

# IMPACT REPORT 2025

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# A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Change has been a defining theme. We've navigated shifts in funding priorities and adapted our programs to ensure continuity and sustainability. We also experienced staffing changes that brought both challenges and opportunities; allowing us to welcome new team members whose fresh perspectives strengthen our collective capacity and reaffirm our commitment to culturally grounded, community-driven public health.

Through it all, our focus has remained clear: advancing health equity for Indigenous peoples through education, collaboration, and advocacy. Our work continues to be guided by the values that define us: respect, integrity, and the understanding that wellness is rooted in culture and community.

As we look ahead, we are committed to building on this foundation, adapting to change, pursuing innovative funding strategies, and nurturing the next generation of Indigenous public health leaders. Together, we will continue to honor our mission and ensure that our work remains rooted in the voices and needs of the people we serve.

Thank you for your continued partnership and belief in our shared vision. I am honored to lead this organization into its next chapter.

Chi-miigwech for supporting this important work.

**Ashley Littlewolf**  
AIPHRC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# *Mission*

To address American Indian public health disparities through assistance, policy, self-determination analysis, education, research, and programming—partnering with tribes across North Dakota, the Northern Plains, and the nation.

# *Vision*

To improve the delivery of culturally appropriate public health services by engaging Tribal partners, respecting Tribal sovereignty, and promoting self-determination.

# Year of Impact

Initiative	Details	Outcome	
24	<b>Indigenous Food Sovereignty Emerging Leaders Program (IFSELP)</b>	Hosted 2 <sup>nd</sup> cohort of IFSELP on campus at NDSU	24 Tribal participants from 11 out of the 12 IHS Regions immersed in food sovereignty community-driven
15	<b>HBI Road Map Champions for AI/AN Peoples</b>	Support Tribally-led health programs to address brain health in their communities	15 Champions advanced community-focused population health approaches related to dementia
18	<b>BCBS of ND Spark Health Innovation</b>	Develop a Native-led community advisory board to co-create a health community toolkit	Convened 18 Native community members to support the toolkit creation
47	<b>Health Services Rural Outreach</b>	Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Child Health and Community Health Representative symposium	47 attendees from across North Dakota to strengthen maternal, child, and community health systems

# Year of Impact

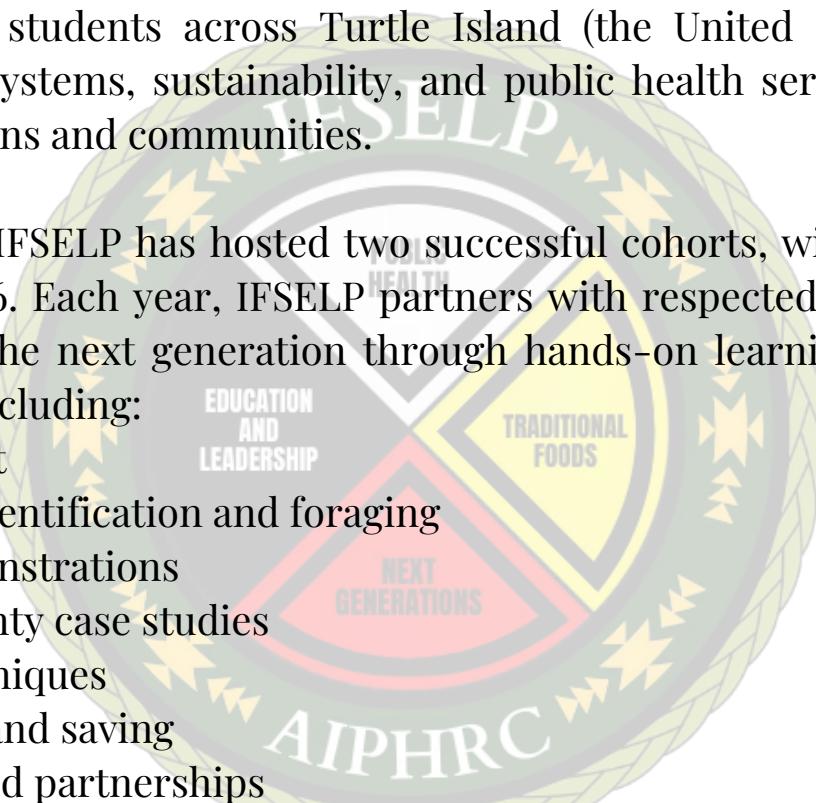
	<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>TCU &amp; Tribal Community Outreach</b>	Engaged with TCUs, Tribal nations and communities through ND, SD, and MN	Built and renewed relationships across the TCUs and Tribal communities
<b>7</b>	<b>National, State, and Local conferences</b>	Native Grown & Gathered, National Tribal Health Conference, Tribal Leaders Summit, AIHEC, Native Nutrition, RES	Outreach and engagement for IFSELP, presented on AIPHRC impact and public health initiatives, recruitment for IFSELP, and built more partners
<b>2</b>	<b>Community Public Health</b>	Creation of new position with AIPHRC dedicated to community driven services	Expand our internal capacity to be in community with our valued partners and Tribal members
<b>1,000</b>	<b>Technical Assistance</b>	Over 1,000 hours of technical assistance provided through various initiatives	Culturally relevant TA, expand capacity building and bridging and supporting community-led Tribal health initiatives

# INDIGENOUS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM (IFSELP)

IFSELP is a unique, fully funded, three-week summer program designed to create opportunities for students across Turtle Island (the United States) to explore Indigenous food systems, sustainability, and public health services in rural and urban Tribal Nations and communities.

Founded in 2023, IFSELP has hosted two successful cohorts, with Cohort 3 set to begin in June 2026. Each year, IFSELP partners with respected Food Sovereignty leaders to guide the next generation through hands-on learning, presentations, and workshops, including:

- Buffalo harvest
- Native plant identification and foraging
- Cooking demonstrations
- Food sovereignty case studies
- Research techniques
- Seed keeping and saving
- Community-led partnerships
- Indigenous Food Sovereignty history in Turtle Island
- And more



**121** TOTAL APPLICANTS

**35** TOTAL TRIBAL REPRESENTATION

**41** TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

**7** TOTAL TRIBAL NATIONS VISITED

**25** TOTAL WORKSHOPS

**39** TOTAL SPEAKERS

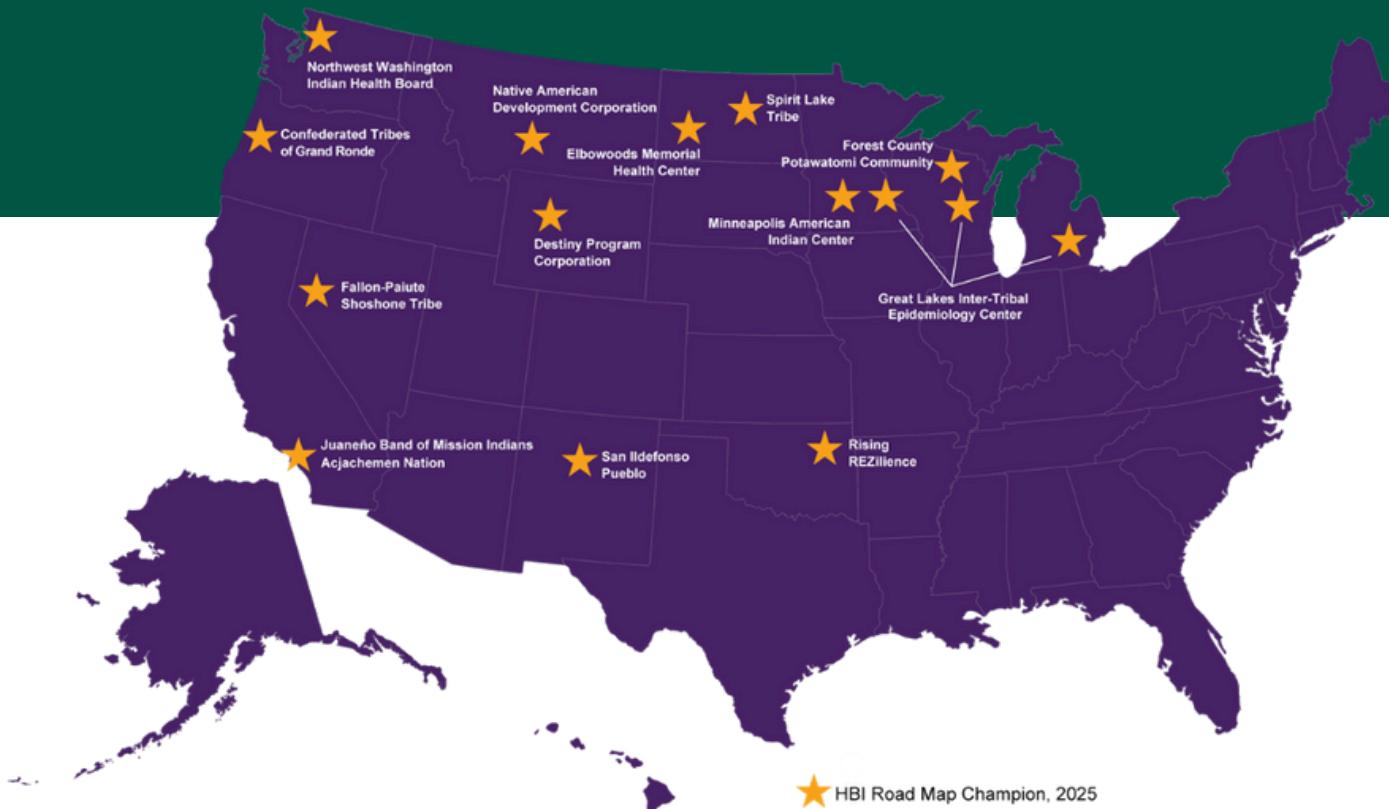
## **What IFSELP cohort participants have shared about the program:**

“This program helped reminded me of who I really am at heart.”

“It’s helped me become mindful in what I eat and how to incorporate traditional foods that help me feel healthier, and it’s helped me to think of ideas to help the community in ways that I learned from the program.”

“The biggest change I noticed in myself from this program was increasing the broadness of my awareness and intentions”





★ HBI Road Map Champion, 2025

# HEALTHY BRAIN INITIATIVE (HBI) ROAD MAP FOR AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVES

**The Healthy Brain Initiative (HBI) Road Map Champions Program supports tribally-led health programs and urban Indian organizations in implementing public health strategies to address brain health, caregiving and dementia in their community.**

The HBI Road Map Champion will receive training and technical assistance that enables them to:

- Develop expertise in Alzheimer's and dementia across primary, secondary and tertiary prevention levels with emphasis on a strengths-based approach that honors American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) cultures and incorporates the indigenous and social determinants of health.
- Share dementia-related knowledge with community members and other program or organizational staff.
- Assess local needs and strengths related to dementia.

Partnering  
tribal communities  
to improve overall  
healthcare delivery  
of American Indians

[ndsu.edu/cphrc](http://ndsu.edu/cphrc)

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## HEALTHCARE TOOLKIT: NATIVE ADVISORY BOARD

Through support from Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota's SPARK Health Innovation Grant, AIPHRC is facilitating the creation of a Community Resource Toolkit designed to:

- Co-design and distribute a culturally informed Healthcare Access Toolkit that helps Native/Indigenous individuals and families in the Fargo-Moorhead area navigate healthcare services more effectively, promoting equity, trust, and utilization of care.
- Form a community advisory board of Native stakeholders (e.g., elders, health workers, youth) to guide the assessment and toolkit creation. Ensure that all data collection is trauma-informed, consent-based, and culturally respectful.

We are hopeful that the toolkit will be published and disseminated in late 2026, ensuring Tribal communities have practical, culturally relevant tools.

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# HEALTHCARE TOOLKIT: NATIVE ADVISORY BOARD



**The toolkit is being developed by a local Native Community Advisory Board comprised of the following members:**

Amy Barcenas, Chippewa Cree  
Whitney Johnson, Oglala Sioux Tribe  
Sadie Nelson, Sokaogon Chippewa  
Emily Sargent, White Earth  
Johnette Gillis, MHA  
Darlene Boyle, Crow Tribe  
Jacob Davis, Turtle Mountain  
Lenore King, Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate  
Kathy Benjamin, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe  
Sandra Berlin, White Earth  
Jordan Joshua, Spirit Lake  
Anna Johnson, Turtle Mountain



## TRIBAL MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH & COMMUNITY HEALTH REPRESENTATIVE

**The purpose of this project is to expand access to maternal and infant health services and to reduce American Indian maternal and infant morbidity in rural tribal nations in North Dakota (ND).**

- The annual Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Child Health Symposium “sells out” each year with 50 professionals who work in Tribal maternal, infant health receiving education, sharing best practices, and problem-solving issues in the delivery of maternal and infant health services in rural communities.
- The annual Community Health Representative Symposium provides community health representatives with educational opportunities to expand their knowledge and skills in providing maternal and infant preventative health and chronic illness care in rural communities. Participants share best practices and collaborate on problem-solving care delivery challenges in rural areas.

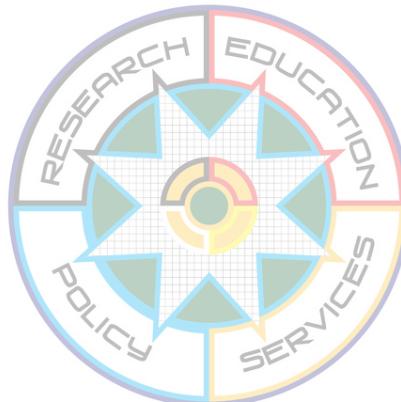
# LOOKING AHEAD

AIPHRC enters the coming year focused on strengthening Tribal public health systems, expanding educational opportunities, and deepening culturally grounded programming. Our priorities reflect community guidance and a commitment to sovereignty, wellness, and Indigenous knowledge.

## Key Priorities for the Year Ahead

- **Renew Mission & Vision:** Engage Tribal partners and staff in refining organizational direction.
- **Expand Youth Leadership (IFSEL Cohort 3):** Offer new hands-on food sovereignty and public health experiences.
- **Release Food Sovereignty Toolkit & Online Modules:** Provide culturally relevant resources for Tribal food systems and public health
- **Grow the HBI Road Map Champions Program:** Launch Cohort 2 with expanded TA and dementia-focused education.
- **Publish the Community Resource Toolkit:** Finalize and disseminate the Native-led tool under the SPARK Innovation grant.
- **Strengthen Organizational Capacity:** Expand staffing, diversify funding, and increase technical assistance.
- **Enhance Outreach & Storytelling:** Elevate Indigenous public health through events, digital media, and presentations.

**Together, these priorities position AIPHRC to continue uplifting Tribal Nations and supporting Indigenous-led public health solutions.**



# Acknowledgements

We honor the elders, leaders,  
and youth who guide and  
inspire our work.

Chi-miigwech to our staff,  
advisory board, partners, and  
funders, for their trust and  
collaboration.

