

Media Contact:
Barbara Soulé
(406) 259-3525

barbara@indianag.org



USDA Selects Intertribal Agriculture Council to Create National Intertribal Food Business Center

Billings, Mont. May 3, 2023—The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) as one of 12 finalists for the [USDA Regional Food Business Centers](#) (Regional Food Centers). As the only finalist selected for its national reach, IAC will establish the National Intertribal Food Business Center to provide technical assistance and capacity-building opportunities for American Indian/Alaska Native food producers with increased access to USDA resources.

"With over 35 years of experience in food and business development work, IAC is excited about this opportunity to expand access to Native food producers and Tribal food systems that empower self-determination in Indian Country," said Kari Jo Lawrence, Executive Director of the Intertribal Agriculture Council. "Our collaboration with the USDA will heal broken food systems and build sustainable economic growth for our communities."

"USDA looks forward to partnering with the Intertribal Agriculture Council on this innovative and unprecedented initiative," said Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Jenny Lester Moffitt. "By leveraging the expertise soon to be available through these Regional Food Centers, USDA will be able to offer unique support for local food systems development across the country."

IAC will partner with other Native organizations—including Akiptan, the Indian Land Tenure Foundation, and the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative—to develop a coordinated national food system development plan that supports the growth and expansion of American Indian/Alaska Native food businesses. The focus will be on small- and mid-sized food and farm businesses, with 68% of the total funding allocated for capacity-building awards.

"The National Intertribal Food Business Center is a historic investment in improving Indian Country's food security and access while also supporting Tribal economic development through food and agriculture," said Carly Griffith Hotvedt, IFAI Associate Executive Director. "Under the leadership of our Executive Director, Erin Parker, IFAI is grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with IAC and other partners through our policy and legal research as well as educational programming and outreach to Indian Country."

"Akiptan is incredibly excited to partner with IAC on this project," said Skya Ducheneaux, Akiptan Executive Director. "We're looking forward to further advancing the Native food system and taking steps towards food sovereignty in Indian Country."

The Intertribal Agriculture Council is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 1987 to pursue and promote the conservation, development, and use of land-based agricultural resources vital to the economic and social well-being of American Indian/Alaska Native peoples. Along with its philanthropic partners, including the Native American Agriculture Fund, IAC is dedicated to establishing a new model of philanthropy that replaces dominant-culture practices and builds healthy, sustainable relationships to uplift Native businesses and organizations. To learn more about IAC's work and the National Intertribal Food Business Center, visit indianag.org.

####