



FY 2023 Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act Congressional Report

**Report to the
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and the
Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives**

August 2024



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About This Report

This report presents an overview of progress made under the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience Act (NATIVE) Act. The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce are each required to submit a report to the Committee on Indian Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives under [Section 4\(e\) of Public Law 114-221, the NATIVE Act](#).

The report is required to discuss the following:

- (1) the manner in which the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Commerce, as applicable, is including Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations in management plans;
- (2) the efforts of the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Commerce, as applicable, to develop departmental and agency tourism plans to support tourism programs of Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations;
- (3) the manner in which the entity or organization described in subsection (d)(1) is working to promote tourism to empower Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations to participate fully in the tourism industry; and
- (4) the effectiveness of the entity or organization described in subsection (d)(1) based on the metrics developed under subsection (d)(4).

Message from Indian Affairs Leadership

At the Department of the Interior, we are working to foster Indian Country's economic revitalization in ways that are dynamic, meaningful, and long-lasting.

I'm excited about the direction we've been taking under this Administration and with Interior Secretary Deb Haaland's leadership to strengthen Tribal self-determination and sovereignty.

This includes finding new means to promote and support Tribal economic revitalization. Promoting economic opportunities in and near Tribal communities helps to ensure that people have the opportunity to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives in their Tribal communities.

Tourism is a vital part of many Tribal economies, providing jobs and revenue that are critical to communities. These resources can be used to help alleviate poverty, increase access to healthcare and education, and conserve cultural and natural resources.

The [Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience Act \(NATIVE Act\) of 2016 \(Public Law 114-221\)](#) sought to enhance and integrate Native American tourism, empower Native American communities, increase coordination and collaboration between Federal tourism assets, and expand heritage and cultural tourism opportunities in the United States.

Through partnership with Tribes and Tribal tourism alliances, we are seeing exciting work across the country to achieve these goals. The Tribal Tourism Grant Program has provided funds to dozens of Tribes to support the development of Tribal tourism businesses.

As described in this report, through coordinated, targeted investments, we are building the foundation for long-lasting, sustainable development in Tribal Nations and communities.



*Bryan Newland
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs*

Section I – Executive Summary

Indigenous tourism offers Tribal communities an opportunity to generate income, alleviate poverty, increase access to healthcare and education, and conserve cultural and natural resources. The Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience Act (NATIVE Act), which was signed into law on September 23, 2016, attempts to address the need for long-term investment from the Federal government in building Tribal capacity for tourism and economic development.

Congress enacted the NATIVE Act to “enhance and integrate Native American tourism, empower Native American communities, increase coordination and collaboration between Federal tourism assets, and expand heritage and cultural tourism opportunities in the United States.”¹ Additional purposes of the NATIVE Act are to:

- Enhance and improve self-determination and self-governance
- Encourage Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations to engage more fully in Native American tourism activities to increase visitation to rural and remote areas

Part of the Department of the Interior’s (DOI) NATIVE Act responsibilities are implemented by the Division of Economic Development in the Office of Indian Economic Development (OIED). The OIED is housed within DOI’s Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (AS-IA). The OIED employs a comprehensive and collaborative approach to establish a more inclusive American tourism strategy that will expand economic opportunity to Native communities, create jobs, spur infrastructure development, and elevate living standards. The OIED’s work to implement the NATIVE Act falls into three key initiatives:

- NATIVE Act Management Planning
- Tourism Pilot Projects
- Tribal Tourism Grant Programs

The OIED also collaborates with DOI’s Office of Native Hawaiian Relations (ONHR), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)’s Forest Service (FS), as well as other Federal agencies, universities, and Native American technical assistance organizations to coordinate assets and provide direct assistance to Tribes, Tribal organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations (NHOs)² under the NATIVE Act.³

This report describes OIED, ONHR, and FS activities to implement the NATIVE Act in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 and highlights plans for FY 2024.⁴ As required under the NATIVE Act, the report specifically details DOI’s efforts in FY 2023 to promote Native American cultural tourism through its management plans and departmental initiatives, including the manner and effectiveness in which technical assistance has been delivered to empower Tribes, Tribal organizations, and NHOs to participate fully in the tourism industry.

Section II – OIED NATIVE Act Initiatives

This section describes the OIED’s efforts to implement the NATIVE Act, including management planning, tourism pilot projects, and Tribal tourism grant programs during FY 2023.

¹ Public Law No: 114-221 (09/23/2016): www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1579/text.

² “Native Hawaiian organization” means a nonprofit organization that services the interests of Native Hawaiians in which Native Hawaiians serve in substantive and policymaking positions and that is recognized for having expertise in Native Hawaiian culture and heritage, including tourism.

³ Since FY 2018, the DOI’s Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Road Maintenance Program (RMP) has received NATIVE Act funding to support Tribal tourism visitation through the maintenance and repair of Tribal transportation infrastructure. NATIVE Act RMP allocations and obligations are described in the BIA’s RMP spending plan, which is submitted to Congress under an annual Congressional directive.

⁴ For details on past NATIVE Act accomplishments, please see the OIED’s [2020-2022 NATIVE Act Congressional Report](#).

NATIVE Act Management Planning

In FY 2023, the OIED continued its work to include Tribes, Tribal organizations, and NHOs in OIED management plans as required under the NATIVE Act.

First, the OIED coordinated and delivered a week-long office-wide strategic planning session in November 2022 for OIED staff, which resulted in a 2023 OIED office-wide strategic plan. Staff began implementing the strategic plan in January 2023 and completed implementation actions to include Tribes, Tribal organizations, and NHOs in NATIVE Act management planning:

- Engaged in interagency collaborations to promote Tribal tourism capacity-building to Tribes, Tribal organizations, and NHOs through webinars and a Grantee Meeting delivered under the OIED's Pilot Technical Assistance Program. Details on content and collaborations are provided in the Pilot Technical Assistance Program section of this report.
- Streamlined internal and external communication protocols to maximize outreach to Tribes, Tribal organizations, and NHOs on the OIED's funding and technical assistance opportunities.

Second, the OIED continued participating in the White House Council on Native American Affairs' NATIVE Act subcommittee to the Economic Development, Energy, and Infrastructure Committee. Federal agency participants include the USDA; Department of Commerce; Department of Transportation; Department of Labor; the OIED; the ONHR; the Small Business Administration; and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Executive Office of the President. Three convenings were held: on December 6, 2022; January 24, 2023; and September 26, 2023. During each meeting, participants shared updates on NATIVE Act projects and collaborative opportunities. Key outcomes are highlighted below.

- Collaborated in cross-promoting announcements on Tribal consultations, funding solicitations, and technical assistance trainings to maximize awareness in Indian Country of federal activities that support Tribal tourism capacity building.
- Coordinated in sharing resources for Indigenous Knowledge, such as the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums, to guide appropriate levels of tourism that are meaningful and respectful of Indigenous Knowledge by Tribal people.
- Coordinated in developing connections with Tribal Colleges and Universities, the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, and other non-governmental partners to expand tourism development workforce opportunities.
- Discussed preliminary concepts for preparing a NATIVE Act Action Plan in FY 2024 with multi-agency coordination to further support Tribal tourism technical assistance and funding opportunities.
- Met with the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs October 12, 2022, to deliver briefings on the OIED's progress on NATIVE Act initiatives.
- Solidified a plan to coordinate on the development of this combined FY 2023 NATIVE Act Report to describe FY 2023 activities to develop Federal support and delivery of services for Tribal tourism capacity building.

Third, OIED served on the White House Council on Native American Affairs International Economic Development subcommittee. Through this collaboration, the OIED convened a first-ever Grantee Meeting that featured a workshop focused on Tribal nations connecting with Indigenous leaders from Latin America. The session was co-hosted by the DOI through the OIED and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation



Indigenous tourism leaders at OIED's Grantee Meeting

with support from the White House Council on Native American Affairs International Economic Development subcommittee.⁵

Tourism Pilot Projects

The OIED issued NATIVE Act funds to support a diverse set of pilot projects aimed at increasing tourism capacity and encourage Tribal communities to engage more fully in Native American tourism activities. Pilot projects and recipients are listed below.

Table 2.1 OIED Tourism Pilot Projects	
Recipient	Project
American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA)	A cooperative agreement to conduct research and provide a means for the delivery of technical assistance to empower Tribes, Tribal organizations, and NHOs to participate fully in the tourism industry.
George Washington University	A grant to provide technical assistance to Tribes in the areas of tourism planning, management, and product development in North and South Dakota. The cooperative agreement also supports a new Indigenous Tourism Collaborative established by DOI’s AS-IA, the Organization of American States (OAS), and George Washington University. The initiative aims to build a resource network to inform and support the development of sustainable Indigenous tourism industry.
OIED Pilot Technical Assistance Program	A pilot technical assistance program administered by Tribal Tech, LLC to promote workshops and trainings to Tribes, Tribal organizations, and NHOs interested in OIED economic development grants and other Federal grant opportunities, specifically promoting tourism development through the NATIVE Act.

American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA)

The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that promotes Native cultural tourism within Indian Country. For nearly two decades, AIANTA has advocated for its paid membership community of Tribes, industry experts, state-recognized Tribes, Native entrepreneurs, and other cultural tourism practitioners.

AIANTA received a cooperative agreement from the OIED to implement the NATIVE Act from March 1, 2019 through April 30, 2024. The terms of the cooperative agreement identified two primary goals:

1. Identify areas where technical assistance is needed through consultation with Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, and NHOs, and
2. Provide a means for the delivery of technical assistance and coordinate the delivery of the assistance to Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, and NHOs in collaboration with Federal partners and other entities with distinctive experience.

⁵ For more information, please see the section on the Indigenous Tourism Collaborative of the Americas’ Indigenous Tourism workshop at OIED’s Grantee Meeting.

On September 18, 2023, the OIED increased the cooperative agreement funding from \$4.4 million to \$4,928,600 to include an additional \$528,630 in NATIVE Act funds. The additional funds were used by AIANTA to continue operations through the end date of the cooperative agreement and to award capacity-building grants to eligible Tribes, Tribal organizations, and NHOs through a competitive application process.



AIANTA hosting a panel at the American Indian Tourism Conference

FY 2023 Measurable Achievements

Research on Technical Assistance Needs of Native American Tourism Organizations

To fulfill the first goal of the cooperative agreement, AIANTA worked in partnership with SMS Research to prepare the “2022 Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience Act Study: Technical Assistance Needs of Native American Tourism Organizations” (TA Report). In October 2022 AIANTA and SMS Research presented the findings in a town hall format at AIANTA’s American Indian Tourism Conference. AIANTA designed their FY 2023 Tribal tourism technical assistance efforts based on the results of the TA Report. This section provides a summary of the TA Report’s findings.

The data in the TA Report was collected from four primary sources identified below:

- 22 stakeholder interviews
- 8 focus groups
- 70 technical assistance providers
- 235 survey respondents

The TA Report identified three significant challenges not explicitly related to training needs or the development of technical assistance. According to the TA Report, these challenges influence Tribal community participation and performance in the tourism industry:

1. Lack of quality internet access
2. Destination management organization systems are designed for states, not Tribes
3. Tribal communities have diverse tourism assets and challenges, requiring different tourism approaches.

In terms of training and technical assistance needs, Tribes with no or limited tourism cited a range of business capacity barriers, while Tribes with advanced tourism programs identified industry access barriers. The top three issues identified by survey respondents for each type of barrier are shown in **Table 2.2**

Table 2.2 Barriers to Tribal Tourism	
Business capacity barriers	Industry access barriers
Funding, access to capital (57%)	Limitations in reaching/promoting destinations (61%)
Recruiting/retaining workforce (54%)	Community concerns about commercialization of culture (53%)
Expanding/diversifying business (49%)	Tourism infrastructure constraints (50%)

The TA Report also examined how government consultants and contractors, academia, nonprofits, and economic development organizations define technical assistance. For purposes of the TA Report, technical assistance includes advice, assistance, and training to strengthen recipients' capacity and improve their performance. A range of opportunities for delivering technical assistance to overcome Tribal tourism barriers were provided in the TA

Report, as summarized in **Table 2.3**.

The report specifically identified the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED), the largest national Indian-specific business organization in the country, as a provider of technical assistance to Tribes and individually-owned Native businesses.

Building Capacity	Develop Federal/regional partnerships to promote TA
	Develop a directory of programs that provide TA
	Determine stages of Tribal development regarding tourism
	Deliver trainings on topics such as grant writing, business development, and financial literacy.
	Prepare Tribal communities and workforce for tourism
Industry Access	Provide TA on how to work with marketing campaigns
	Deliver information on how to connect and communicate with tour operators
	Provide TA on developing strategic plans to attract visitors
	Provide trainings on how to build community support around the economic growth of tourism
	Provide information on how to leverage Tribal Colleges and Universities to develop tourism guides

Technical Assistance Coordination

AIANTA coordinates the delivery of cultural tourism information to Tribes through electronic communications, direct outreach, and in-person events. AIANTA maintains a database of over 9,000 cultural tourism professionals, cultural tourism leaders, and industry partners. In FY 2023 AIANTA’s electronic outreach tools included the following:

- Weekly [newsletter](#) outreach, including the Rupert Report. The Rupert Report provides updates, training information, new partnership benefits, and information regarding the cultural tourism industry
- Monthly funding opportunity [newsletter](#)
- Additional electronic communications to deliver announcements

AIANTA also conducts direct outreach to cultural tourism professionals and practitioners to provide resources and connections to support network and training opportunities through calls, virtual meetings, and town hall forums. FY 2023 outreach accomplishments are summarized below.

- AIANTA hosted three town hall events shown in Table 2.4 for approximately 318 participants. The town halls provided an opportunity for AIANTA to share information and hear directly from cultural tourism professionals. Much of the information transmitted in FY 2023 focused on research to benefit Native nations and communities.



Informational flyer on the Rupert Report

Date	Activity	Registrants
10/27/2022	American Indian Tourism Conference and SMS Research presents 2022 Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience Act Study	247
12/13/2022	Sharing Stories: Native American Artists and The Creative Economy	48
04/12/2023	SMS Research Findings on Technical Assistance Needed	23

- AIANTA planned and hosted the 24th Annual American Indian Tourism Conference, October 24-27, 2022 at Harrah's Resort Southern California on the Rincon Indian Reservation. The conference attracted 295 attendees who enjoyed networking opportunities, high-level keynote sessions, and information breakout sessions led by hospitality industry experts.
- AIANTA planned and hosted Go International, an annual two-day training event in Albuquerque, New Mexico. AIANTA provided tailored training specific to the international visitor marketplace to 44 participants. The training offered a deep dive into how to enter and successfully participate in the international visitor marketplace. Speakers from the industry provided training on building products, pricing products, working with tour operators, and working with the media.
- AIANTA supported hands-on learning opportunities and exposure for 21 participants at the Go West and IPW, which allowed participants to access experiential learning and exposure through AIANTA's [NativeAmerica.travel](https://www.nativeamerica.travel) website.
- AIANTA collaborated with universities to deliver certificate programming on cultural tourism and sustainability, as shown in **Table 2.5**



Stage view of AIANTA's American Indian Tourism Conference, October 2022

Date	Institution	Certified
03/13 – 04/28/2023	Arizona State University	5
09/12 – 11/6/2023	George Washington University	30

- AIANTA continued to operate [NativeAmerica.travel](https://www.nativeamerica.travel), a destination website that connects travelers to tourism experiences with Tribes, Tribal organizations, and NHOs. The site includes high-impact photographs, historical and cultural sites, and Tribal narratives to invite domestic and international visitors to explore Indian Country. **Table 2.6** identifies the categories of organizations listed on the website and the number of site links provided within each category as of FY 2023.

In FY 2023, AIANTA improved the website by redesigning the home page and working with VisitWidget to complete an entirely new map and itinerary planning features. Internal upgrades to the website improved the navigation and page flow of the site, enhancing user experience.



Informational flyer about the NativeAmerica.travel

Listing Types	# of Sites
Tribal Enterprise	235
Tribe/Tribal Listing	87
Native-Owned Business	80
Inter-Tribal organization	53
Native Hawaiian	7
Non-Native (Endorsed) Partners	12

AIANTA provided 17 national informational webinars. A total of 415 individuals attended the webinars, which are listed below.

Date	Webinar	Attended
11/17/2022	ASU Sustainable Tourism Information	16
01/10/2023	Travel Trade Manual: A Planner for Indigenous Tourism	29
01/17/2023	USFS: Funding Opportunities to Conserve and Restore Tribal Forestland	74
01/24/2023	NEA: Working with the Indian Arts and Craft Board Museums	26
02/14/2023	Excellence in Tourism Industry Awards: The 2022 Winners and Their Tourism Initiatives	11
02/21/2023	NAAF: Healthy One Bite at a Time with Native Foods and Plants	44
02/28/2023	ASU Sustainable Tourism Information	15
03/14/2023	Go International Preview: Marketing the Mission of Your Business	16
04/11/2023	Seed Savers Saving our Story	23
04/25/2023	Developing Studio and Gallery Tours – Visiting Native American Artist	23
05/09/2023	Dark Skies Primer	9
05/23/2023	AIANTA's Certificate Program in Partnership with GWU – Cultural Heritage Tourism Information Session	17
06/13/2023	Artist in Residency Programs: Living and Creating an Inspirational Setting	22
06/29/2023	AIANTA/USFS FY 2023 Request for Proposals	34
07/11/2023	Growing Money for Your Agricultural Enterprise: What it Takes to Get to YES!	8
08/08/2023	AIANTA's Certificate Program in Partnership with GWU – Cultural Heritage Certificate Program Information Session	21
08/15/2023	Advancing into the International Market – Resources to Become Expert Ready	27

George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies (GWU)

From FY 2018 through FY 2023, the George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies (GWU) provided technical support under the NATIVE Act to foster Tribal economic development through Tribal tourism planning, management, and product development in North Dakota and South Dakota. The GWU employed a holistic approach that can be replicated throughout Indian Country to support OIED efforts nationally.

As detailed in the [OIED’s 2020-2022 NATIVE Act Congressional Report](#), the GWU previously supported North Dakota Tribes in developing Native tourism alliances and securing long-term funding sources. As a result, in FY 2023 NATIVE Act funding was transitioned away from North Dakota tourism and focused on South Dakota tourism initiatives. The GWU continued, though, to advise the North Dakota Native Tourism Association (NDNTA) on an as needed basis.

Over a 12-month period from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023, the South Dakota Native Tourism Alliance

(SDNTA) participant organizations and project partners reached key milestones for the future long-term success of their emerging regional tourism organization and the responsible development and management of Indigenous tourism in South Dakota.

Strengthening the SDNTA and Developing a Governance Structure

The GWU actively supported Native American communities in South Dakota to enhance their preparedness for utilizing tourism as a tool for economic development. With the guidance and support of the GWU, Tribal leaders in the SDNTA took initial steps in FY 2023 to establish an independent regional tourism organization from the existing ad hoc network. This transition was focused on enabling long-term coordination among Tribes for the development and management of Indigenous tourism.

In June 2023, the SDNTA initiated the process to transition into an independent nonprofit 501c(3) organization. By September 2023, the SDNTA had elected eleven Tribal Nation representatives to form the inaugural Board of Directors. The Board convened its first official meeting in October 2023, focusing on overseeing the finalization of bylaws, initiating the incorporation process, and undertaking the recruitment and hiring of a full-time field Project Manager.



SDNTA Partners, Crow Creek Reservation, June 2023

Tribal leader support is crucial for the sustainability of the SDNTA and the collaborative implementation of the five-year strategic plan. Throughout FY 2023, 36 Native leaders represented the SDNTA at a wide range of meetings, conferences, and trade shows, including those listed below. These opportunities helped foster connections with new operators and partners, and provided network members the opportunity to share the SDNTA’s story to a wider global audience.

- AIANTA’s American Indian Tourism Conference, San Diego, CA - October 2022
- Great Plains Tribal Chairman’s Association Annual Meeting, Rosebud Reservation - December 2022
- South Dakota Governor’s Conference on Tourism, Pierre, South Dakota - January 2023
- International Indigenous Tourism Conference, Manitoba, Canada - March 2023
- International Round Up, Boise, Idaho - April 2023
- OIED Grantee Meeting, Cherokee, North Carolina - August 2023
- Upper Midwest Convention and Visitor Bureau Conference, Brookings, South Dakota - September 2023

Several SDNTA leaders were honored at the 2022 American Indian Tourism Conference, which took place on October 24 – 27, 2022. Ivan Sorbel, Executive Director of the Pine Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce, received the "Best Cultural Experience" award for the Oglala Lakota Living History Village. The father-daughter duo Guss and Tianna Yellowhair from Tatanka Rez Tours (the only formally registered Indigenous tour operator in South Dakota) were cited for their "Excellence in Customer Service," an award commending their work providing authentic Native tour experiences to visitors while educating them about Native issues.



Dew Bad Warrior Ganje, Ivan Sorbel, Tianna and Guss Yellow Hair, Sarah and Frank Kills in Water, AITC 2022

Takanka Rez Tourz connects visitors with the Lakota language and culture and provides a past and present history of the reservation. "A lot of hard work and long days went into this business in order to share knowledge, build bridges and carry on the traditions and practices of everyday Lakota teachings," said Guss Yellowhair to the Lakota Times.

Representatives from the GWU and the South Dakota Department of Tourism held meetings with Tribal Chairpersons throughout the state. GWU, along with key SDNTA leaders, presented at the Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association Annual Meeting and received a unanimous resolution of support from the Association.

Sarah Kills in Water of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe represented the SDNTA in March 2023 at the International Indigenous Tourism Conference in Manitoba, Canada, where she spoke on a panel with fellow Indigenous tourism leaders from the Americas. The session was facilitated by Ed Hall on behalf of the GWU and its Indigenous Tourism Collaborative of the Americas.

Jennifer Martel with the Sitting Bull College Visitor Center and Rilda Means from the Heritage Center Itówapi Owápazo represented the SDNTA at the International Round-Up (IRU) tradeshow event in Boise, Idaho to promote experiences in the Dakotas. At IRU, nearly 60 organizations from around the Great American West and 40 international and domestic buyers from over 10 countries convened and learned about unique visitor experiences. Sparked by meetings held at IRU, the Italian tour operator Open View booked tours with SDNTA tour providers in Rosebud Reservation, Pine Ridge Reservation and the Lakota Youth Development for a five-day experience. The tours will be held in July and September 2024, with 12 guests each.

Marla Bull Bear, Executive Director of Lakota Youth Development, and Tianna Yellow Hair, Owner of Tatanka Rez Tours, received the 2023 Women Leaders in Tourism Awards from AIANTA at their annual two-day Go International Training in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Each year during Women's History month, AIANTA takes the opportunity to recognize some of the leading women in Indian Country cultural tourism who are long-time Tribal and business members of AIANTA and reflect the passion and drive needed to develop, introduce, sustain, and grow Tribal tourism.

In September 2023 the GWU moderated a panel that included Board Members from the North Dakota Native Tourism Alliance (NDNTA) and the SDNTA as part of the Upper Midwest Convention and Visitors' Bureau (CVB) Conference. The panelists received standing applause by over 100 conference attendees. The focus of the keynote panel was how CVBs and other tourism organizations can work with local and regional alliances like the NDNTA and SDNTA. Panelists included Stacey LaCompte, Executive Director, NDNTA; Les Thomas, Board

Vice-President, NDNTA; Representative Tamara St John, Board Member, NDNTA and SDNTA participant; Frank Kills in Water, Board Vice-Chair, SDNTA; and Tianna Yellow Hair, Board Member, SDNTA.

Product Development and Tour Operator Linkages

In FY 2023 the GWU played a crucial role in building the capacity of Tribal Nations and Native entrepreneurs to develop tours and establish market linkages. An important market linkage was secured through a partnership with the international tour operators Destination America and Trafalgar. Destination America collaborated with the SDNTA to create a nine-day [National Parks and Native Trails of the Dakotas](#) tour. This tour includes Tribal Nations from North and South Dakota, as well as Native American tour providers who participated in the Tourism Product Development Studios facilitated by the GWU. Notably, it is the first itinerary offered by a major tour operator that focuses primarily on Tribal lands and connects South Dakota and North Dakota.

To prepare for these new tour offerings, the GWU conducted a series of 15 coaching and training sessions on tour guiding and tour operations in collaboration with South Dakota's Department of Tourism (SD Tourism). The SD Tourism is an integral partner in the SDNTA. Additionally, the GWU and SD Tourism organized two tour testing opportunities in the first quarter of 2023. The tour testing opportunities offered new Native tour providers a chance to present proposed tour content and receive feedback on how to enhance their delivery.

As part of this partnership, the TreadRight Foundation granted \$2,963 to Lakota Youth Development, one of the Native American tour providers, to assist in covering start-up costs for the development of the tour.

Trafalgar's inaugural coach tour took place in May 2023 and was a resounding success. Visitors on this initial tour enjoyed authentic and immersive experiences at the Pine Ridge Reservation, Rosebud Reservation, Lakota Youth Development in Milks Camp, and the Sitting Bull College Visitor Center. Over 30 Native American tour providers from five reservations offered services and derived financial benefits from the tour.

Trafalgar offered five coach tour departure dates from May to August 2024 to accommodate a range of 20-30 persons per tour. This marked the first-ever tour of its kind focused exclusively on Tribal lands, bridging the connection between South Dakota and North Dakota.

Additional tours were designed and implemented for South Dakota State University and Black Hills Adventure Tours in summer 2023.

The SDNTA has garnered significant media attention, especially due to its partnership with Destination America and Trafalgar, along with the inaugural coach tour that took place in May 2023. The following media articles provide coverage of these noteworthy events.

- [The era of Indigenous tourism has \(finally\) arrived](#), FastCompany.com
- [10 New Adventure Tours We're Excited About for 2023](#), Afar
- [A New Tourism Approach, SD Native-Led Tourism Alliance Launches Economic Catalyst Tours On Reservations](#), Yankton Daily
- [Three things to know about a new tourism opportunity in South Dakota focused on Native American culture](#), News Center 1
- [The otherworldly US states where cows outnumber humans, Exclusive: An extraordinary coach tour created](#)



SDNTA Tour Testing Session, Lakota Youth Development Camp

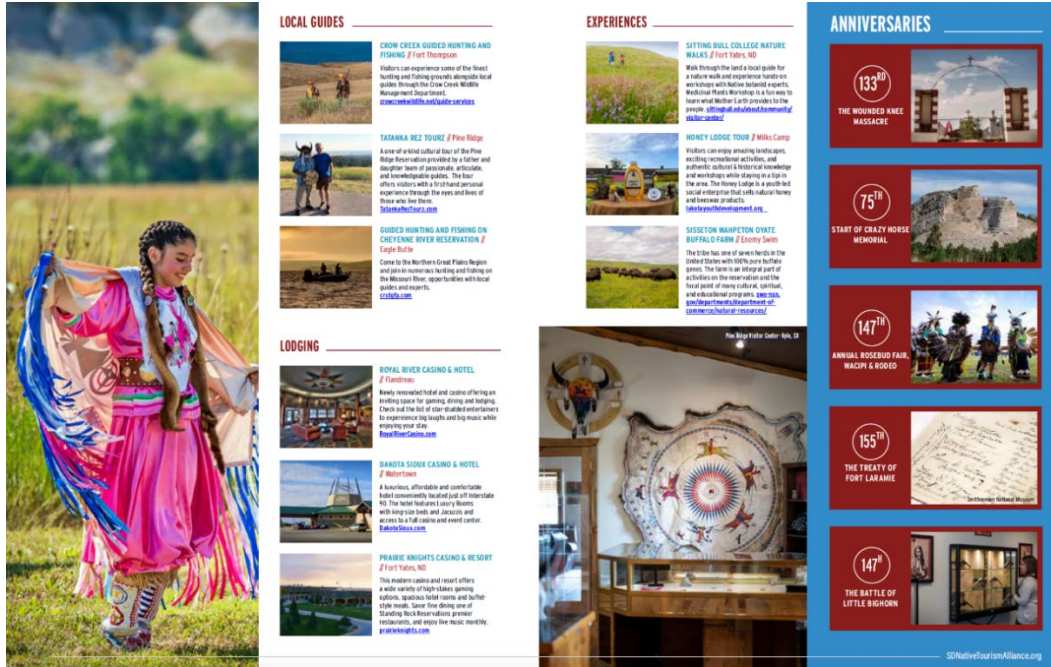
- [in collaboration with Native American Tribes snakes around the Dakotas' Imax-wide plains](#), The Times UK
- [Indigenous-led tourism: How to choose a travel experience that benefits people and nature](#), Euro News; The same article was syndicated on [Yahoo](#), [MSN](#), and [Good Word News](#).

Additional media coverage featuring the SDNTA that focuses on the challenges of fostering demand for Indigenous tourism and the national recognition of the importance of partnerships between Tribal Nations, tour operators, and state tourism offices is included below:

- A writer from Bloomberg wrote an article, [Indigenous Tourism Gains Traction in the US but Faces Headwinds](#), highlighting the challenges associated with garnering greater demand for Indigenous tourism. SDNTA leaders are quoted in the article.
- Travel Weekly highlighted the [importance of partnerships between Tribal nations, tour operators and state tourism offices](#) that features the SDNTA as an example of these promising new initiatives.



SDNTA Test Tour of Oglala Lakota Living History Village, Pine Ridge Reservation



SDNTA Experiences Sales Sheet, International Round Up, April 2023

The GWU and SD Tourism convened meetings with Tribal Leaders, business support organizations, and entrepreneurs to organize a new cohort of tour providers from the Tribal Nations that are located along the Native American Scenic Byway. Tribal Leaders from the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, and Lower Brule Sioux Tribe expressed their support for participating in the GWU’s Tourism Product Development Studios and actively assisted in identifying and preparing local entrepreneurs to participate in these training sessions, which focus on the development, pricing, and operations of new tours.

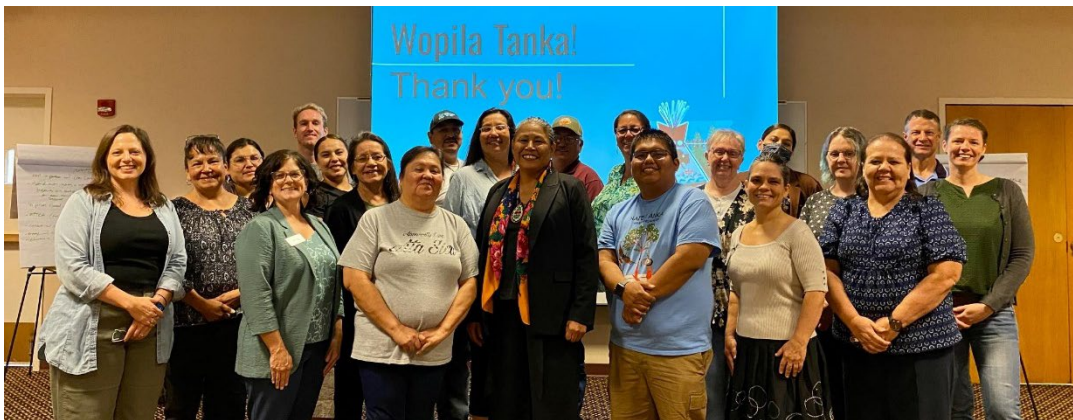
The GWU and SD Tourism continued to support the SDNTA and the newly established Board of Directors in FY 2023 to identify and secure sustainable funding for the future activities of the organization. In 2023 the GWU secured a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration with counterpart funds from SD Tourism that will assist the SDNTA in 2024 to continue strengthening as an independent nonprofit, creating and promoting new tour offerings, building partnerships with new tour operators, and coordinating educational and networking opportunities for SDNTA participants.

Network Engagement and Education

A critical function of the SDNTA is to provide Native and non-Native network participants with opportunities to come together to learn, share, plan, and advance projects. In FY 2023 the SDNTA held three in-person SDNTA network meetings that were attended by 79 member organizations. These meetings were held in Pierre, Crow Creek Reservation, and Standing Rock Reservation. In-person meeting participants advanced priority initiatives and had the opportunity to experience unique tours offered by the host reservations.



Chairman Peter Lengkeek Presenting at Quarterly SDNTA Meeting, Crow Creek Reservation, June 2023



Chairwoman Janet Alkire Presenting at Quarterly SDNTA Meeting, Standing Rock Reservation, September 2023

The SDNTA also held three virtual network meetings that were attended by 84 participants to learn about project progress, provide insights, and support initiatives. In addition to developing the governance structure, the SDNTA created content for new pages on the sdnativetourismalliance.org website to educate visitors and promote Native attractions and experiences.

In addition to regular meetings, the SDNTA hosted quarterly virtual Coffee Chats to provide SDNTA participants and partners a more casual opportunity to connect, learn, and share within the network. The Coffee Chats also helped to familiarize new and prospective SDNTA participant organizations. In 2023 the SDNTA hosted four virtual Coffee Chats that were attended by 59 participants. The topics included:

- Summer SDNTA Trafalgar Tours with presentations from Pine Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce, Rosebud Reservation, Lakota Youth Development, and Sitting Bull College Visitor Center
- Indigenous Tourism Promotion and Tour Operation with Akwesasne Travel
- Indigenous Agritourism Operations and Opportunities with presentations from the Alliance of Rural Communities, Trinidad & Tobago, AIANTA, and SD Tourism
- Building a New Heritage Center at Maḥpíya Lúta (Red Cloud) with a presentation by Ashley Pourier

The following table provides an overview of the partnerships maintained over the past 12 months through the SDNTA.

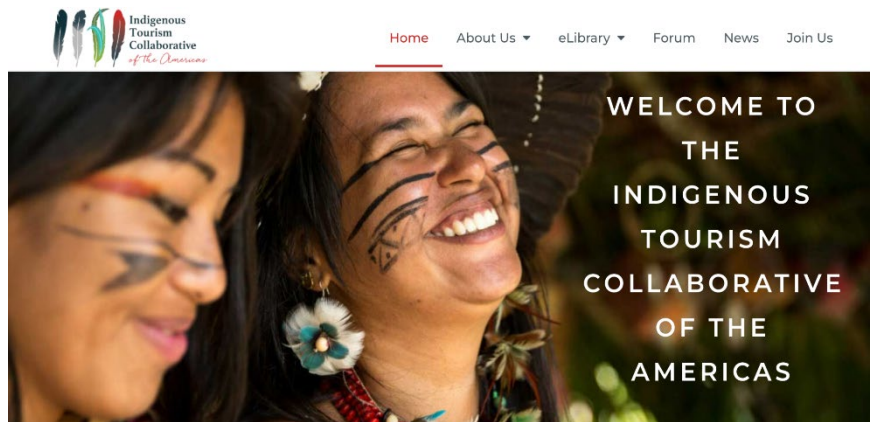
Table 2.8 Summary of GWU South Dakota Tribal Tourism Support				
South Dakota Tribal Nations & Tribal organizations and Businesses	Tourism Alliance Development and Strengthening	Capacity Building: Tour Development and Testing	Tour Sales & Business Development	Other Technical Assistance
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe	X	X		X
Crow Creek Sioux Tribe	X	X		X
Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe	X			
Lower Brule Sioux Tribe	X	X		X
Oglala Sioux Tribe	X	X		X
Rosebud Sioux Tribe	X	X	X	X
Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate	X			X
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe	X	X	X	X
Yankton Sioux Tribe	X			
Crazy Horse Memorial	X			
Dakota Indian Foundation	X			
First Peoples Fund	X	X		
Four Bands Community Fund	X	X		
Grand River Casino and Resort	X			
Lakota Cultural Center and Museum	X	X		
Lakota Youth Development	X	X	X	X
Lode Star Casino & Motel	X			
Oglala Sioux Tribe Department of Transportation	X	X		
Pine Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce	X	X	X	X
Red Cloud Indian School Heritage Center	X	X	X	X
Rosebud Sioux Tribe Sicangu Resource Development	X	X	X	X
Rosebud Hotel and Casino	X	X		
Rosebud Sioux Dept. of Natural Resources and Game, Fish & Parks	X			
Sinte Gleska University	X	X		X
Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribal Historic Preservation Office	X			

Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Department of Planning	X			
Sitting Bull College Visitor Center	X	X	X	X
Standing Rock Tribal Planning Dept.	X			
Tatanka Rez Tourz	X	X	X	X
Thunder Valley CDC	X			
Wota Wagon	X	X	X	

Indigenous Tourism Collaborative of the Americas

The Indigenous Tourism Collaborative of the Americas (ITCA) is bringing the economic potential and significance of Indigenous tourism into focus and has already gained the encouragement and support of the U.S. Department of the Interior; U.S. Department of State; the White House Council on Native American Affairs’ International Indigenous Issues Committee; the National Congress of American Indians; National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development; and Canadian, Central American, South American and Caribbean Indigenous tourism associations. The ITCA is an advisory network of Indigenous leaders and non-Indigenous tourism leaders working together to recover from COVID-19, build capacity and resilience in Indigenous tourism, and gain respect and inclusion for Indigenous tourism leadership in government and the tourism industry. The ITCA provides a platform for Indigenous community leaders, policymakers, and business owners to share their experiences, learn from one another, take collective action, and better understand how to promote change through tourism without compromising their cultural values.

In celebration of the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples, the ITCA launched its Indigenous Tourism e-Library in FY 2023, an easily accessible and comprehensive repository that features more than 500 tools and resources to help Indigenous peoples and their stakeholders and partners develop and better manage tourism. The eLibrary supports sustainable Indigenous tourism throughout the Americas (United States, Canada, Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America). For more information visit: <https://Indigenoustourismamericas.org/>.



Indigenous Tourism eLibrary

The ITCA also organized a panel discussion as part of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada's International Indigenous Conference held on March 8-10, 2023 in Winnipeg. Ed Hall, Indigenous Tourism and Economic Development Executive in Residence at the GWU and ITCA Steering Committee Member, moderated a dynamic discussion focused on radical collaboration as key to Indigenous tourism success in the Americas. Panelists included Keith Henry, President and CEO of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, Sarah Kills-In-Water, SDNTA, Ernest Neptune, Wabanaki Tourism Coordinator and Jean-Philippe LeMoigne, Latin America Representative for the World Indigenous Tourism Alliance. The panel was very well-received and affirmed the tremendous demand for exchanges among Indigenous tourism groups throughout the hemisphere.



ITCA panel discussion held at the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada's International Indigenous Conference in March 2023

In August 1-3, 2023, as part of the OIED Grantee Meeting⁶, the USAID and ITCA co-facilitated discussions between Indigenous tourism leaders from Tribal Nations in the United States and several countries in Central America: Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama. This opportunity for North-South peer-to-peer exchanges with Indigenous leaders from Latin America working within the tourism sector was met with profound interest and success. The interactive session explored the lived experiences of those working with Indigenous tourism efforts. Leaders shared their efforts in establishing tourism, networking, business opportunities, and a time for open Indigenous Knowledge sharing through a Q&A session. The outcomes included exploring ways for supporting peer-to-peer learning today and in future digital and in-person meetings. USAID, the FSC Foundation, participants in the ITCA, and facilitators of the Central American delegation's attendance expressed their keen interest in continuing to support these exchanges.

⁶ A detailed summary of OIED' Grantee Meeting is provided in the following section, "OIED Pilot Technical Assistance Program."



Indigenous tourism leaders from South Dakota, North Dakota, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama meet with K. Denise Litz, Chief of OIED's Division of Economic Development, and Morgan Rodman, Executive Director of the White House Council on Native American Affairs



Indigenous tourism leaders from Guatemala and South Dakota, Graciela Coy and SD Representative Tamara St. John

OIED Pilot Technical Assistance Program

From March 1, 2022 through February 29, 2024 OIED offered the Pilot Technical Assistance Program (PTAP). The PTAP supported Tribes, Tribal organizations, and NHOs interested in OIED economic development grants and other Federal grant opportunities, and specifically promoted tourism development through the NATIVE Act. PTAP activities were focused on pre-application training, grant writing, business plan development, and business sustainability.⁷ A contractor, Tribal Tech, LLC⁸, administered the PTAP under the direction of the OIED.

In FY 2023 the PTAP continued its work with Tribal communities to provide resources, training, and information to support Tribal tourism initiatives. A summary of FY 2023 accomplishments to support Tribal tourism is provided in this section.

⁷ Business sustainability is focused on providing grantees with resources so that planned projects become fully implemented. This includes providing Tribes with tools and information on funding and technical assistance so that a planned project will proceed through the planning stage and become fully operational.

⁸ Tribal Tech, LLC is American Indian-owned and certified as woman-owned under SBA's 8(m) Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Program.

Fundamentals of Grant Writing 1 & 2: Keys to Success Webinars, December 8th and 15th, 2022

Event Description

In collaboration with AIANTA, the *Fundamentals of Grant Writing: Keys to Success* webinar series aimed to foster excellence in grant acquisition and project execution. Comprising two sessions, the core objectives of the webinars were designed to equip attendees with skills and knowledge, focusing on the following key areas: 1) application planning and preparation; 2) grant-writing mechanics; 3) common pitfalls and best practices; and 4) where to find further resources.

Impact

The need for these webinars was evident as there were 435 total participants representing 75 Tribal Nations and Tribal organizations.

- Part 1 - Planning and Mechanics (December 8, 2022): 262 participants.
- Part 2 - Reading a Notice of Funding Opportunity & Request for Proposal (December 15, 2022): 173 participants.

Pathways to Native Business Plan Development and Sustainability Virtual Workshops, March 7th & 9th, 2023

Event Description

In collaboration with training and technical assistance providers from the Administration for Native Americans (ANA), the *Pathways to Native Business Plan Development and Sustainability* workshops aimed to increase participant confidence in business plan development from preparation, planning, and writing through sustainability and next steps, including funding and technical assistance available for business sustainability support.

Impact

The success of these webinars was evident as there were 296 overall participants, representing 67 Tribal Nations and Tribal organizations, equipping participants with essential knowledge and tools for strategic business planning and sustainable growth.

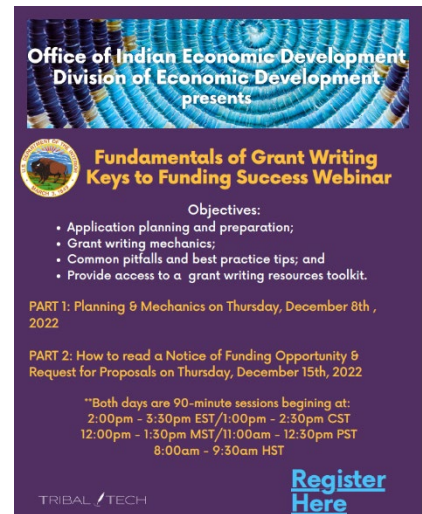
- Part 1 - Overview of planning and logistics for business plan development (March 7, 2023): 188 participants.
- Part 2 – Business sustainability concepts and practices (March 9, 2023): 108 participants.

Grant Writing Workshop, Sitka Heritage and Cultural Tourism Conference, Alaska, April 13, 2023

Event Description

The Heritage and Cultural Tourism Conference hosted by the Sitka Tribe of Alaska included three days of learning, networking, and business building in tourism. Areas of interest included how private and Tribal partnerships are reshaping the industry, incorporating culture into the local market, and cultural initiatives at state and Federal levels.

During the Conference PTAP delivered a Fundamentals of Grant Writing workshop to provide attendees with an overview on planning logistics for grant writing, developing a grant writing team, incorporating community, and developing templates and resources to use for future applications. The second part of the presentation reviewed [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov), Federal notices of funding opportunities, other resources (e.g., Federal, foundation, and AIANTA), and best practices.



PTAP webinar flyer



PTAP webinar flyer

Impact

This hands-on session had 10 participants, with 89% finding the content relevant or highly relevant.

OIED Grantee Meeting, Cherokee, North Carolina, August 1-3, 2023

Event Description

The theme of the OIED's FY 2023 Grantee Meeting was *Building Connections: Strengthening Indigenous Communities Toward Economic Self-Sufficiency*. Hosted by the OIED's Division of Economic Development (DED) in Cherokee, North Carolina, the Grantee Meeting theme highlighted establishing meaningful relationships and collaborations within Indigenous communities, with the ultimate goal of enhancing their economic independence. The program's plenary sessions and workshops aimed to explore strategies and initiatives to support communities in achieving self-sufficiency and sustainable economic growth. The OIED's online Grantee Meeting summary can be found at <https://www.bia.gov/service-page/technical-assistance>.

Attendees gained the following over the course of the Grantee Meeting:

- Learned to blend entrepreneurship and Indigenous values for sustainable growth
- Gained strategies for integrating cultural heritage into economics for balanced empowerment
- Received insights into collaboration for Indigenous economic development, linking local and global opportunities

Four general plenary sessions and 27 smaller workshop sessions allowed for a wide range of peer-to-peer learning and knowledge sharing opportunities. Attendees raised questions to presenters, panelists, and one another on how to solve common challenges and learn from the success of other Tribal communities.

The Grantee Meeting provided a significant spotlight on Tribal Tourism during its plenary and breakout sessions. These sessions aimed to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Native American communities, emphasizing the importance of Indigenous tourism. A Tribal tourism roundtable discussion, led by industry experts, further underscored the significance of fostering Indigenous community development through regional Native tourism alliances. These sessions highlighted how tourism can be a powerful tool for preserving and promoting the culture and traditions of Tribal communities, ultimately strengthening their economic and cultural identities in the visitor industry. Below is a list of sessions from the Grantee Meeting that focused on Tribal Tourism.

- *Plenary Session 2 - Tribal Tourism Plenary Session* included remarks from Morgan Rodman, Executive Director for the White House Council on Native American Affairs, who provided an opening address and articulated the critical role of Tribal communities in shaping the tourism landscape. Following his insights, Edward Hall, Indigenous Economic Development and Tourism Executive in Residence at GWU, shared remarks to highlight the intersection of transportation infrastructure and tourism development. The Plenary Session then transitioned into a Tribal tourism roundtable, featuring experts in the field who shared insights into best practices and innovative strategies for communities engaged in tourism initiatives.



OIED and Tribal Tech team at the Grantee Meeting, August 2023

- Plenary Session 3 - E hō‘ihi aku, e hō‘ihi mai - How the HŌ‘IHI Grant Program Empowers Native Hawaiians to Redefine Cultural Identity for the Visitor Industry:* This Plenary Session focused on the transformative impact of the HŌ‘IHI Grant Program on Native Hawaiians' ability to redefine cultural identity within the visitor industry. Representatives from the Wai‘anae Economic Development Council shared narratives on how the HŌ‘IHI Grant Program has empowered Native Hawaiians to actively shape and contribute to the cultural narrative presented to visitors. Their accounts shed light on the program's tangible outcomes and the significance of community-driven initiatives in fostering a more authentic and enriching tourist experience.
- Breakout Session 3 - Fostering Indigenous Community Development through Regional Native Tourism Alliances:* The OIED partnered with GWU and Virginia Tech Pamplin College of Business (VT) to discuss their demonstration projects that support Tribal tourism. This session covered how tourism alliances were formed and are evolving, key factors of their success, and their tangible impact.
- Breakout Session 5 - Agritourism: Connecting the Visitors to your Culture, Story and Foodways:* In this session, AIANTA presented agritourism as a tool to build food security, increase farm income, and develop bonds in the community and with guests through: 1) farm tours; 2) farm-to-table experiences; and 3) community involvement (inviting community members, elders, or cultural leaders to ensure authenticity and respect for the culture).
- Breakout Session 8 - How Technical Assistance & Training Can Help Create Tourism Experiences That Honor Culture, Tradition and History:* In this session, AIANTA discussed their education and training programs designed to help Tribes and Native-owned businesses create tourism experiences that celebrate and honor their culture, tradition and history.
- Breakout Session 9 - Radical Collaboration - Key to Indigenous Tourism Success in the Americas:* GWU presented a live demonstration of ITCA’s comprehensive eLibrary, the largest database of Indigenous tourism resources, to help attendees develop community-centered tourism.
- Breakout Session 13 - Building an Indigenous Alliance to Support Tourism in Tribal Communities:* This session focused on the importance of collaboration in tourism. Panelists from the Montana Indigenous Tourism Alliance (MITA) discussed how Tribes can work together to support their own tourism development goals and collaborate with other Tribes and businesses in their regions.
- Breakout Session 14 - Honoring Heritage and Building Legacies: The Foundation of Economic Development through Cultural Tourism:* This session facilitated American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian (AIANNH) communities to identify existing and potential enterprises and envision economic development initiatives that center around cultural practices and preservation. AIANTA provided practical tools and strategies for AIANNH communities to enter, engage, and export tourism businesses to maximize their potential, increase visibility and revenue, and strengthen their connection to their communities.
- Breakout Session 16 - USDA Rural Development Business & Economic Development Funding Opportunities:* During this session, attendees heard directly from Tribal constituents about their success stories and how USDA Rural Development business programs have helped their Tribal communities develop sustainable



Hawaiian tourism presentation on E hō‘ihi aku, e hō‘ihi mai at the Grantee Meeting



AIANTA workshop at the Grantee Meeting

economic opportunities.

- *Breakout Session 23 - Indigenous Tourism - A Conversation with Panama and Guatemala:* This session provided an opportunity to meet with Indigenous leaders from Latin America’s tourism sector and learn about their efforts in establishing tourism, networking, and business opportunities. The session was co-hosted by the OIED and the USAID’s Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation.
- *Breakout Session 28 - Tribal Tourism: Tips and Resources for Planning Your Tourism Program:* In this session AIANTA shared information and tips for tourism planning. Using its “Cultural Heritage Tourism, A Planner for Indigenous Tourism Professionals” guidebook, AIANTA shared stories about how other Tribes have developed planning teams to support their tourism efforts.



Grantee Meeting breakout discussion on Indigenous tourism

Impact

The event brought together 256 attendees representing 100 Tribes, including 174 OIED grantees from 96 Tribal organizations. Attendees also included 18 Federal representatives and nine international visitors representing six countries (Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama).

Tribal Tourism Grant Programs

The OIED’s NATIVE Act tourism goals have been supported in part through the OIED’s [Tribal Tourism Grant Program \(TTGP\)](#) as well as ONHR’s cooperative agreements and grants. Updates on these activities are provided below.

TTGP

Launched in 2021 using FY 2020 funding, TTGP supports Tribal economic development and fulfills the mission of the NATIVE Act by providing funding for Tribes to conduct Tribal tourism feasibility studies and business plans. Feasibility studies and business plans support Tribes in making informed decisions about potential tourism projects. In FY 2023, the OIED awarded the following Tribes and Tribal organizations \$2 million in FY 2022 funding and \$1 million in FY 2023 funding for the TTGP under a single funding announcement.

Table 2.9 FY 2023 OIED Tribal Tourism Grant Program Awards			
Tribe or Tribal organization	Project	State	Award
Haida Corporation	Hydaburg Tourism Feasibility Study	Alaska	\$150,000
Hualapai Tribal Council	Developing a Tribal Tourism Plan for the Hualapai Reservation	Arizona	\$150,000
Muscogee (Creek) Nation	MCN Tribal Tourism Feasibility and Business Development Plan Project	Oklahoma	\$149,423
Village of Kaktovik (AKA Barter Island)	Polar Bear Tourism Feasibility Study	Alaska	\$149,270
Mesa Grande Business Development Corporation	A Business Plan for Mesa Grande's Agritourism Business	California	\$149,212
Penobscot Indian Nation	Penobscot Indian Nation Tourism Development Initiative	Maine	\$149,010
Blackfeet Tribe	Blackfeet Tourism Business Plan	Montana	\$125,388

Bay Mills Indian Community	BMIC Feasibility Study to Assess Tourism	Michigan	\$125,000
Spirit Lake Tribe	2022 Spirit Lake Tribal Tourism Feasibility Study Project	North Dakota	\$125,000
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma	Choctaw Country Destination Management Plan	Oklahoma	\$125,000
The Chickasaw Nation	The Chickasaw Nation's Exhibit C Gallery Project	Oklahoma	\$124,122
Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas	Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas Travel and Tourism Planning	Texas	\$120,291
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center	IPCC Cultural Tourism Feasibility Study to Serve Pueblos and Larger State of New Mexico Economy	New Mexico	\$113,251
Crow Tribe of Indians	Apsaalooke Tourism Action Project	Montana	\$112,771
Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness	Wabanaki Ways Feasibility Study	Maine	\$105,000
Leech Lake Reservation Business Committee, Inc.	The Creation of a Tourism Development Plan for the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	Minnesota	\$104,515
Burns Paiute Tribe	Foley Field Destination Resort Feasibility Study and Business Plan	Oregon	\$102,300
Oneida Indian Nation	Oneida Indian Nation Tribal Tourism Feasibility Study	New York	\$101,762
Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation	Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Shabbona Reservation Analysis	Kansas	\$82,764
Northern Arapaho Tribe	Casino Amenity Market Assessment Feasibility Study	Wyoming	\$78,701
Rosebud Sioux Tribe	Rosebud Sioux Tribe Cultural Heritage Feasibility Study	South Dakota	\$75,190
Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana	South Toledo Bend Park Feasibility Study	Louisiana	\$72,672
Nansemond Indian Nation	Mattanock Town Ecotourism Center Feasibility Study and Business Plan	Virginia	\$71,720
Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians	Lac Courte Oreilles B&K Intersection/Tribal Plaza Tourism Project	Wisconsin	\$63,000
Enterprise Rancheria of Maidu Indians of California	The Enterprise Rancheria Sports & Entertainment Tourism Development Project	California	\$55,066
Sitka Tribe of Alaska	A Xandei Yaan too At: Moving Sitka Tribal Tours into the Future Business Planning Project	Alaska	\$54,708
Nez Perce Tribe	Development of the Nez Perce Tribal Tourism Business Plan	Idaho	\$49,408
Elk Valley Rancheria, California	Elk Valley Rancheria RV Park Feasibility Study Project	California	\$48,600
Chippewa Cree Tribe	The Chippewa Cree Tribal Tourism Feasibility Study Project	Montana	\$45,755

Native Village of Chenega	Chenega Heritage Tourism Business Plan	Alaska	\$30,916
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ONHR Cooperative Agreements and Grants for NHOs

In FY 2023 the OIED, in partnership with the ONHR and National Park Service (NPS), continued their support for two cooperative agreements with NHOs in Hawai‘i. One agreement is with the Edith Kanaka‘ole Foundation (EKF) for the restoration and utilization of traditional placenames at Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park. The other agreement is with the Historic Hawaiian Foundation (HHF) to engage NHOs in a stewardship training program that engages visitors and residents in the preservation of culturally-significant sites in Hawai‘i. Project plans and summaries of progress through the end of FY 2023 for each of the projects are provided below.

Edith Kanaka‘ole Foundation – Restore & Utilize ‘Ōiwi Spatial Data at Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park
 (Project Period of Performance: September 2021 – December 2024)

- Established study methodology (Papakū Makawalu – a method to translate traditional Native Hawaiian historical resources)
- Archival research on place names, ahupua‘a boundaries, boundary commission testimonies, etc.
- Compiling place names for the database
- Four field visits to the Kahuku Unit of the park, defining boundaries of the wao land designations for the GIS database
- Completed historical research on the Kahuku ahupua‘a, including chants and mele
- Next steps include analyzing data and building the GIS database

Historic Hawai‘i Foundation – Native Hawaiian Organization Stewardship Training Program
 (Project Period of Performance: June 2021 – June 2026)

HHF and NPS conducted three online trainings and two in-person trainings on the following topics:

- The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Technical Preservation Briefs
- Considerations for Historic Integrity for the National Register of Historic Places
- Traditional Knowledge in Stewardship and Preservation and NHO Stewardship Training Case Studies Presentations
- Sustainability and Historic Preservation
- Preservation Trades Training Workshop: Maintenance and Repair of Historic Buildings

Notable achievements from the selected partnership agreements include:

- Pacific American Foundation – Traditional fishpond restoration and education at Waikalua Loko I‘a, Kāne‘ohe, O‘ahu
- Recruited and trained 25 steward leaders for the Native Hawaiian Organization Stewardship Training Program
- Developed 5 in-person training days at Waikalua Loko Ia over the course of 5 months
- Planned, conducted, and coordinated 5 Lā ‘Ohana Days (community workdays for visitors/residents) – 525 attendees
- The start of this partnership program coincided with a new school year (2022-2023) that reflected a “post-pandemic” period. As a result, the interest in schools, families, and community returning to large outdoor events like our community workdays, and regular visits by schools and community groups have been brisk and constant since August 2022. Waikalua Loko I‘a continues to be one of the largest community classrooms on the windward side, hosting students K-12 and college on a regular basis.

- Kauluakalana - stewardship training, preservation, and restoration project at Ulupō Heiau State Historic Site in Kailua, O‘ahu - Completion of consultation process with State Historic Preservation Division concurrence for the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 process in order to begin activities at the state historic site. Planned activities for education and land restoration are currently ongoing.
- Huliauapa‘a - Kahalu‘u Kūāhewa, Hawai‘i This project is working to generate a Stewardship Plan Template for utilization at Kahalu‘u Kūāhewa and other locations throughout the archipelago and conduct stewardship trainings supporting increased visitation and the recognition of Wahi Kūpuna (ancestral places) Best Management Practices. Activities are currently ongoing.



Visitors attend one of Kauluakalana’s training and lo‘i restoration workday at Kūkanono, Kailua. PC: Kaleo Wong, Kauluakalana

HŌ‘IHI Grant Program - E hō‘ihi aku, e hō‘ihi mai

In FY 2022, the OIED partnership with ONHR produced seven grantees for the Heritage (Tourism) Opportunities in Hawai‘i or the HŌ‘IHI Grant Program (CFDA 15.068) implementing the NATIVE Act in Hawai‘i. Work for each of the recipients was conducted during FY 2023 and is described below. In addition, ONHR received its own appropriations for the NATIVE Act and continued its implementation of the HŌ‘IHI Grant Program in FY 2023.

Tourism is a major economic driver that has long been experienced by the Native Hawaiian community as extractive and transactional. NATIVE Act funding helps to equip NHOs across Hawai‘i with additional resources to change that experience in ways mutually beneficial to visitors and the islands’ original stewards. A sustainable and equitable tourism model recognizes that an enriching visitor experience depends on a thriving local Native Hawaiian community with deep pilina (connection) to and aloha (love) for Hawai‘i’s natural and cultural resources.

The Hawaiian value of hō‘ihi (to treat with reverence and respect), reflected in the ‘ōlelo no‘eau (Hawaiian proverb) “E hō‘ihi aku, e hō‘ihi mai,” meaning “show respect, get respect” represents the core principle of ONHR’s program. Through showing respect, visitors can then be welcomed as guests with a shared kuleana (responsibility) in perpetuating the values and importance of Native Hawaiian traditional knowledge and cultural practices.

HŌ‘IHI Program Grantee Accomplishments

‘Ao‘ao o Nā Loko I‘a o Maui - Kō‘ie‘ie Fishpond Visitor Engagement Program

‘Ao‘ao O Nā Loko I‘a O Maui is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to revitalizing Kō‘ie‘ie Fishpond for educational, archaeological, cultural, and recreational purposes. They offer unique Hawaiian cultural learning experiences and fishpond revitalization opportunities for the community to engage with this important Hawaiian cultural and historical landmark in North Kīhei, Maui. With funding from the HO‘IHI grant program, ‘Ao‘ao O Nā Loko I‘a O Maui was able to continue restoring Kō‘ie‘ie Fishpond. The fishpond crew has been diligently working on restoring the fishpond’s walls in the northern and southern sections and have thus far restored approximately 205 feet of the fishpond’s perimeter. The outreach and education team regularly hosts school groups, community organizations, and visitors to provide educational



Both pictures: Kō‘ie‘ie Fishpond PC: Kaleo Wong, Kauluakalana

opportunities to learn about the fishpond and natural resources in, above, and around it. Kō'ie'ie Fishpond's Visitor Kiosk is staffed and stationed at the fishpond regularly to answer any questions visitors have and to provide educational materials and information.

Hanalei River Heritage Foundation - I Mana Ka 'Āina Visitor Engagement Program

I Mana Ka 'Āina's overarching goal for year 1 in their 2-year grant was to do research and create content for community/visitor engagement and their educational program. The following activities were completed during FY 2023:

- Training and orientation for staff, contractors, and volunteers
- Community meeting
- Develop research and data collection process (create online database)
- Research and archive data to develop curriculum
- Completed data collection and research
- Created online database for information collected
- Content developed focused on agriculture, cultural practices, natural/cultural resources, contemporary uses, and impacts of climate change.

A National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation with the State of Hawai'i Historic Preservation Department (SHPD) is ongoing for this project, with fieldwork limited to educational activities while an archaeological inventory survey is completed on areas of the project deemed adjacent to important historical areas. Activities currently planned for year 2 include the completion of archaeological work and continued operation of a historical interpretive engagement program for visitors.

Hi'ipaka LLC - Hō'ihī no Waimea

HŌ'IHI Grant Program funding has allowed Hi'ipaka LLC, otherwise known as Waimea Valley Park, to implement an artisan program that provides financial support to Native Hawaiian practitioners working at the Waimea Valley Park. Project goals consisted of sharing Native Hawaiian values within each cultural learning experience categorized as a "takeaway." Values are transferrable and help to teach visitors how best to behave and act while at the park, at wahi pana (sacred places), or elsewhere in Hawai'i. Values can easily be



Auntie Bobbie Tate, Hula traditions and mo'olelo (stories)



Marie Cera, Kapa Making

utilized at home as well, after visitors leave Hawai'i and reflect on their visit. Some of the current practices that are conducted include ukulele lessons, ku'i kalo (taro pounding), ulana lau niu (weaving coconut fronds), 'ohe kāpala (bamboo print) making, and Hawaiian weapon makers lashing lei o manō. The project is being fully implemented daily at Waimea Valley Park, with staff seeing an increase in over 600 individual engagements by the artisans per day and a daily average of over 120 "takeaways," well over the project target of 50. The building of a kauhale (traditional house) as well as a hale wa'a (canoe house) was completed for use with the artisan program.

Moanalua Garden Foundation Inc. - 46th Annual Prince Lot Hula Festival

Moanalua Gardens Foundation (MGF)'s 46th Annual Prince Lot Hula Festival took place at the Frank E. Fasi

Civic Grounds on Saturday, July 15, 2023. A total of 25 hālau hula took part in the festival, which also included an open market comprised of Native Hawaiian vendors and cultural practitioner demonstrations.

In FY 2024, the MGF plans to broadcast select performances from the 46th Annual Prince Lot Hula Festival to cable networks in Hawai‘i and online platform audiences. Viewers who tune into this broadcast will be treated to a showcase of hula and Hawaiian culture, featuring performances by twelve Hālau from O‘ahu, Maui, and Hawai‘i Island. The broadcast will also include special stories from cultural practitioners and messages from select kumu (masters/teachers) hula.



A hālau hula dances at the 46th Annual Prince Lot Hula Festival. PC: Kai Markell

PA‘I Foundation - Nānā I Ke Kumu: Look to the Source

Funding received by the HŌ‘IHI Grant Program has allowed PA‘I Foundation to provide financial support to Native Hawaiian artisans to share, perpetuate, and market their products and services. The following artists, events, and organizations have been directly supported through HŌ‘IHI grants:

- Ola Ka No‘eau Gallery at the Bishop Museum – a 3-day event in March 2023, in partnership with the Bishop Museum, featured a display of contemporary Native Hawaiian artists and cultural practitioners. PA‘I Foundation continued to coordinate multiple social events related to the Bishop Museum display, which closed on October 15, 2023.
- Videos of artists at Bishop Museum
- Showcase at Central Pacific Bank (CPB) in downtown Honolulu
- Hapa Haole Hula Celebration at the Royal Hawaiian Center in Helumoa, Waikīkī on August 18 – 19, 2023. Throughout the day, artists and cultural practitioners offered free workshops (with materials provided) to visitors and tourists. The event provided an opportunity to engage with both residents and visitors to Hawai‘i to share and perpetuate the unique Hawaiian culture.
- I Le‘a Ka Hula Mākeke, a 2-day event at the Royal Hawaiian Marketplace that showcased hālau hula, cultural practice demonstrations such as carvings and lei making, an open market with Native Hawaiian vendors, as well as other demonstrations.

Wai‘anae Economic Development Council (WEDC) - E Mau Ke A‘o: Sustaining the Cultural Practitioner

The key purpose of E Mau Ke A‘o was to perpetuate Hawaiian culture for future generations by enhancing the entrepreneurial capacity of cultural practitioners. This program utilized a Hawaiian culture-based curriculum that bridged Western business and finance with the values and traditions of Kanaka Maoli (people of Native Hawaiian descent). This concept provides a space where cultural practitioners could be more open and receptive to the idea of creating sustainable revenue streams while overcoming discomfort and trauma associated with western business practices. The key activities of the program that were performed included hosting 2 in-person full-day workshops in Wai‘anae, O‘ahu that helped cultural practitioners create a business entity, modularize their ‘ike (cultural knowledge) for live and online delivery, and obtained one-on-one assistance for business development and digitization of content to be used on digital platforms. WEDC also provided a modified seminar for a group of practitioners on Hawai‘i island to create their videos. An online web-hub for practitioners to access and market their services is also currently in development.

Through this project, cultural practitioners have gained the skills needed to diversify their income streams, perpetuate ancestral knowledge in a financially sustainable way, and provide a business model for future practitioners. The larger community also benefited from the increased availability of cultural workshops (both in person and virtual).

WEDC staff also participated in the OIED Grantee Conference in Cherokee, North Carolina from August 1-3,

2023. The group presented on their E Mau Ke A‘o framework and were participants in a plenary discussion on tourism impacts in Hawai‘i.

Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association (NaHHA) - Festival Event Engagement Program for Visitors & Native Hawaiian Cultural Practitioners

NaHHA had several delays in planning during FY 2023. Their grant has been extended to enable them to put on their Ho‘okipa Hawai‘i Weekend on February 3rd and 4th, 2024. This two-day family-friendly event is dedicated to the inclusion of Hawaiian culture and knowledge systems through the medium of Hawaiian cultural practitioners, exhibits, demonstrations and vendors that engages community and visitors in a greater understanding and appreciation for the Native Hawaiian culture and Hawai‘i.

FY 2023 Grantee Selections

In FY 2023, ONHR fulfilled the core principles of the [HŌ‘IHI Grant Program](#) by providing grant funding to successful NHO applicants who met at least one (but in most cases, more than one) of the criteria for the following priorities:

- Uplift, perpetuate, and in some cases revive, traditional Native Hawaiian practices (e.g., ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, kapa making, lauhala and kaula weaving, hula, amongst many others, including lesser known practices) by creating opportunities for demonstrations, visitor education on history, usage, and protocols, or hands-on visitor participation experiences in the cultural practice;
- Support the maintenance, enhancement, and protection of Hawai‘i’s natural resources, wahi kūpuna, and wahi pana at areas impacted by tourism;
- Enhance the entrepreneurial capacity for the Native Hawaiian community by helping create business opportunities in the visitor industry, offering business development training, or stimulating economic activity; or
- Undertake related activities with visitors that convey respect and reaffirm the principle of reciprocity to the place, resources, and traditional knowledge holders and practitioners.

There were a total of 8 grant awards for FY 2023. The following NHOs were awarded funds through the HŌ‘IHI Grant Program:

1. Hawai‘i Land Trust: Cultural Ecological Preservation and Education programs at community preserve on O‘ahu, Maui, and Kaua‘i
2. Kāko‘o ‘Ōiwi: Implementation of Māhuahua ‘Ai O Hoi and a visitor engagement program
3. Waimea Hawaiian Homestead Association: Aloha Festivals, Island of Hawai‘i
4. Mālama Loko Ea Foundation: Holole‘a Wahi Pana & Kele A‘o Program (culturally informed virtual tours, service learning, festivals, storytelling events)
5. Hi‘ipaka LLC: Hō‘ihi Hou Waimea
6. Kohala Center Inc: Guiding respectful visitor engagement at Kahalu‘u Bay Bay through ‘āina stewardship practices: ho‘olauna, kilo, hana and mo‘olelo
7. Hōlani Hana Inc: Kahea a Kauiki: Restoring the Rightful Role of Native Hawaiian communities to Navigate the Stewardship of our Sacred Places
8. Hana Arts: Hana No‘eau: A Native Hawaiian Arts & Culture Education Program

Section III – OIED NATIVE Act Funding Summary

The summary on the next page highlights the OIED’s annual funding and activities in FY 2023.⁹

⁹ For details on past NATIVE Act funding and accomplishments, please see the OIED’s [2020-2022 NATIVE Act Congressional Report](#).

Table 3.1 FY 2023 OIED NATIVE Act Initiatives and Funding		
OIED Initiative		FY 2023 Funding
<u>NATIVE Act Management Planning</u>		
Administrative Oversight	The OIED Central Office staff provides management and oversight of this program, including day-to-day management of its wide range of activities, creation of new initiatives and monitoring methods, conducting internal control reviews, and other operational matters.	\$1,438,656
Grant Solutions - Application Review Module	The OIED collaborated with the Department of Health and Human Services to utilize GrantSolution’s Application Review Module (ARM) to systematize the grant review process enabling the OIED to professionally evaluate Tribal tourism applications, utilizing tourism subject matter experts as contracted application reviewers to obtain detailed, written summary reports for all Tribal applicants.	\$146,563
<u>Tourism Pilot Projects</u>		
AIANTA	FY 2023 funds were transferred to the AIANTA cooperative agreement enabling the entity to continue their work through April 2024. The funding also supported a Request for Proposals (RFP) for NATIVE Act capacity building grants, which are due for submission February 2024.	\$528,630
AIANTA Evaluation	The OIED issued an RFP to engage an organization or contractor that has experience working with Federal funds and programs. The selected contractor provided an audit/assessment in FY 2023 of the Cooperative Agreement (CA) recipient to better measure the recipient’s capacity to carry out the scope of work in the CA and accomplish the defined workplan deliverables and metrics, as well as budgeting and reporting as required by recipients who receive Federal funds. The contract also provided a breakdown of funding sources and staff allocation specifically related to the use of Federal funds under the CA.	\$28,050
George Washington University - Indigenous Tourism Collaborative of the Americas (ITCA)	George Washington University worked with the Organization of American States and the OIED to launch an online digital repository of resources in FY 2023 for Indigenous tourism and community development, an effort supported by this funding. The funding also supported ongoing strengthening of the ITCA. The aim of the ITCA is to establish a network of Indigenous leaders and tourism industry organizations to exchange ideas and experiences and foster dialogue to drive collaborative action to support sustainable development and growth in Indigenous communities in the United States and throughout the Americas.	\$312,101
Pilot Technical Assistance Program - Tribal Tech TA Contract	Technical assistance contract focused on supporting Tribes, Tribal organizations, and NHOs with tourism pre-application training, post award support, and training.	\$770,000
<u>Tribal Tourism Grant Programs</u>		
OIED Tribal Tourism Grant Program - Feasibility Studies/Business Plans	The OIED combined FY 2022 and 2023 funds to award 30 grants for a total of \$3M (\$2M from FY 2022 and \$1M from FY 2023).	\$1,000,000
FY NATIVE Act Total		\$4,224,000

Section IV – USDA Forest Service NATIVE Act Projects and Progress

In FY 2023 the FS received a \$2 million Congressional allocation of NATIVE Act funds. Accomplishments are summarized below.

FS Recreation, Heritage, & Volunteer Resources (RHVR) and Office of Tribal Relations (OTR) worked with AIANTA through an ongoing partnership agreement on the selection of the awardees of \$1,575,000 in Congressionally-allocated FY 2023 NATIVE Act funds. FS received 15 proposals from Tribes and Tribal organizations across the Nation. Awardees were selected and notified in mid-December 2023, with project completion dates set for December 2025. AIANTA retained a modest administrative fee for its substantial work on co-administering the funding program. The awardees are listed in the table below:

Table 4.1 FY 2023 FS Tribal Tourism and Recreation Program Awards			
Tribes or Tribal Organization	Project	Location	Award
Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository	Keneq—Fire Gallery: Sharing Our Living Traditions	Kodiak, Alaska	\$ 143,460
Bay Mills Indian Community	Shingabawassin “Spirit Stone Trail” Initiative	Bimley, Michigan	\$ 129,000
Chief Joseph Foundation	Chief Joseph Foundation’s Equestrian Trails Project for Cultural Heritage Tourism and Local Economic Development on the Nez Perce Reservation and Surrounding Community in North Central Idaho	Lapwai, Idaho	\$ 240,565
Organized Village of Kasaan	Kasaan Tourism Improvement Project	Kasaan, Alaska	\$150,000
Pit River Tribe KWAHN Corporation	4 Corners Property Cultural Tourism Master Planning	Burney, California	\$ 175,000
Snoqualmie Indian Tribe	Snoqualmie Tribe Ancestral Lands Movement Capacity Investment	Snoqualmie, Washington	\$ 250,000

Because no proposals were received from FS Rocky Mountain (R2), Southwestern (R3) and Intermountain (R4) regions in FY 2023, \$335,115 was held back and will be awarded in those regions in the FY 2024 Request for Proposals.

In the FS’ Region 2, also known as the Rocky Mountain Region, \$250,000 of the FY 2023 FS NATIVE Act Congressional allocation went to the Pactola Visitor Center. Region 2 encompasses national forests and grasslands in Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, and most of South Dakota and Wyoming. The Pactola Visitor Center is associated with the Black Hills National Forest and is located in Rapid City, South Dakota. The Black Hills Parks & Forests Association will work in collaboration with the participating Tribes in management and operation of the Pactola Visitor Center. The initial step will be to hire two to three Tribal members from the participating Tribes to begin development of the natural and cultural interpretation program and to become knowledgeable in the management and operation of the Pactola Visitor Center while assisting in those duties. The FS staff will share responsibility for developing and providing a range of technical assistance for visitor information programs, materials, interpretive displays, and interactions with visitors based on negotiations with the Tribes. Tribes engaged in the project are the Rosebud Sioux Tribe/Sicangu Lakota, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Pine Ridge/Oglala Lakota, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, and Crow Creek Sioux Tribe.

In summer FY 2023 the first progress reports from some of the FY 2022 awardees were received. Summaries from the reports are as follows:

Table 4.2 FY 2022 FS Tribal Tourism and Recreation Semi-Annual Awardee Reporting Progress as of FY2023 Q3	
AWARDEE	SUMMARY OF PROGRESS
Metlakatla Tribe	Report Received <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary: In the process of securing project quotes. No Project Funds Expended.
Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe	Report Received <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary: Planning meetings have been initiated. No Project Funds Expended.
La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians	Report Received <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary: Request for Proposals for Architect has been issued. No Project Funds Expended
United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma (UKB)	Report Received <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary: The project has identified three restoration sites with two of the three sites completed for debris removal and invasive species removal to make ready for public signage. Reported \$9,885.35 in Project Funds Expended.

At the time of the first draft of this report, AIANTA was awaiting reports from the following awardees:

- Pueblo of Picuris
- Jemez Enterprises

On September 29, 2023, the FS and the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska agreed to co-steward the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area. A memorandum of understanding was signed formalizing the agreement. It enables the FS and Tribes to collaborate on management decisions and future plans at the recreational area, and ensures the FS will consider the traditional, cultural, and historical knowledge of the Tribe. The agreement also includes the co-stewardship of the Mendenhall Glacier Campground.

Section V – FY 2024 NATIVE Act Next Steps

Below are steps that the DOI and the FS will take in FY 2024 to implement the NATIVE Act.

OIED’s FY 2024 NATIVE Act efforts are summarized below.

- The OIED concluded PTAP’s FY 2023 NATIVE Act funding on February 29, 2024 for PTAP’s tourism-specific activities through contractor Tribal Tech, LLC.
- As part of their cooperative agreement with the OIED, AIANTA launched two new activities in FY 2024: Capacity-Building Grants for Tribes, Tribal organizations, and NHOs and a Cultural Tourism Navigator Pilot to provide direct outreach and support to OIED Tribal Tourism grantees. The Capacity Building Grants are specific to cultural tourism development, growth, or enhancement. AIANTA offered five awards within the OIED’s five geographic zones (Alaska, Hawaii, Southwest, Northwest, and Eastern zones). The six-month Cultural Tourism Navigator Pilot program provided access to resources, technical assistance, and training for

the OIED’s FY 2021 and 2022 Tribal Tourism grantees. The goal is to support grantees in developing an implementation plan as they complete their tourism feasibility studies and business plans.

- In FY 2024, the OIED plans to award a new cooperative agreement that will continue to build, enhance, and expand Federal Tribal tourism inclusive of technical assistance, assets, and other potential resources needed to empower Tribes and Tribal organizations to participate fully in the tourism industry. In addition, the recipient of this award will support the Federal government-to-government relationships with Tribal governments. The successful entity or organization will also support a five-zone implementation in the OIED’s five geographic zones. The five-zone approach may be implemented through sub-awards and partnerships with subject matter experts or consultants that may include, but are not limited to universities and colleges, private consulting firms, and non-academic non-profit entities. This new OIED cooperative agreement will commence in summer 2024 and support the NATIVE Act for the next five years. The OIED plans to select and announce the new awardee in summer 2024.
- In FY 2024, the OIED will award an additional cohort of Tribal tourism grants focused on tourism business implementation. This newly designed grant will help move Tribes and Tribal organizations who have already completed either a feasibility study or business plan to the next stage of business implementation.

In FY 2024, ONHR will support the following NATIVE Act efforts:

- ONHR released its next HŌ‘IHI Grant Program NOFO on April 3, 2024, with a closing date of June 3, 2024.
- In coordination with DOI’s NPS and ONHR, support for two cooperative agreements with NHOs in Hawai‘i will continue. One agreement is with the Edith Kanaka‘ole Foundation for the restoration and utilization of traditional placenames at Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park. The other agreement is with the Historic Hawai‘i Foundation to engage NHOs in a stewardship training program that engages visitors and residents in the preservation of culturally-significant sites in Hawai‘i.

FS NATIVE Act efforts in FY 2024 include the following:

- Members of both RHVR and OTR attended and presented at the 2023 American Indian Tourism Conference at the Choctaw Nation on October 2-6, 2023 to raise awareness about NATIVE Act funding opportunities and other opportunities to partner with the FS on improving Tribal representation and co-stewardship of FS-managed lands.
- RHVR will work to prioritize funding to document progress at NATIVE Act project sites in FY 2025.
- The FS received a \$1 million Congressional allocation of NATIVE Act funds for FY 2024. The FY 2024 call for proposals will start on June 3rd, with the following tentative timeline:

DATE	ACTION
6.3.2024	RFP posted on AIANTA’s website at AIANTA.org
6.10.2024	Webinar to go over the funding opportunity with panelist awardees from previous AIANTA/USFS NATIVE Act Awards
6.25.2024	Written questions regarding the RFP due to AIANTA
7.10.2024	AIANTA responds to all written questions submitted by deadline with all submitted questions and answers posted on AIANTA’s website.
7.26.2024	Deadline to submit proposals to AIANTA
Aug/Sept 2024	Successful applicants notified/award agreements sent
Sept/Oct 2024	Award agreements signed

Additional Considerations for FS

- The current interest and partnership proposals from Tribes to work with the FS exceeds Congressional appropriations for the NATIVE Act.
- The NATIVE Act does not give granting authority to USDA. As a result, the FS established a partnership agreement with AIANTA in 2022 to avoid preexisting statutory restrictions.