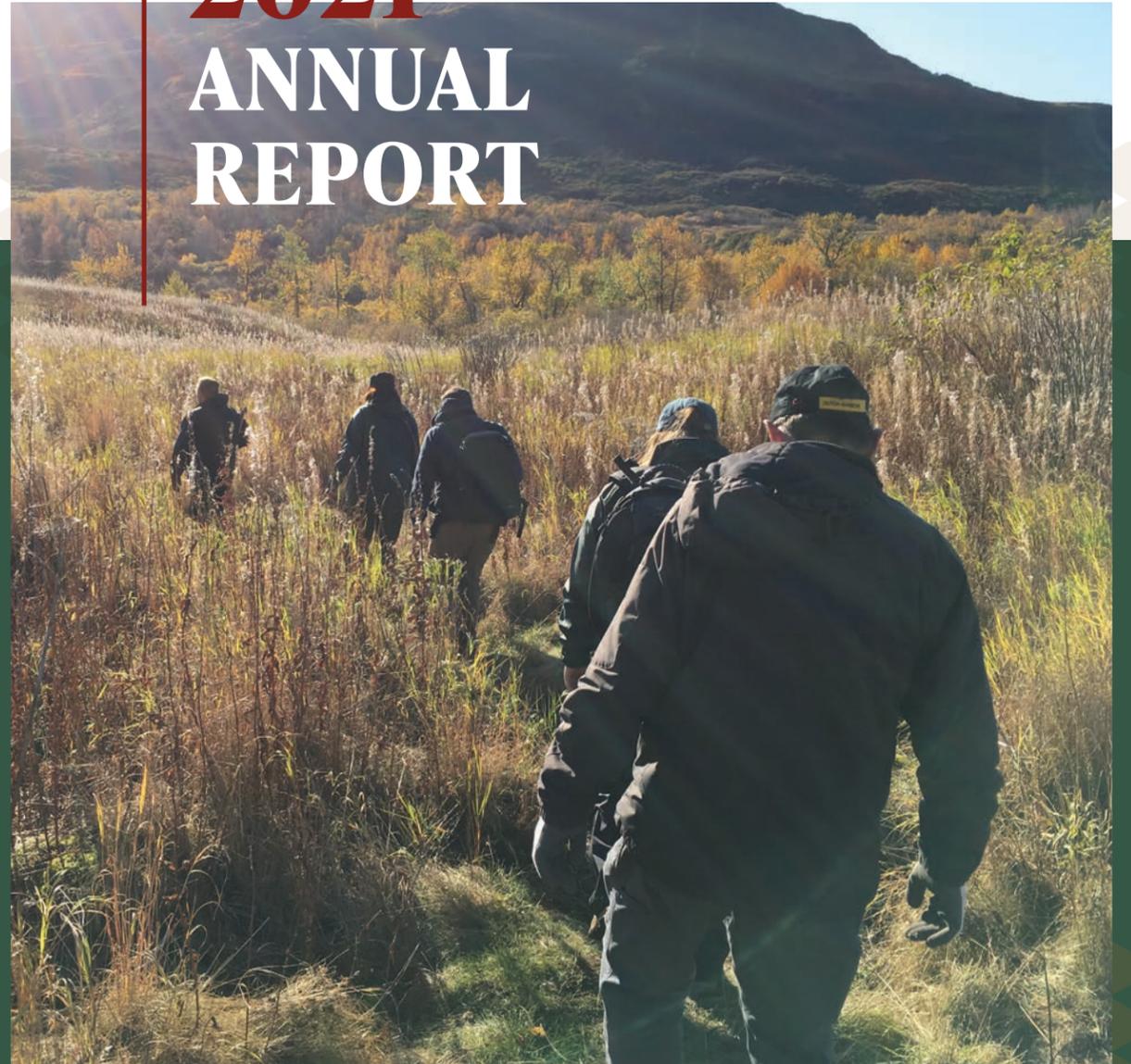




NATIONAL CENTER FOR AMERICAN  
INDIAN ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



The National Center for American  
Indian Enterprise Development

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“ I have attended many Reservation Economic Summit (RES) conferences and have had a vendor booth for the past three years. The best marketing tool I have is building relationships in Indian Country. RES gave me the opportunity to meet many potential clients and allies. Last year, COVID devastated my business. However, two contracts kept me in the black and those were through contacts I met at RES.

**Karla Bylund (Citizen Potawatomi)**  
Founder and Owner, Soaring Bird Solutions



# A New Dawn for Indian Country

It would be easy to look back on fiscal year 2021 and conclude that little had changed over a very challenging 2020. Indeed, we continue to battle a global pandemic that has taken millions and upended the daily lives of nearly everyone. Yet, amid the struggles, there are signs of optimism about the future. We now have three incredible vaccines that are our best hope of finally ending the pandemic and keeping our friends and loved ones safe and healthy. Our economy is starting to get back on track and millions are returning to work after COVID-19-related jobs losses. Though it can be fleeting, there is clearly light at the end of the tunnel.

That light at the end of the tunnel is burning bright for the National Center because I have seen how we have weathered the storms of the last year and a half. Our last annual report only reflected the beginning stages of COVID-19. My belief that we would emerge stronger was based primarily on optimism. I knew without a doubt the National Center would serve an important role for hundreds of Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian businesses and entrepreneurs. But I also knew that no living person had experienced anything on the scale of COVID-19—that we were entering uncharted waters.

Since that time, the National Center has proven that my optimism was grounded in reality. Our organization continues to provide unmatched services and training to clients across the country. And it's not just existing clients—we are now serving more than 1,100 clients, up from just 200 a few years ago. We have shifted our Native Edge Institutes to a virtual format that allows us to reach far more people than we would otherwise. We have developed new partnerships, including with the Canadian Consulate of Chicago, that will foster new international trade opportunities for Native-owned companies. And we planned and executed a successful—and safe—in-person Reservation Economic Summit, providing many attendees with their first opportunity for business travel and networking since RES 2020. We even launched a new magazine!

I could not be prouder of the work our incredible staff has performed over the last two years. Their dedication and professionalism gives me reason to be confident in how our organization will continue meeting its mission in 2022 and beyond. I hope you enjoy learning about the National Center's work in 2021.



**Chris James**  
President and CEO

# How the National Center Fosters Economic Development in Indian Country

Now entering our 53rd year, the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development is the only organization dedicated to serving American Indian and Alaska Native businesses and entrepreneurs. From the halls of Congress to the boardrooms of major companies domestic and abroad, we are the voice of Native business.

Though our mission has remained constant, our organization is constantly changing—for the better. We have grown from a small group that hosted an annual luncheon to a national force with offices in six states, 20 staff, and over 20 consultants and contractors that is the host of the largest economic development gathering in Indian Country, a robust advocacy organization, and the go-to resource for business training for the entrepreneurs who need it most. We have enabled billions in contracts and deals and created thousands of jobs for Native and non-Native employees alike. We are developing new partnerships to foster and promote international indigenous trade.

**But we are still writing the National Center's story.**

One of our primary roles is a connector—a bridge builder. We connect Native-owned businesses to the supply chains of major companies and government agencies. We ensure businesses and entrepreneurs in need of startup capital have access to banks and financial institutions. We provide training and technical assistance to those looking to take the next step in their entrepreneurial development. And we create networking and matchmaking opportunities that forge lasting relationships.

In Washington, DC, the National Center advocates for the smart policies, regulations, and representation that help tribes, Alaska Native Villages and Corporations, and Native-owned businesses thrive. We provide the perspectives needed



to move our agenda forward. In 2020, one of our key pieces of legislation—the Native American Business Incubators Program Act—became law. Success continues to grow in 2021, not only with the appointment of Deb Haaland as Secretary of Interior and countless other Native American and Alaska Native public officials, but with the continued advancement of policies that will strengthen the Indian Country economy.

Finally, we share Indian Country's story—our positive story. In 2021, we launched a magazine to tell these stories in an organized and semiannual manner, featuring Congresswoman Sharice Davids on our first cover. We are excited about NC Magazine because it's yet another way to share the amazing work of our team and our partners throughout the communities we serve.

**2021 was a strong year for our organization.  
2022 looks even better.**

# How the National Center has lived up to its three unique pillars

“I can't wait to attend #RES2021 in July. I've also virtually attended the Native Edge Institute focused on Economic Resilience: How to Maneuver and Build Your Business During Unprecedented Times. This training was helpful to my business because it showed that I was not alone. There are people out there willing to help and so many opportunities for companies like mine.

**CJ Krueger (Haida)**

Owner, TripTych Planning

## Strengthening Native-Owned Businesses

We pride ourselves in our training programs and support for Native American, Alaska Native, and tribally owned businesses to take their products and services to the next level. We do this by:

**Providing** unsurpassed professional business consulting services and technical assistance at no cost to our clients, which now number more than 1,100.

**Facilitating** more than 5,300 contracts in nearly 20 years, resulting in nearly \$4 billion in contracts and more than 65,000 jobs.

**Developing** American Indian/Alaska Native-owned businesses, including connecting Fortune 1000 companies with qualified Native-owned companies to incorporate in their supply chains.

**Connecting** Native businesses with opportunities in the new digital economy to expand their reach and potential.

## Your Advocate in Washington, DC

We serve as the voice for Native business in the Halls of Congress and inside federal agencies. Our accomplishments are significant and still growing, including:

**Working** with Congressional leaders to introduce legislation that will elevate our voice in Washington, including creating an Associate Administrator for Native American Affairs at the Small Business Administration.

**Advocating** for tribes, tribally owned businesses, and Native American and Alaska Native entrepreneurs in COVID-19 relief legislation, ensuring our communities get the resources they need to rebuild and recover.

**Supporting** the historic appointment of Deb Haaland as the first Native American cabinet secretary, as well as countless other senior Native leaders in government.

**Partnering** with sister organizations to present a united policy front in Washington, DC.

## Access to Capital and New Markets

Access to capital is one of the biggest challenges Indian Country faces. We help businesses get the financing they need for success, and develop networks, training, and a robust lender referral service. This includes:

**Growing** Native Edge Finance, Inc., (NEF) a Native Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). Native Edge Finance's goal is to provide economic opportunities for Native American communities and businesses by providing products and financial services to support business growth and development.

**Connecting** businesses directly with financial institutions capable of funding their dreams at events like RES and our Native Edge Institutes (NEIs).

**Establishing** new avenues for business growth, including through partnerships that foster global indigenous trade.

# Resiliency and Reinvention: The National Center and COVID-19

The theme for RES 2021 was “Forward with Resiliency and Reinvention.” In reality, that phrase could describe the entirety of 2021. The strength of our organization was tested throughout the year, but we met each and every challenge head on. Whether it was expanding—rather than contracting—our Native Edge Institutes or making the hard decision to move RES from March to July, we remained resilient even when forced to reinvent ourselves. The National Center even managed to expand our staff and our presence during the pandemic when we opened a new office in Nevada.

From the early stages of the pandemic, we understood how vulnerable Indian Country is to the pandemic—both our health and economy. That’s why our Native Edge Institutes took on a special focus on helping others in weathering pandemic-related economic hardship and understanding the resources available to businesses struggling from the pandemic. A commitment to shining a light on the struggles of Native-owned businesses led us to partner with the Center for Indian Country Development at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis to conduct a survey to determine how Native-owned businesses were faring during the pandemic. The findings helped us cater our programming throughout 2021.

Resiliency requires figuring out new ways of conducting business, networking, and sharing ideas. The National Center was well suited to meet these new challenges because resiliency has been our organization’s calling card for more than five decades and key to our peoples’ survival, and ultimately success, for millennia. Our shared history tells us that we can overcome any obstacle that stands in our path.

**The National Center is ready  
to take on any challenge.**



# The National Center's Unique Programs

The National Center's work extends far beyond the week we spend in Las Vegas for RES. From direct training and technical assistance for emerging businesses, to connecting entrepreneurs with the capital needed to make their dreams a reality, to opening new international markets for indigenous goods and services, and recognizing and grooming the next generation of Native leaders, the National Center is truly an organization that spends 365 days a year living up to its mission. Below are just a few examples of how we meet our mission.



## American Indian PTAC

The National Center's American Indian Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) provides professional business consulting services and technical assistance to Native American-owned businesses interested in marketing and selling their products and services to Federal, state, local, and tribal governments. The National Center's PTAC assists businessowners in marketing and networking, identifying bid opportunities, SBA, 8(a), HUBZone and other certifications, determining suitability for contract, and more.

Throughout the pandemic, the PTAC has stuck to its mission of providing new opportunities for Native businesses, including business and governments battling COVID-19. Our PTAC adjusted its programming and outreach to reflect a new COVID-19 reality, while continuing its critical work to support contractors that work in a wide variety of fields.



## Native Edge Finance

Providing opportunities for tribal and Native-owned businesses to access needed capital has long been one of the National Center's most important functions. In 2020, we announced the development of our own Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), known as Native Edge Finance. Native Edge Finance's goal is to provide economic opportunities for Native American communities and businesses by providing products and financial services to support business growth and development. The National Center is currently in the process of capitalizing Native Edge Finance.

## Global Indigenous Trade

An increasingly global world means that Native-owned businesses must expand their horizons and seek new markets to do business. That's why the National Center is working to connect our American Indian and Alaska Native clients with international companies, broader global indigenous communities, and even the governments of some of our closest allies. This year, we partnered with the Consulate General of Canada in Chicago to identify and produce a report on cross-border trade opportunities between Canadian First Nations and

American Indian tribes in Illinois, Missouri, and Wisconsin. And in November 2021, Chris James traveled to Dubai for Expo 2020 (delayed by a year due to COVID-19), with the specific goal of fostering new cross-indigenous trade opportunities.

## Bolstering the Native American 40 Under 40 Awards

The National Center continues to recognize emerging leaders across Indian Country through the Native American 40 Under 40 awards program. Now in its second decade, there are more than 500 members of this exclusive and increasingly close-knit fraternity. Being recognized as a 40 under 40 awardee is not a one-time event; it is a designation that lasts a lifetime and opens doors for the best and brightest from our community. The National Center truly means business for Indian Country—from the early beginnings through sustained success.

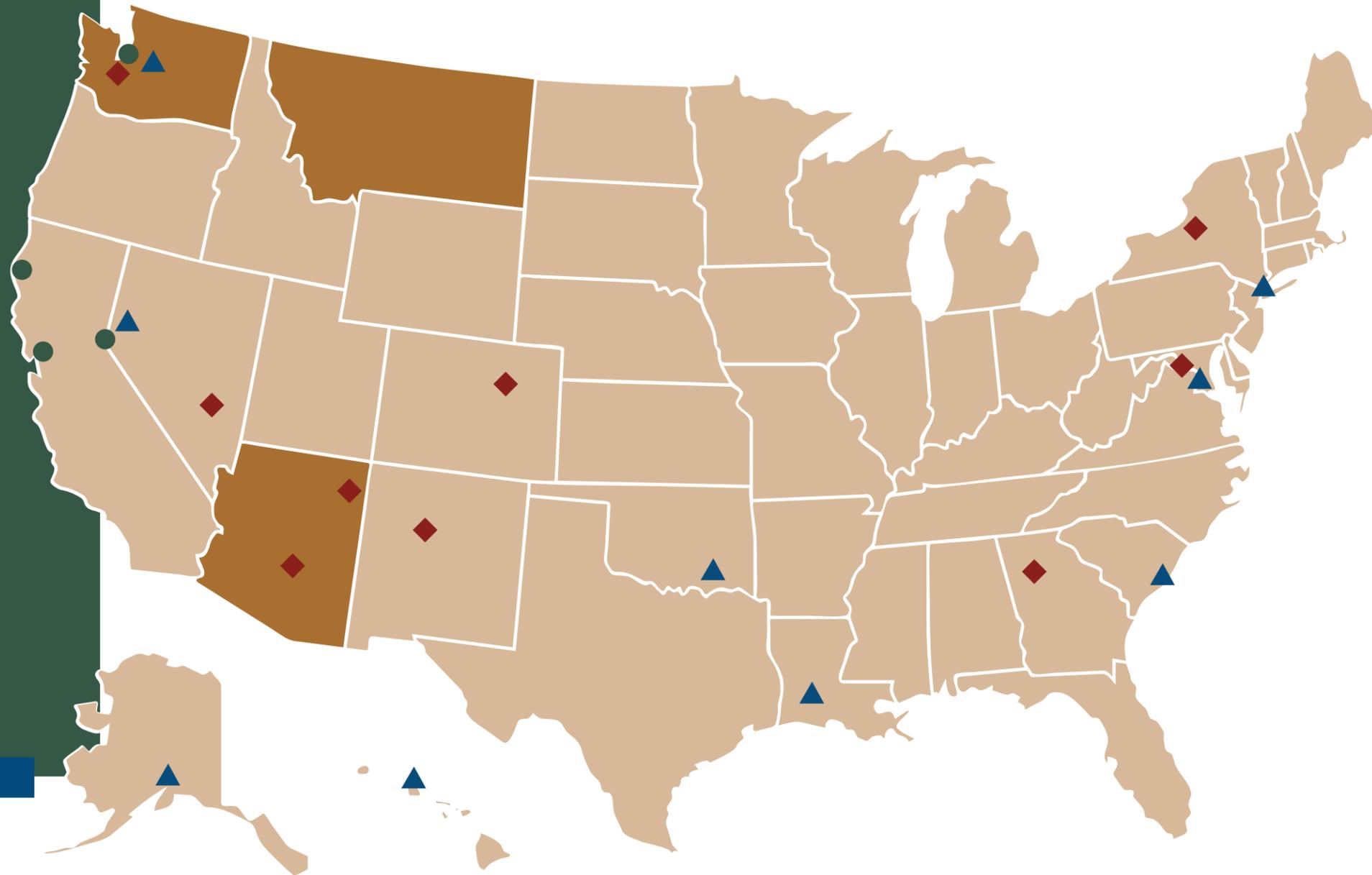
# Where We Operate



We have put the “national” in the National Center. Through our office locations, Native Edge Institutes, heat mapping, or our travels into tribal communities, the National Center has its hands on the pulse of Indian Country. Our travels allow us to tailor our programming and services to the unique needs of tribal communities and the entrepreneurs and small businesses that are the backbone of our economy.

In FY 2022, our geographic reach will grow. We will open a new office in Washington, DC, providing our organization with a permanent presence in our nation’s capital. We will also continue to bring the Native Edge Institutes’ unique programming to new cities and states – while providing online access free of charge. Our broad footprint means we can meet the people and businesses we serve where they are.

Check out where we were in 2021.



- ▲ NEIs**
- Brooklyn, NY
- Honolulu, HI
- Anchorage, AK
- Charleston, SC
- Snoqualmie, WA
- Kinder, LA
- Durant, OK
- Reno, NV
- Washington, DC

- Travel Locations**
- Napa/San Francisco, CA
- Lake Tahoe, CA
- Klamath, CA (Yurok Tribe)
- Seattle/Tacoma, WA

- Heat Mapping Tribes**
- Confederated Tribes of the Coville Reservation, WA
- Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, MT
- San Carlos Apache Tribe, AZ

- ◆ Office Locations**
- Mesa, AZ (Headquarters)
- Las Vegas, NV
- Tacoma, WA
- Washington, DC
- PTAC Offices:**
- Marietta, GA: (Headquarters)
- Liverpool, NY
- Albuquerque, NM
- Window Rock, AZ
- Denver, CO

# How the National Center Recognizes Native-Owned Businesses and Entrepreneurs

Every year, the National Center recognizes Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian businesses and entrepreneurs, as well as those who have made significant contributions to our community, through the American Indian Business awards. From Hollywood to the Halls of Congress and from casinos to the cutting edge of the international economy, award winners truly represent the richness and diversity of Indian Country.

The 2021 class was indeed special. Learn more about a few of our deserving award winners and why they are shining examples for our community.



## Native Woman Business Owner of the Year Award

This award is in recognition of outstanding leadership, management, quality performance, and commitment to excellence as a successful Native American woman business owner.

**Award Winner:** *Ahsaki LaFrance-Chachere, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Ah-Shí Beauty*

Ahsaki LaFrance-Chachere is the Founder and CEO of Ah-Shí Beauty, as well as owner of Four Arrows Logistics and Four Arrows Western Wear. Ahsaki, a Diné (Navajo) and African American Woman, was featured as one of six “Beauty Game Changers” in Harper’s Bazaar for her work at Ah-Shí that is elevating Native American representation in the cosmetics industry. Ah-Shí—Navajo for “this is me, this is mine”—now has two locations, including one in the Navajo Nation, and ships worldwide.

## Tim Wapato Public Advocate of the Year Award

This award is in recognition of outstanding leadership in support of American Indian business and economic development.

**Award Winner:** *Jodi Archambault, Director, Indigenous Peoples Initiatives for Wend Collective*

Jodi Archambault currently serves as the Director of Indigenous Peoples Initiatives for Wend Collective and as a strategic advisor for the Bush Foundation. Prior to these roles, she worked for the DC law firm of Sonosky, Chambers, Sachse, Edreson and Perry in 2015 after serving as a political appointee under the administration of President Barack Obama. During her tenure in the administration, Jodi served as the Special Assistant to the President for Native American Affairs for the White House Domestic Policy Council, Deputy Assistant Secretary to the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs at the Department of the Interior and separately as the White House Associate Director of Intergovernmental Affairs.

## American Indian Business of the Year Award

This award is in acknowledgement of the success of an American Indian or tribal Nation owned business and its demonstration of excellent corporate citizenship.

**Award Winner:** *Tlingit Haida Tribal Business Corporation, presented to Jeremiah Gideon, Capture Director, Tlingit Haida Tribal Haida Tribal Business Corporation*

Tlingit Haida Tribal Business Corporation has made demonstrated efforts to support its community by providing direct financial support, employment opportunities, as well as cultural artifact support and repatriation.



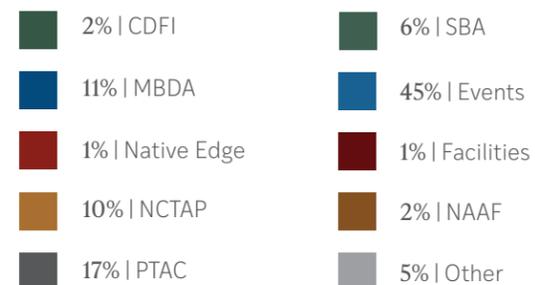
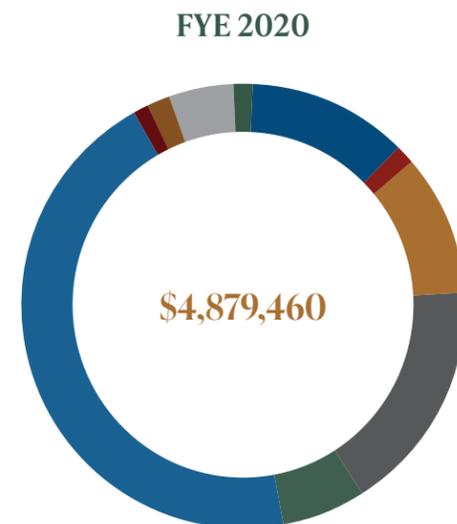
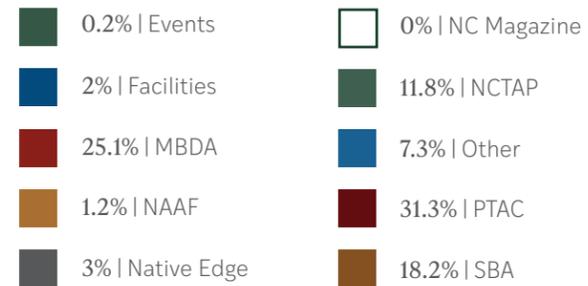
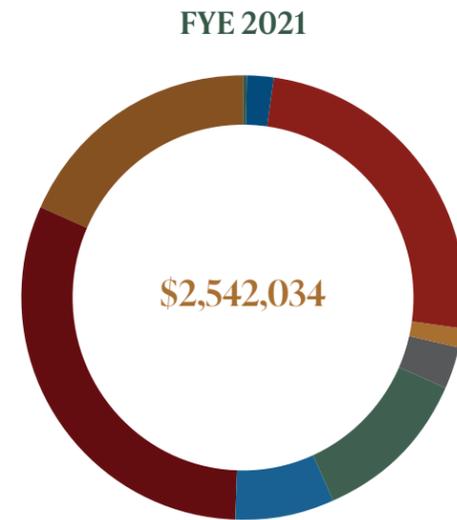
# The National Center is in a Strong Financial Position

Despite a challenging year dominated by a global pandemic, the National Center remains in very strong financial position. As was the case in FY 2020, our funding streams are diverse, providing a firm foundation needed to weather any storm. Moving RES to July – in FY2022 – makes it difficult to accurately depict the FY2021 financial picture for the National Center, which is reflected in the graphs found in this section.

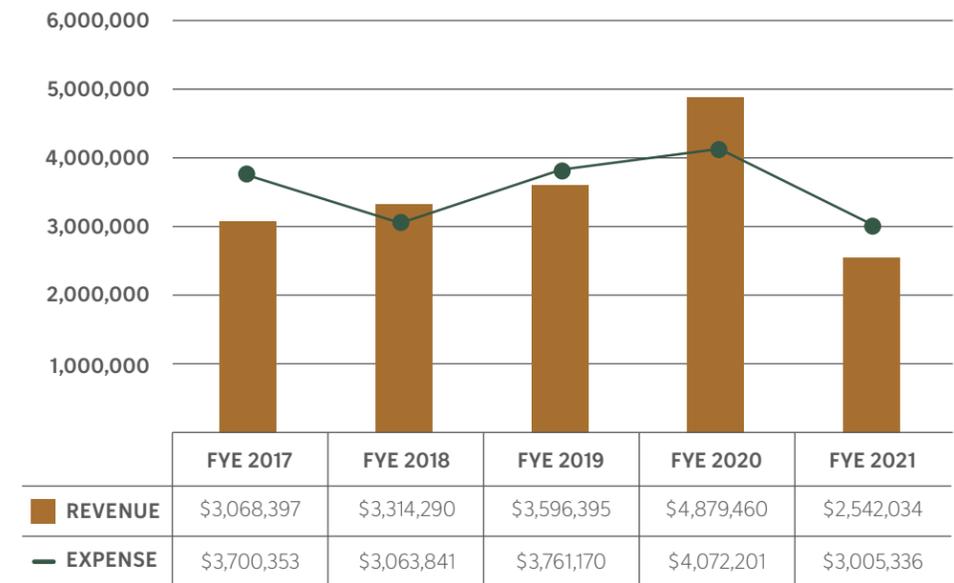
However, we are on track to significantly increase annual revenue in FY2022, which will include revenue from both RES 2021 and RES 2022. We can provide even more services to tribes, entrepreneurs, and Native-owned businesses in communities in every corner of the country as a result of these additional financial resources.

The National Center would not be in a strong financial position without the generosity of our partners and sponsors, which span Indian Country, businesses large and small, the federal government, and even the individuals who take time out of their busy schedules to register and attend our events each and every year. Thank you for your generous support of our organization.

**Fiscal Year runs July 1 - June 30**



## 5-Year Revenue Over Expense



## FYE 2021 Balance Sheet

### ASSETS

Total Checking/Savings	\$1,752,815
Total Accounts Receivable	\$809,399
Total Other Current Assets	\$385,703
Total Fixed Assets	\$354,583

**TOTAL ASSETS** \$3,302,500

### LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Total Current Liabilities	\$1,970,599
Total Long Term Liabilities	\$432,193
Total Equity	\$899,708

**TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY** \$3,302,500

# Partnering with our Neighbors to the North

In early 2021, the National Center was presented with the unique opportunity to work with the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service through the Consulate General of Canada in Chicago. The National Center led a team to produce a report that detailed market opportunities for Canadian Indigenous-owned technology companies to partner and do business with tribes and Native-owned businesses in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Missouri. We created a comprehensive roadmap for future partnership through interviews with Native business leaders, state and federal policy analysis, and identification of key technology sectors lacking in each state.

Though there are significant opportunities for partnerships, there are also challenges. While overcoming economic and legal barriers will be hard, overcoming societal

barriers will be even harder for Canadian Indigenous-owned technology companies looking to do business in the U.S. It's no secret that both Canada and the United States have a long history of indigenous discrimination. This has led to lower infrastructure and broadband investment in tribal lands, lack of access to capital, fewer educational opportunities, and difficulty in attracting top-tier tech talent. Cross-border collaboration can help to overcome some of these challenges.

Our first time working with the Canadian Consulate in Chicago has proven that regardless of where border lines are drawn, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Alaska Native, and Canadian First Nations can and should be able to work together to reach their mutual goals.



## RES 2021: New Time, Same Fantastic Programming

The National Center returned to Las Vegas this year for Reservation Economic Summit 2021, the largest and longest-running American Indian business conference and trade show in the country. This year, RES 2021 offered not only in-person programming, but for the first time a live virtual option that allowed Native entrepreneurs and businessowners to participate even when they couldn't travel. Thanks to this new hybrid format—and the pace of vaccine adoption in Indian Country—RES 2021 was able to reach an audience of 2,700 in-person and virtual attendees.

After a challenging year, the theme of “Forward with Resiliency and Reinvention” echoed throughout the conference. For the first time, the National Indian Gaming Association and American Indian Business Leaders co-located their events with RES, providing Indian Country with unprecedented access to all three organizations' programming. Attendees took part in sessions dedicated to surviving difficult times and rebuilding their businesses afterward. Speakers included administrator of the Small Business Administration Isabella Casillas Guzman, Academy-Award-winning actor Wes Studi, New Mexico congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández, and motivational speaker

D.J. Vanas. Indian Country entrepreneurs and business owners networked, learned from each other's experiences, and found new ways to incorporate resiliency and reinvention into their businesses.

Session tracks at RES 2021 included agriculture, finance, economic development, procurement, natural resources, and workforce development. Textiles, candles, pottery, jewelry, and more were on display at the American Indian Artisan Market. The Buy Native Procurement Matchmaking Expo gave Indian Country the chance to offer their products and services one-on-one to a wide range of buyers both in and out of Indian Country, including Fortune 1000 companies and other large corporations. Indian Country's largest trade show was a resounding success, with booths selling out quickly.

While RES 2021 included more hand sanitizer and masks than RES 2020, RES featured the same high-level programming and business instruction expected at RES. We can't wait for RES 2022—coming to Caesar's Palace in May—to see how the spirit of “resiliency and reinvention” transforms American Indian enterprise and propels Indian Country businesses towards further economic success.



# NEIs Continue to Provide Invaluable Training to Entrepreneurs

In 2021, the National Center—thanks to continued vaccine uptake and a commitment to following public health guidelines—welcomed in-person attendees back to our Native Edge Institutes. Offered free of charge and featuring a virtual attendance option, NEIs have made it easier than ever for Native-owned businesses and entrepreneurs to get the trainings and tricks of the trade they need to be successful. In fiscal year 2021, we hosted 12 NEIs in nine states with a total of 650 in-person and virtual attendees, including over 12,000 Facebook views for the sessions.

This in-depth, one-day training program provides vital updates and instruction on procurement, contracting, business best practices, and specific subject matter expertise. Available free of charge, NEIs are made possible through support from the United States Small Business Administration, the Minority Business Development Agency, and private sector businesses like Wells

Fargo and Key Bank. They are all archived on the National Center’s website.

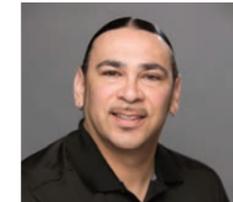
After the initial shockwaves of COVID-19 traveled through Indian Country in 2020, the National Center retooled NEIs to focus on keeping Native-owned small businesses afloat during the pandemic. As the country started to turn to recovery in 2021, we again shifted the focus of NEIs, this time towards resiliency and reinvention. Building resilient businesses able to reinvent themselves when needed is key to ensuring that Indian Country businesses can manage through turbulent times.

Like the business owners and entrepreneurs we met in 2021, NEIs are moving forward with resiliency and reinvention. As the nation continues to recover from the pandemic, the needs of Indian Country businesses will undoubtedly change. Native Edge Institutes will be there to respond to those new needs with top-tier business development programming.

## Board of Directors



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Chairman  
Navajo



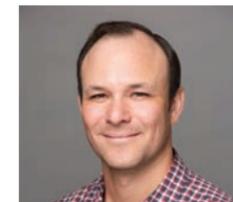
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Director  
Muscogee Creek

# The National Center Staff



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Vice President



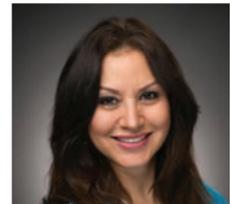
**ERIN ABRAHAMSON**  
Chief of Staff



**SUSANNE GROSHONG**  
Director of Finance



**GEORGE WILLIAMS**  
AIPTAC Program Manager



**YVETTE FIELDER**  
Program Director



**SADIE BELTON**  
Export Center Project Director



**JOAN BEGAY NOTAH**  
Senior Procurement Specialist



**ALEXANDRA RUMBAUGH**  
Program Manager



**EMERALD SKYE BYRD**  
Public Relations Coordinator



**SHELBY KINLICHEE**  
Export Business Development Specialist



**AMBER CHILDS**  
Business Development Specialist



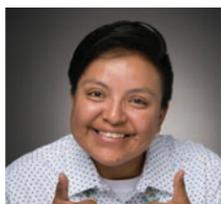
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Procurement Specialist



**ADOLFO VASQUEZ**  
Procurement Specialist



**KATHLEEN WEEKS**  
PTAC Office Manager



**RUESH YAZZIE**  
Building Facilities Manager

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