- Candace Lowry** (Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina)
- Ray Martin** (Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation of California)
- Shane Melbo** (La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians)
- Kate Nelson** (Tlingit and Haida Tribes of Alaska)
- Franklin “Hud” Oberly** (Osage Nation)
- Meryl Picard** (Bishop Paiute Tribe)
- Elizabeth Reese** (Pueblo of Nambe)
- Whitney Sawney** (Cherokee Nation)
- James Siva** (Morongo Band of Mission Indians)
- Tamisha Tenorio** (Pueblo of San Felipe)
- Chase Williams** (Muscogee Creek Nation)
- Crystal Worl** (Tlingit and Haida Tribes of Alaska)

2024 Native American 40 Under 40 Honorees





GOING ABOVE and BEYOND

At RES, our annual American Indian Business Awards honored the people and companies that have gone above and beyond to advance economic development in our communities. 2024 honorees included the first Alaska Native elected to Congress, a longtime advocate for her tribe and Indian Country, and a major financial institution with a long track record of support for tribes and tribal enterprises.

American Indian Business of the Year:

Alaska Native Renewable Industries
(Huslia, AK)

American Indian Leadership Award:

Austin Tsosie, CEO, Diné Development Corporation
(Scottsdale, AZ)

Congressional Achievement Award:

U.S. Representative Mary Peltola
(AK-AL)

Corporate Advocate of the Year Award:

JPMorgan Chase & Co.

Native Woman Business Owner of the Year Award:

Sharon Hamer, Akiak Technology, LLC
(Bethel, AK/Alexandria, VA)

Tim Wapato Public Advocate of the Year Award:

Fawn Sharp, Former President of the National
Congress of American Indians

Tribal Gaming Visionary Award:

Michell Hicks, Principal Chief, Eastern Band of
Cherokee Indians
(Cherokee, NC)



“I know government from the inside. I understand how powerful a tool the SBA’s Native 8(a) contracting program can be for Tribes as a path toward economic independence and self-sufficiency... It is an honor and privilege to receive recognition from such a prestigious organization.”

— Sharon Hamer on winning Native Woman Business of the Year

SHARING OUR COMMUNITY’S STORY



“The Native Edge podcast provides a crucial platform for Indigenous entrepreneurs and business leaders to share insights, successes, and challenges.

It fosters a deeper understanding of economic empowerment in Native communities. I was delighted to participate as one of its first guests and look forward to listening to future episodes.”

— Clara Pratte, CEO and Founder of Strongbow Strategies



Native Edge, a new podcast launched in the spring of 2024, shares the vibrant spirit of Indigenous business owners and leaders throughout the country. Through engaging and light-hearted conversations, co-hosts Chris James and Yvette Fielder highlight important topics and success stories that are too often underrepresented by traditional media.

Early discussions have included advocacy, agriculture and food sovereignty, economic development, leadership, and even basic life advice. And we’re just getting started. So stay tuned for upcoming episodes of the *Native Edge*.

Native Edge is released twice a month and is available on all major platforms or online.



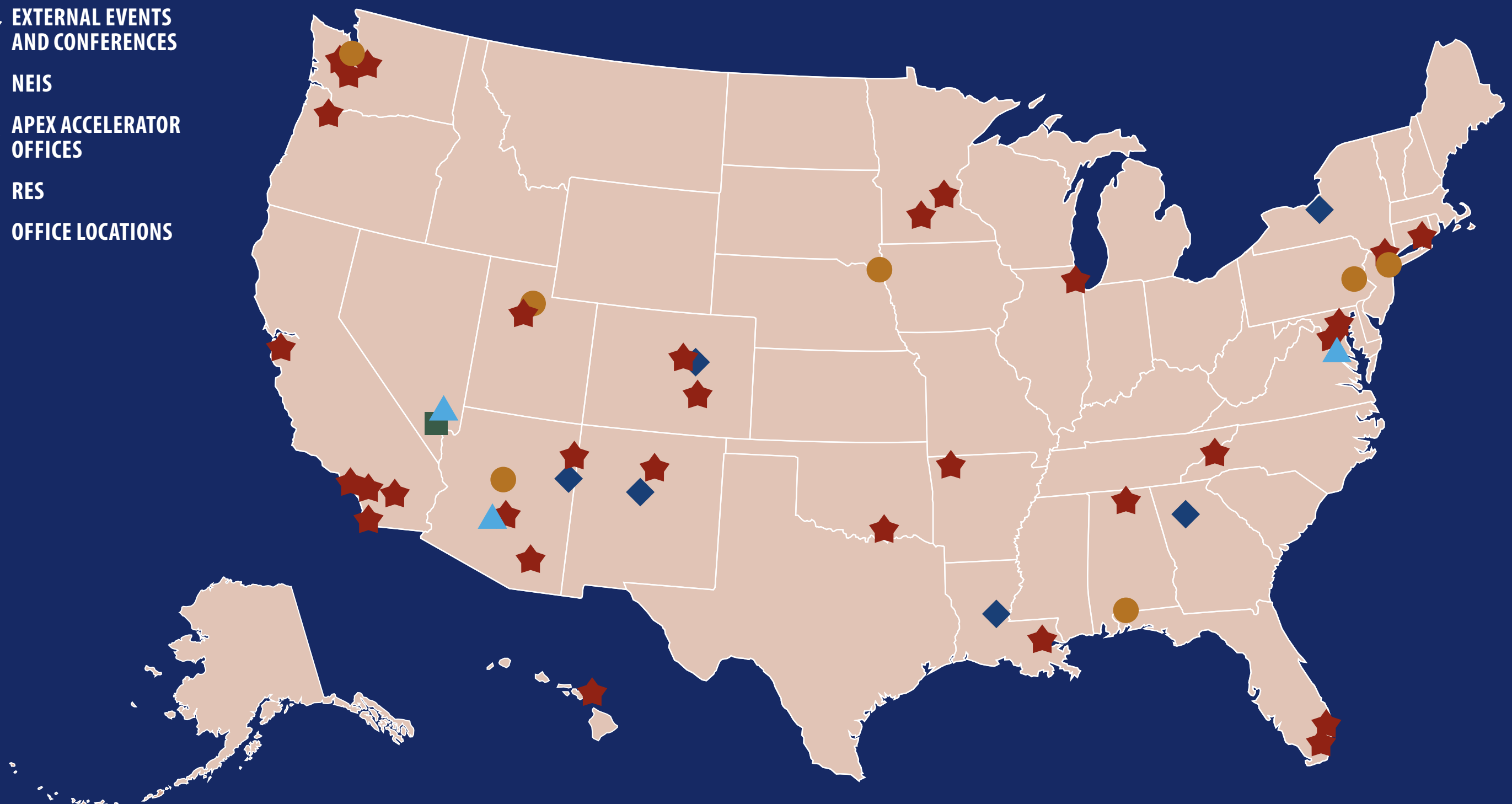
Check it out our latest episodes!

www.buzzsprout.com/2356794/episodes

We Put the “NATIONAL” in NATIONAL CENTER

In 2024, our work took us across the country, from Seattle to Miami, Maui to Connecticut. And though we don't have space for it on this map, our team made cross-border and transatlantic connections with our friends in Canada, Ghana, and South Africa.

- ★ EXTERNAL EVENTS AND CONFERENCES
- NEIS
- ◆ APEX ACCELERATOR OFFICES
- RES
- ▲ OFFICE LOCATIONS



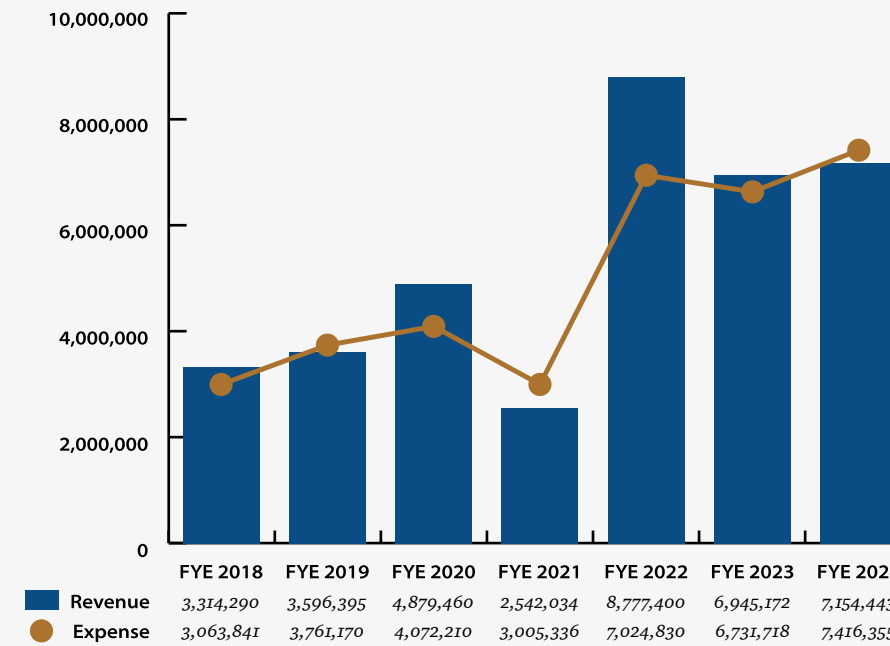
FINANCIAL STABILITY ENSURES SUSTAINED SUCCESS

Our financial success over the last several years made it possible for our team to travel the world on behalf of the clients we serve and issues for which we advocate. It positioned us to lead a new federal program that will expand the scope and reach of our organization. It gave us the confidence to launch a podcast to better share Indian Country’s story. Our fiscal strength meant we could hire and retain top-tier talent who will take our organization to new heights.

Platinum
Transparency
2024

Candid.

NCAIED 7 Year Revenue Over Expense



FYE 2024 Balance Sheet

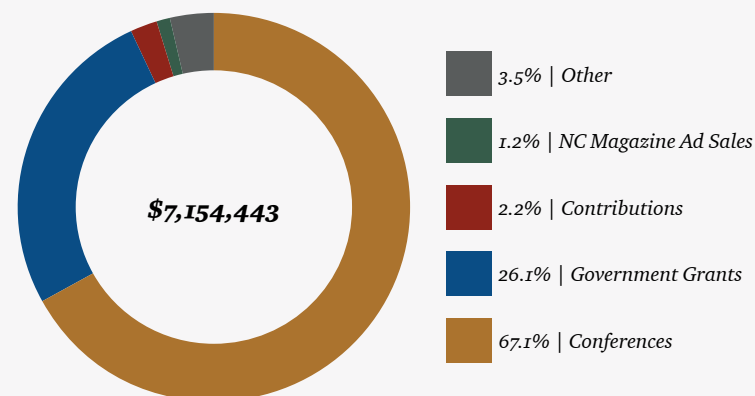
Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,208,137
Grants and Contributions Receivable	224,911
Prepaid Expenses	213,718
Fixed Assets	250,226
Total Assets	2,896,992

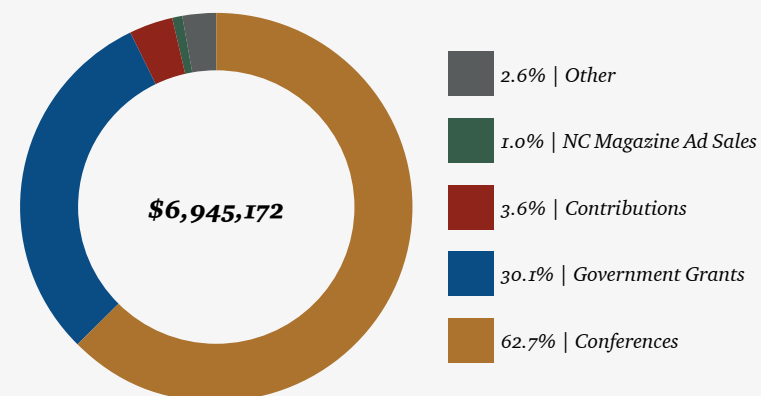
Liabilities & Equity

Current Liabilities	293,172
Net Assets	2,603,820
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	2,896,992

FYE 2024



FYE 2023



Our stability also helps us weather economic headwinds and uncertainty. While revenues in 2024 grew by more than \$200,000 over the previous year, as was the case for many businesses and organizations, rising prices – particularly for travel – hit our bottom line. Expenses rose more than anticipated.

Despite increased expenses, the final picture for FY2024 reveals an organization with the financial strength to accomplish its goals for 2025 and beyond.

Charity
Navigator



✦ **FOUR-STAR** ✦

A DYNAMIC TEAM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Chris James
President and CEO



Erin Abrahamson
Chief of Staff



Emerald Skye Byrd
Director of Strategic Partnerships



Charmayne Charlie
Administrative Specialist



Melissa Cody
Export Business
Development Specialist



Derrick Watchman
Chairman



Lillian Sparks Robinson
Vice Chair



Helvi Sandvik
Treasurer



Kip Ritchie
Secretary



Yvette Fielder
Program Director



Mikaela Garcia
Digital Media Coordinator



Carla Ghafari
Multimedia Assistant



Tricia Grossman
Senior Staff Accountant



Kyia Jackson
Business Development Specialist



John Echohawk
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Charlie Galbraith
Director



Margo Gray
Director



William D. Lowe
Director



Chris Jeansonne, Jr.
APEX Accelerator
Procurement Specialist



Lewis Lowe
Director of Communications
and Senior Advisor



Jessie Melamed
Director of Fundraising



JoAn Begay Notah
Project Director,
Arizona MBDA Export Center



Crystal Pierce
APEX Accelerator Senior
Procurement Specialist



Lynn Dee Rapp
Director



Ronald J. Solimon
Director



Ernie Stevens, Jr.
Director



Joan Timeche
Director



Lauryn Ross
Junior Staff Accountant



Stan Sams
APEX Accelerator
Procurement Specialist



Jessamyn Tracy
Director of Special Projects



Mabel Tsosie
APEX Accelerator
Procurement Specialist



Kathleen Weeks
APEX Accelerator Senior
Office Manager



Jana Turvey
Director



Burton Warrington
Director



George Williams
APEX Accelerator
Program Manager



Rich Yehling
Chief Financial Officer

OUR SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

The National Center is fortunate to have generous sponsors and strong partners that make our work possible. These include members of our Corporate Advisory Council (CAC), comprised of representatives from Fortune 1000 companies willing to donate their time, financial expertise, and business acumen to The National Center. 2024 CAC members are bolded.

AIBL – American Indigenous Business Leaders
AISES - Advancing Indigenous People in STEM
Akitpan
Alaska Airlines
Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce
Alliance for Trial Clean Energy
Amazon
American Petroleum Institute
AMERIND
ANCSA Regional Association
Association on American Indian Affairs
BAE Systems
Baker Tilly
Bank of America
Big Fire Law Policy Group LLP
Block, Inc.
Boeing
Bristol Bay Native Corporation
Brunton Architects Engineers
Caesars Entertainment
Calista Corp
Cedar Rock Alliance
CKP Insurance
Command Holdings - A Pequot Company
Converse

Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana
CTIA
Dimension Credit
Dine Development Corporation
Direct 2 Completion
Dominion Energy
Drummond Woodsum
Epiq
FedGeek
Finite Carbon
First American Petroleum/Cougar Den
First Peoples Worldwide
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GovContractPros
Hanna Dot Agency
Ho-Chunk, Inc.
Holland & Knight
Huntington Bank
IllumiNative
Indian Energy LLC
Indian Land Capital Company
Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative
Intertribal Agriculture Council
John Deere
JPMorgan Chase

Junior Achievement USA
KRBR Consulting LLC
KeyBank
Koniag Government Services
Lockheed Martin
Makai LLC
Mandan Hidatsa & Arikara Nation
Marathon Petroleum
Mayo Clinic
MBDA
Meta
MGM Resorts International
Michigan Economic Development Corporation
Midi Enterprises, LLC
Mno-Bmadsen
National Congress of American Indians
National Rugby Football League
Native American Agriculture Fund
Native American Bank N.A.
Native CDFI Network
Native Forward Scholars Fund
Native Governance Center
Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development
Nike
Notah Begay III Foundation
Palm Mortuary
Palms/SMGHA
Patterson Earnhart Real Bird & Wilson LLP
PilieroMazza PLLC
Potawatomi Ventures
Quarles & Brady
RTX
Sacred Path
Salesforce
Salt River Project

San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
Schwabe
Shivwits Band Corporation
Siemens Industry, Inc.
Sister Sky, Inc.
Sky Bear Media
South32
Sovereign Resiliency Partners
Square
Strategic Growth Advisors
Strategies 360
Tarana
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The Akana Group Inc.
The Government of Canada
Tinhorn CX
Titan Facility Services, LLC
Totem Technologies, Inc.
Trane Technologies
Tribal Leadership Council
Tribal Tech
True Family Enterprises
U.S. Department of Energy
U.S. Department of Treasury
U.S. General Services Administration
U.S. Small Business Administration
U.S. Department of the Interior (OIED)
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Visa
Walmart
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WAV
Wells Fargo
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Zendesk



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