



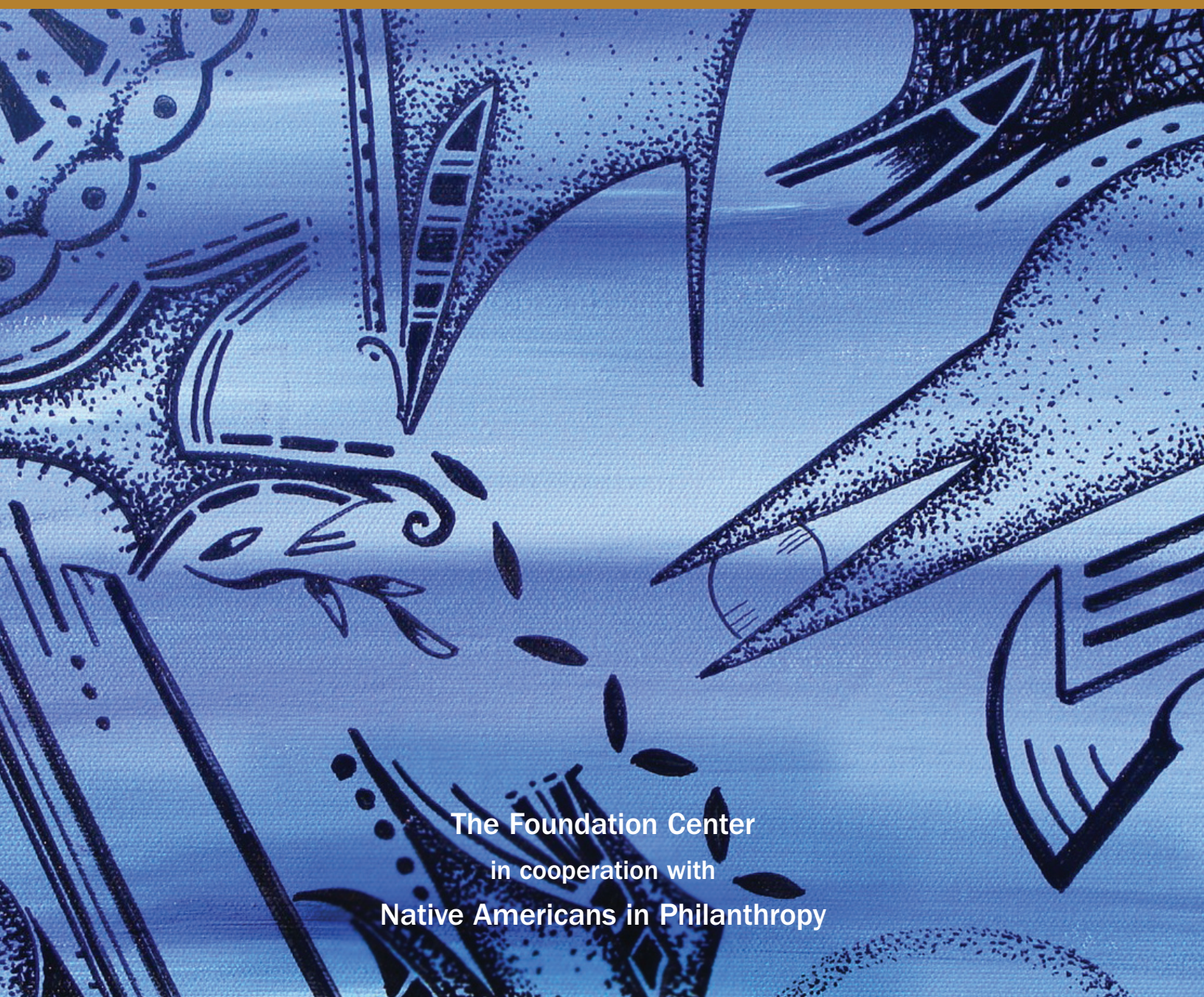
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Native Americans  
in Philanthropy

# Foundation Funding for Native American Issues and Peoples



The Foundation Center  
in cooperation with  
Native Americans in Philanthropy



## About the Foundation Center

Established in 1956 and today supported by close to 550 foundations, the Foundation Center is the leading source of information about philanthropy worldwide. Through data, analysis, and training, it connects people who want to change the world to the resources they need to succeed. The Center maintains the most comprehensive database on U.S. and, increasingly, global grantmakers and their grants — a robust, accessible knowledge bank for the sector. It also operates research, education, and training programs designed to advance knowledge of philanthropy at every level. Thousands of people visit the Center's web site each day and are served in its five regional library/learning centers and its network of 450 funding information centers located in public libraries, community foundations, and educational institutions nationwide and beyond. For more information, please visit [foundationcenter.org](http://foundationcenter.org) or call (212) 620-4230.

## About Native Americans in Philanthropy

Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP) board and members hold a vision of healthy and sustainable communities enhanced by the Native spirit of generosity.

This vision inspires and motivates member engagement through our mission which is to advance philanthropic practices grounded in Native values and traditions.

To advance the mission of NAP, our framework for the future is centered on the following three strategic directions:

- ◆ Engage Native and non-Native practitioners of philanthropy to focus on sustainable Native communities;
- ◆ Educate to instill Native philanthropic values into contemporary practice; and
- ◆ Empower Native philanthropic leadership to be effective practitioners.

NAP celebrates the rich history that Native peoples have in sharing their wealth and caring for their communities. NAP is comprised of individuals who seek to enrich the lives of Native people through bridging organized philanthropy and indigenous communities in order to foster understanding and increase effectiveness. For more information about Native Americans in Philanthropy visit [nativephilanthropy.org](http://nativephilanthropy.org) or call (612) 724-8798.

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# Foundation Funding for Native American Issues and Peoples

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**Native Americans in Philanthropy**

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## **Key Findings**

- ◆ Since 2000, the share of overall foundation giving targeting Native Americans has declined
- ◆ The top 10 funders for Native Americans in 2009 accounted for close to three-fifths of grant dollars
- ◆ Education received the largest share of foundation giving for Native Americans in 2009
- ◆ Most foundation funding for Native Americans in 2009 supported organizations not affiliated with tribal governments
- ◆ Recipients located in three of the country's seven major regions (the Northeast, Midwest, and Southwest) captured more than two-thirds of grant dollars benefiting Native Americans in 2009

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Examines current and historical trends to understand why foundation funding benefiting Native Americans remains low and provides examples of foundations actively working to support Native communities.

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Compares the funding priorities of mainstream and Native-controlled foundations and Native communities, documents the need for unrestricted support, and suggests ways to address low levels of grantmaking for rural Native Americans.

# Foreword

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Native Americans in Philanthropy is pleased to partner with the Foundation Center to produce this research. This report and partnership has afforded us the opportunity to update and share much needed research about the philanthropic investment in Indian Country and Native issues. We offer a special thanks to the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation for its commitment to addressing issues of equity within the philanthropic sector. We are honored to have Louis Delgado and Sarah Hicks provide reflections and essays in this report.

This report supports and expands on the research conducted in 2004, *Large Foundations' Grantmaking to Native America*, by Sarah Hicks and Miriam Jorgensen. This report revisits (and in some areas expands on) the data analyzed. It should be noted that some of the methodology and information addressed differs from the *Large Foundations' Grantmaking to Native America* report. This includes:

- ◆ Updated trend data for giving to Native communities, organizations, and causes in the 2000s and presenting a current (2009) picture;
- ◆ Use of more sophisticated coding and analysis to examine distribution of funding by issue area and subpopulations;

- ◆ Differentiation of multi-benefit grants from grants that benefit only Native American causes and concerns; and
- ◆ A comparison of Native priorities to foundation funding by issue area.

While we acknowledge this is only a cursory look at investments by the philanthropic sector to Native America, the data highlights a lack of resources and investments into the Native community. We encourage the use of this report to expand your knowledge, improve and deepen partnerships in your work, and join NAP in supporting the vision of healthy and sustainable communities enhanced by the Native spirit of generosity.

Carly Hare (Pawnee/Yankton)  
Executive Director  
Native Americans in Philanthropy



# 1 Trends in Foundation Giving Benefiting Native Americans through 2009

By Reina Mukai and Steven Lawrence

The analysis presented in this chapter serves to benchmark larger U.S. foundation support benefiting Native Americans over the past decade. The Foundation Center looks forward to working with Native Americans in Philanthropy to update this analysis periodically, and the Center will continue to provide annual updates on overall foundation giving benefiting Native Americans.

## Change in Funding Benefiting Native Americans, 2000 to 2009

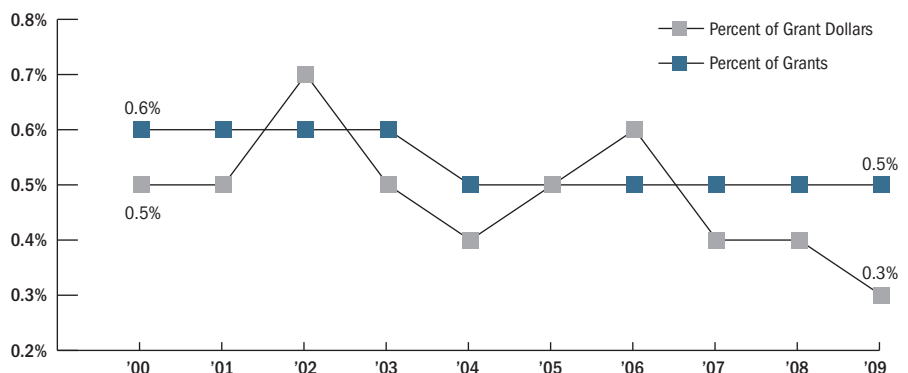
Over the past decade, U.S. foundation support explicitly targeting Native Americans has declined as a share of total foundation giving. In 2000, funders included in the Foundation Center's annual sample allocated 0.5 percent of their grant dollars to organizations and activities that could be identified as benefiting Native Americans (Figure 1). (See "About the Foundation Center Grants Sample" for details.) Despite recording increased shares in a couple of the intervening years, the share of overall grant dollars focused on Native Americans had slipped to 0.3 percent as of 2009. The share of number of grants also declined marginally during this period, from 0.6 percent to 0.5 percent.

Actual dollars awarded by sampled foundations for the benefit of Native Americans varied widely from year-to-year over the past decade.

Annual funding surpassed \$100 million in two of the years, primarily as a result of exceptional giving by a few foundations, but totaled a far lower \$68 million in 2009 (Figure 2). Total grant dollars targeting Native Americans were down 30.8 percent in the latest year. The number of foundation grants benefiting Native Americans remained far more consistent during much of this period. However, after reaching a peak of 836 grants in 2008, the number declined more than 10 percent to 749 in 2009.

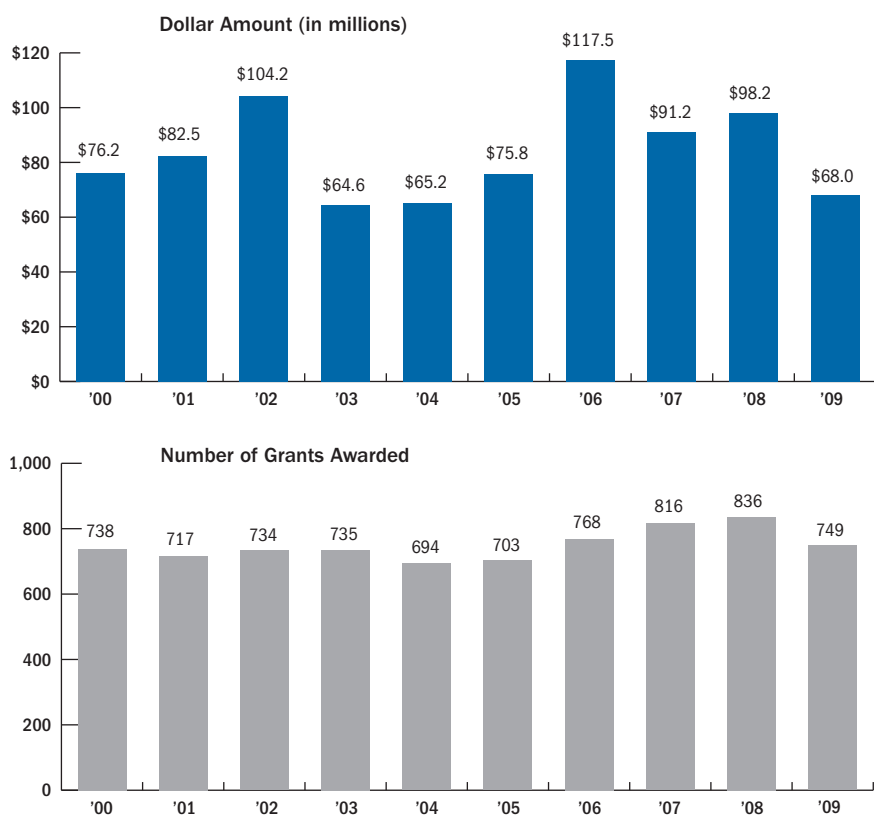
Part of the drop in funding benefiting Native Americans in the latest year undoubtedly resulted from the severe economic downturn. Giving fell 14.1 percent across-the-board in the 2009 sample. Yet the more extreme decline in grant dollars targeting Native Americans, and the fact that no single large funder was responsible for most of this reduction, suggests that there may have been a disproportionate impact on funding for Native Americans. However, given the notable past fluctuations in

FIGURE 1. Share of Foundation Giving Benefiting Native Americans, 2000 to 2009



SOURCE: The Foundation Center, 2011. Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a sample of over 1,000 larger foundations.

**FIGURE 2. Foundation Giving Benefiting Native Americans, 2000 to 2009**



SOURCE: The Foundation Center, 2011. Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a sample of over 1,000 larger foundations.

## About the Foundation Center Grants Sample

The information presented in this report is based on the Foundation Center's annual grants sets. Each set includes all of the grants of \$10,000 or more awarded to organizations by over 1,000 of the largest U.S. foundations, including the top 15 funders in most states. It accounts for more than half of the total grant dollars awarded by the universe of independent, corporate, community, and grantmaking operating foundations in that year. Specifically, the 2009 grants set included 154,664 grants awarded by 1,384 foundations totaling \$22.1 billion. Grants to individuals and grants from donor-designated and restricted funds of community foundations were not included.

## IDENTIFYING FUNDING BENEFITING NATIVE AMERICANS

Each grant included in the Foundation Center's annual grants set is coded for its subject or purpose, recipient organization type, type of support provided, population group served, and geographic focus. Grants are coded as serving Native Americans if the foundation has provided a grant description or related information that specifies this population group, or if the recipient organization receiving the grant includes an explicit focus on Native Americans within its stated mission. However, these data most likely do not capture all giving by sampled foundations intended to benefit Native Americans. For example, many foundations do not provide grant descriptions. In addition, the Foundation Center does not automatically code grants based on the demographic characteristics of the recipient communities, although those communities may in fact have a substantial concentration of Native Americans. Conversely, a number of grants included in this analysis may benefit multiple ethnic and/or racial population groups, including Native Americans. Therefore, all of the grants tracked in this analysis should not be considered to provide a benefit exclusively for Native Americans.

giving levels, it will take at least a few more years of data to determine whether the latest reduction is part of a larger trend or simply reflects normal year-to-year variation.

## Top Funders for Native Americans

Foundations that awarded the highest levels of support for Native Americans dominated giving for this population group. In 2009, the top 10 funders provided close to three-fifths (59.5 percent) of grant dollars benefiting Native Americans, awarding a combined 172 grants totaling \$40.5 million (Table 1). Among the remaining 225 foundations that provided support targeting this population group in the latest grants sample, the median number of grants awarded by each foundation was one and the median grant value was \$50,000.

The New Jersey-based Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) ranked as the top funder by grant dollars supporting Native American causes in 2009, with 23 grants totaling \$10.2 million. Over the past ten years, two foundations have ranked as the top funder of Native Americans more than once: the RWJF (four times) and the Ford Foundation (three times).

Support for Native Americans represents a small fraction of overall giving even for most of the top funders of this population group. For example, the top 10 funders in 2009 allocated a median 4.1 percent share of their giving for Native Americans. Among all 235 foundations in the sample that awarded at least one grant benefiting Native Americans, the median share was 0.6 percent of grant dollars awarded. Eight funders awarded at least 10 percent of their grant dollars for this population group, while one provided more than 50 percent. Among top funders by *share* of giving for Native Americans, the Alaska-based Fund for Indigenous Rights and the Environment

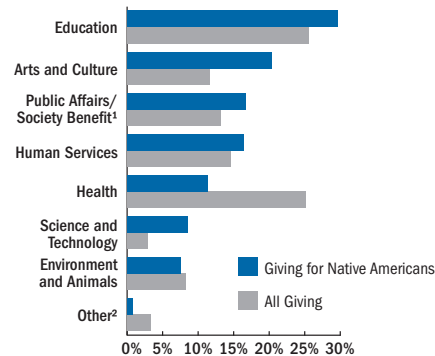


ranked first, with two-thirds of grant dollars targeting Native Americans, followed by the Alaska Conservation Foundation and Montana-based O. P. and W. E. Edwards Foundation (Table 2).

### Funding by Issue Area

Consistent with the funding priorities of U.S. foundations overall, sampled foundations directed the largest share of their 2009 grant dollars serving Native Americans for education (Figures 3 and 4 and Table 3). However, many of these grants included support for multiple population groups, including Native Americans. For example, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awarded several grants for its Summer Medical and Dental Education Program, a six-week academic enrichment program for undergraduate college students from minority groups, rural areas, and economically disadvantaged backgrounds who are interested in pursuing careers in medicine or dentistry. Among large education grants tracked in the latest sample that focused exclusively on Native Americans was a \$402,200 award from the Lumina Foundation for Education to Pablo, Montana-based Salish Kootenai College

**FIGURE 3. Foundation Giving Benefiting Native Americans versus All Giving by Major Subject, 2009**

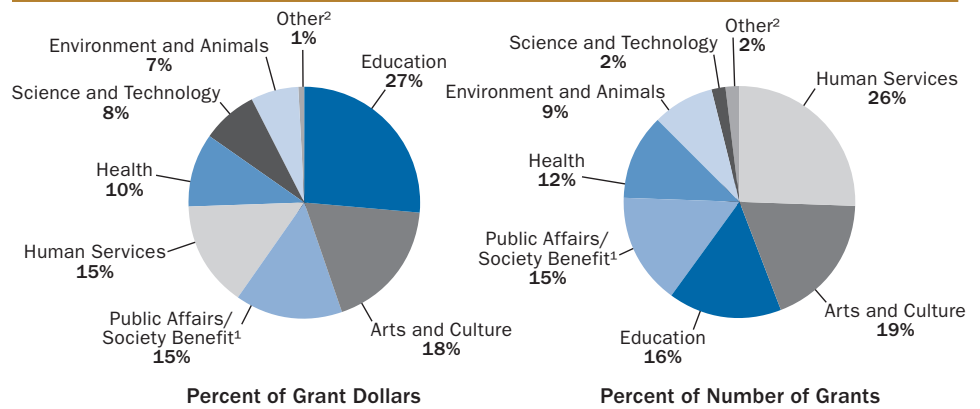


SOURCE: The Foundation Center, 2011. Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a sample of 1,384 larger foundations. Due to rounding, figures may not add up.

<sup>1</sup>Includes civil rights and social action, community improvement and development, philanthropy and voluntarism, and public affairs.

<sup>2</sup>Includes religion and the social sciences.

**FIGURE 4. Foundation Giving Benefiting Native Americans by Major Subject, 2009**



SOURCE: The Foundation Center, 2011. Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a sample of 1,384 larger foundations. Due to rounding, figures may not add up.

<sup>1</sup>Includes civil rights and social action, community improvement and development, philanthropy and voluntarism, and public affairs.

<sup>2</sup>Includes religion and the social sciences.

**TABLE 1. Top 10 Foundations by Giving Benefiting Native Americans**

Foundation	State	No. of Grants	Amount	%	Giving for Native Americans as % of Foundation's Overall Giving
1. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	NJ	23	\$10,235,559	15.1	3.5
2. Ford Foundation	NY	28	8,909,500	13.1	2.0
3. W.K. Kellogg Foundation	MI	17	5,575,950	8.2	2.5
4. Alfred P. Sloan Foundation	NY	3	4,683,541	6.9	8.7
5. Marguerite Casey Foundation	WA	19	2,789,500	4.1	9.2
6. Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation	MI	1	2,350,000	3.5	4.8
7. Christensen Fund	CA	36	2,003,804	2.9	13.4
8. Otto Bremer Foundation	MN	38	1,672,166	2.5	7.6
9. Lilly Endowment	IN	1	1,147,500	1.7	0.4
10. California Wellness Foundation	CA	6	1,085,000	1.6	2.3
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>172</b>	<b>\$40,452,520</b>	<b>59.5</b>	
All other foundations		577	\$27,508,964	40.5	
<b>Total</b>		<b>749</b>	<b>\$67,961,484</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

SOURCE: The Foundation Center, 2011. Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a sample of 1,384 larger foundations.

**TABLE 2. Top 10 Foundations by Share of Giving Benefiting Native Americans, 2009**

Foundation	State	No. of Grants	Amount	Giving for Native Americans as % of Foundation's Overall Giving
1. Fund for Indigenous Rights and the Environment <sup>1</sup>	AK	1	\$ 60,000	66.7
2. Alaska Conservation Foundation <sup>1</sup>	AK	2	641,383	34.3
3. O. P. and W. E. Edwards Foundation <sup>1</sup>	MT	15	478,751	23.3
4. Con Alma Health Foundation <sup>1</sup>	NM	4	92,000	20.0
5. Lannan Foundation <sup>1</sup>	NM	18	861,000	19.3
6. Rasmuson Foundation <sup>1</sup>	AK	22	691,970	17.3
7. Theodore R. & Vivian M. Johnson Scholarship Foundation	FL	10	1,021,251	14.0
8. Christensen Fund	CA	36	2,003,804	13.4
9. Marguerite Casey Foundation	WA	19	2,789,500	9.2
10. Alfred P. Sloan Foundation	NY	3	4,683,541	8.7

SOURCE: The Foundation Center, 2011. Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a sample of 1,384 larger foundations. Includes only those foundations awarding at least \$50,000 to Native Americans.

<sup>1</sup>While these foundations do not rank among the top 1,000 by giving nationally, they have been included in the sample because they rank among the top 15 foundations by total giving in their state.



**TABLE 3. Foundation Giving Benefiting Native Americans by Subject, 2009**

Subject	Amount	%	No.	%
<b>Arts and Culture</b>				
Arts—Multipurpose	\$ 6,805,850	10.0	54	7.2
Media and Communications	1,443,780	2.1	26	3.5
Visual Arts/Architecture	527,500	0.8	5	0.7
Museum Activities	2,403,295	3.5	25	3.3
Performing Arts	598,113	0.9	10	1.3
Humanities	130,200	0.2	8	1.1
Historic Preservation	528,007	0.8	11	1.5
<b>Total Arts and Culture</b>	<b>\$12,436,745</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>18.6</b>
<b>Education</b>				
Policy, Management, and Information <sup>4</sup>	\$ 98,500	0.1	3	0.4
Elementary and Secondary	4,788,500	7.0	38	5.1
Vocational and Technical	34,000	0.1	2	0.3
Higher Education	1,978,600	2.9	20	2.7
Graduate and Professional	9,831,026	14.5	26	3.5
Adult and Continuing	13,000	0.0	1	0.1
Library Science/Libraries	68,000	0.1	2	0.3
Student Services	732,600	1.1	17	2.3
Educational Services	511,800	0.8	10	1.3
<b>Total Education</b>	<b>\$18,056,026</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>15.9</b>
<b>Environment and Animals</b>				
Environment	\$ 4,418,138	6.5	58	7.7
Animals and Wildlife	234,000	0.3	6	0.8
<b>Total Environment and Animals</b>	<b>\$ 4,652,138</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>8.5</b>
<b>Health</b>				
General and Rehabilitative				
Hospitals and Medical Care	\$ 2,712,436	4.0	38	5.1
Reproductive Health Care	467,513	0.7	4	0.5
Public Health	2,797,075	4.1	27	3.6
Other	120,134	0.2	4	0.5
<b>General and Rehabilitative Subtotal</b>	<b>6,097,158</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>9.7</b>
Specific Diseases				
Medical Research	113,500	0.2	5	0.7
Mental Health	420,000	0.6	1	0.1
<b>Total Health</b>	<b>\$ 6,958,234</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>12.1</b>
<b>Human Services</b>				
Crime, Justice, and Legal Services	\$ 686,027	1.0	10	1.3
Employment	325,000	0.5	8	1.1
Food, Nutrition, and Agriculture	1,202,795	1.8	28	3.7
Housing and Shelter	672,000	1.0	19	2.5
Safety and Disaster Relief	19,233	0.0	1	0.1
Recreation and Sports	108,495	0.2	5	0.7
Youth Development	2,931,500	4.3	30	4.0
Human Services—Multipurpose	4,082,585	6.0	92	12.3
<b>Total Human Services</b>	<b>\$10,027,635</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>25.8</b>
<b>Public Affairs/Society Benefit</b>				
Civil Rights and Social Action	\$ 5,205,450	7.7	25	3.3
Community Improvement and Development	3,730,711	5.5	65	8.7
Philanthropy and Voluntarism	279,500	0.4	7	0.9
Public Affairs	994,179	1.5	18	2.4
<b>Total Public Affairs/Society Benefit</b>	<b>\$10,209,840</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>15.4</b>
<b>Science and Technology</b>				
General Science	\$ 104,716	0.2	3	0.4
Technology	4,998,150	7.4	9	1.2
Life Science	60,000	0.1	2	0.3
<b>Total Science and Technology</b>	<b>\$ 5,162,866</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<b>Social Sciences</b>				
Social Sciences and Economics	\$ 48,000	0.1	2	0.3
Interdisciplinary/Other	150,000	0.2	1	0.1
<b>Total Social Sciences</b>	<b>\$ 198,000</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.4</b>
<b>Religion</b>	<b>\$ 118,000</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>\$ 142,000</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0.9</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$67,961,484</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>100.0</b>

SOURCE: The Foundation Center, 2011. Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a national sample of 1,384 larger U.S. foundations. Includes only grants that could be identified as specifically benefiting Native Americans or that were awarded to organizations that include Native Americans among the populations they explicitly serve.

<sup>4</sup>Includes a broad range of supporting activities or organizations by 18 “common codes.”

to identify factors that improve the postsecondary retention and success of American Indian students enrolled in developmental studies courses. Finally, similar to national trends, the largest share of grants focused on Native Americans supported human services.

Yet a marked difference arises with the second-ranked priority of arts, culture, and media. Sampled foundations directed roughly 18 percent of both their grant dollars and grants for Native Americans for arts and culture in 2009, far surpassing the shares of funding supporting the arts in the overall sample (10.5 percent of grant dollars and 13.4 percent of grants). The Lilly Endowment provided the largest grant in this area: \$1.1 million in general operating support to the Indiana-based Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art.

Public affairs/society benefit ranked third among grantmaking priorities in 2009 with 15 percent of dollars. More than half of funding in this area focused on civil rights and social action, led by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's \$1.8 million grant to the National Congress of American Indians to support efforts of Native American tribes to strengthen their governance. Support for community improvement and development accounted for another third of dollars, led by the M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust's \$224,500 grant to the Potlatch Fund to establish a development program to serve Native Americans.

Among the four other areas that benefited from the bulk of funding targeting Native Americans in 2009, foundations provided notably larger shares of grant dollars for science and technology compared to their overall giving (7.6 percent versus 2.6 percent), although most of this resulted from a single award: the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation's \$4.5 million grant to National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering to fund new obligations in the Minority Ph.D. Program and the Sloan Indigenous Graduate Program.

Foundations also awarded a relatively larger share of Native American-focused grant dollars for human services. Among the largest grants awarded was a \$200,000 grant from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation to the Native American Youth and Family Center for the Life Skills and Economic Security Project for Native Americans. By comparison, foundations directed proportionately smaller shares of funding for Native Americans in the areas of health and the environment and animals.

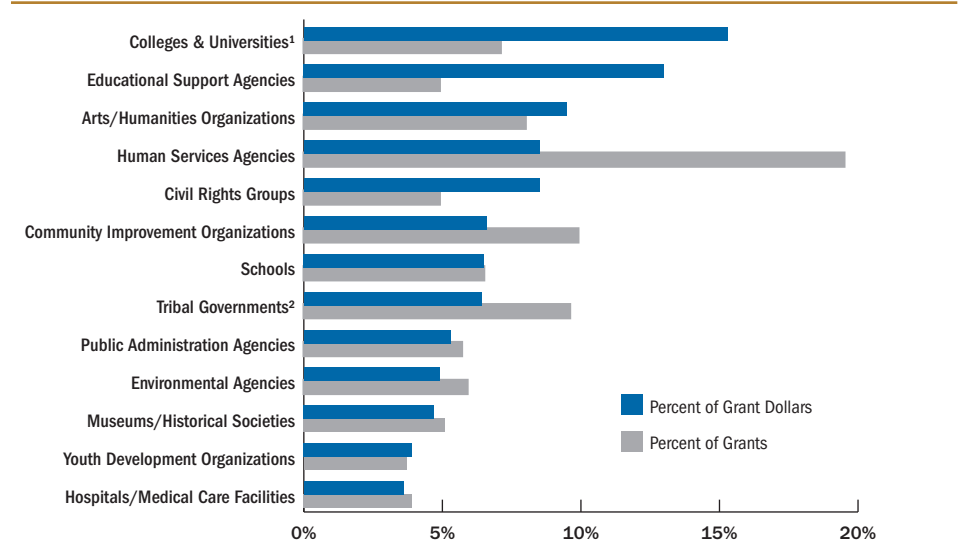
### Funding by Recipient Type

Most foundation support benefiting Native Americans funds the work of organizations not affiliated with tribal governments. Just 6.4 percent of grant dollars and 9.6 percent of grants in the 2009 sample were awarded to entities affiliated with tribal governments, such as the Pueblo of San Felipe (NM), Blackfeet Reservation Development Fund (MT), and Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe (WA) (Figure 5). They also include colleges, human services agencies, and other organizations under the purview of tribal governments.

Among the other recipients of support benefiting Native Americans, colleges and universities and educational support agencies—which include educational alliance organizations and those established as the nonprofit fundraising arms of education institutions—accounted for the largest share of grant dollars. By share of number of grants, human services agencies captured 19.5 percent, the largest share, but just 8.5 percent of grant dollars. The difference in proportion of grant dollars received versus number of grants received reflects the fact that human services grants tend to be smaller on average than grants made to other types of recipients.<sup>1</sup>

Table 4 ranks the top recipients of foundation giving benefiting Native Americans in 2009, led by the National Action Council for Minorities in

**FIGURE 5. Foundation Giving Benefiting Native Americans by Recipient Type, 2009**



SOURCE: The Foundation Center, 2011. Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a sample of 1,384 larger foundations. Includes recipient types representing more than 3 percent of grant dollars.

<sup>1</sup>Does not include tribal-run colleges.

<sup>2</sup>Recipient types coded with "Tribal Governments" auspice codes also include organizations such as colleges and universities, human services agencies, civil rights groups, etc., that are under the purview of the tribe.

**TABLE 4. Top 25 Recipients of Foundation Giving Benefiting Native Americans, 2009**

Foundation	State	No. of Grants	Amount	%
1. National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering	NY	1	\$4,518,400	6.6
2. Native Arts and Cultures Foundation	MN	1	3,500,000	5.1
3. Rehoboth Christian School	NM	4	2,556,000	3.8
4. National Congress of American Indians	DC	5	1,938,950	2.9
5. Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art	IN	6	1,440,000	2.1
6. Indian Law Resource Center	MT	2	1,250,000	1.8
7. American Indian College Fund	CO	15	1,243,000	1.8
8. Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development	CA	7	1,070,000	1.6
9. National Conference of State Legislatures	CO	1	1,000,000	1.5
10. Association of American Medical Colleges	DC	1	965,181	1.4
11. University of California <sup>1</sup>	CA	5	870,000	1.3
12. University of Washington	WA	2	825,000	1.2
13. Grand Canyon Trust	AZ	3	668,850	1.0
14. University of Arizona Foundation	AZ	2	649,000	1.0
15. Nunamta Aulukestai	AK	1	631,383	0.9
16. Tohono Oodham Community Action	AZ	3	630,000	0.9
17. Howard University	DC	1	600,000	0.9
18. Duke University	NC	1	600,000	0.9
19. University of Nebraska Medical Center	NE	1	600,000	0.9
20. Columbia University	NY	1	600,000	0.9
21. University of Virginia	VA	1	600,000	0.9
22. University of Texas Health Science Center	TX	1	599,980	0.9
23. Case Western Reserve University	OH	1	599,544	0.9
24. University of Louisville Research Foundation	KY	1	598,123	0.9
25. Foundation of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey	NJ	1	581,090	0.9
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>68</b>	<b>\$29,134,501</b>	<b>42.9</b>
All other recipients		681	38,826,983	57.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>749</b>	<b>\$67,961,484</b>	<b>100.0</b>

SOURCE: The Foundation Center, 2011. Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a sample of 1,384 larger foundations.

<sup>1</sup>Includes grants to multiple campuses.

Engineering and the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation. Interestingly, both of these organizations received just one grant related to Native Americans, but these grants were sufficiently large to propel them to the top of the list. Among recipients benefiting from the greatest number of grants targeting Native Americans in the 2009 sample were the American Indian College Fund (15 grants totaling \$1.2 million) and Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development (seven grants totaling \$1.1 million).

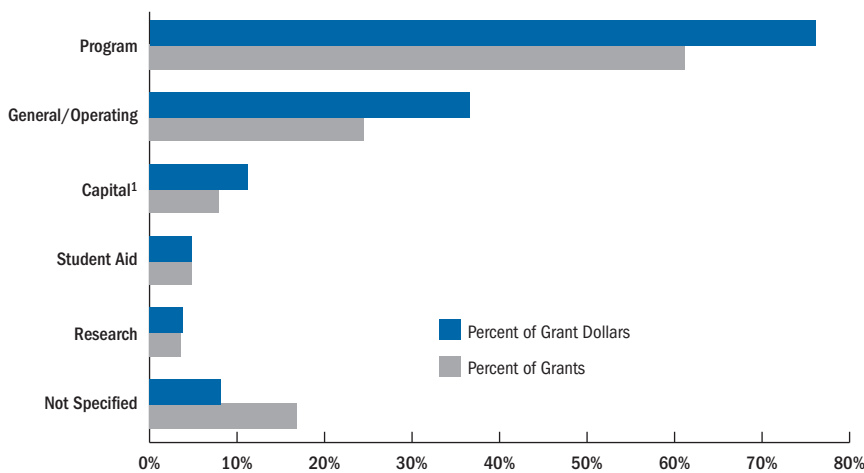
## Types of Support Provided

Most foundation funding for Native Americans in 2009 (76.1 percent of grant dollars) targeted specific programs and projects, although a substantial share (36.6 percent) also provided general operating support (Figure 6). Some grants provided both—among these was a \$631,383 grant from the Alaska Conservation Foundation to Nunamta Aulukestai for the Bristol Bay Protection Campaign to build regional support and for organizational capacity.

Grant dollars benefiting Native Americans were far more likely than overall giving in the 2009 sample to

provide program support (76.1 percent versus 51 percent), general operating support (36.6 percent versus 21.7 percent), and also student aid funds (4.9 percent versus 3.5 percent). They were somewhat less likely to provide capital support (11.2 percent versus 13.5 percent) and much less likely to fund research (3.8 percent versus 13.8 percent). The largest capital grant benefiting Native Americans in the latest sample was the Ford Foundation's \$3.5 million grant to the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation for endowment support to leverage additional resources to revitalize, strengthen, and promote Native American arts and culture and operations support to build the foundation's capacity and establish programs.

**FIGURE 6.** Foundation Giving Benefiting Native Americans by Types of Support, 2009



SOURCE: The Foundation Center, 2011. Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a sample of 1,384 larger foundations. A grant may occasionally be for multiple types of support and would therefore be counted more than once.

<sup>1</sup>Includes endowment funds.

## Population Groups Served

Of the foundation funding in the 2009 sample coded as including a benefit for Native Americans, about one-third of grant dollars (33.9 percent) and one out of five grants (23.1 percent) were also coded as targeting a particular subset of the Native American population. For example, roughly one-third of grant dollars (33.3 percent) and grants (36.4 percent) specifically focused on Native Americans who are economically disadvantaged. The largest of these awards was the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's \$520,446 grant to the National Indian Education Association to continue participation in the Campaign for High School Equity (CHSE) to build political/public will around College and Career Ready (CR) policies and inform Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization.

Another 15.5 percent of grant dollars and 21.8 percent of grants were directed to benefit Native American children and youth. Among these grants was a \$300,000 award from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps to promote

## Native American Participation on Mainstream Foundation Boards

A new report by Nielsen and Associates, *Changing the Native Philanthropic Landscape: A Study on Mainstream Philanthropic Board Participation*,<sup>1</sup> examines the challenges and opportunities in creating pathways for Native American participation on mainstream foundation boards. It also offers recommendations for supporting those serving on boards. Through a survey of emerging and established Native leaders and interviews with directors of mainstream foundation boards, the report focuses on six primary findings: barriers to access despite interest in participation, other constraints to participation (e.g., lack of experience, personal time constraints), the importance of outreach, relationship building, drawing on cultural values, and encouraging personal achievement for community benefit.

1. Nielsen, Julie E. et al., *Changing the Native Philanthropic Landscape: A Study on Mainstream Philanthropic Board Participation*, a report commissioned by Native Americans in Philanthropy, 2010.



leadership development, education, and employment skills training among Hispanic and Native youth in northern New Mexico by supporting the United We Serve Summer Service program. Women and girls, which accounted for about 3 percent of grant dollars and 5 percent of grants for Native Americans

in 2009, were the only other population group to be targeted with more than 1 percent of grant dollars.

Finally, just over three-quarters (77.4 percent) of 2009 grant dollars benefiting Native Americans were intended for the exclusive benefit of

this population group. The balance included support for Native Americans along with other racial or ethnic groups for example, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grants awarded to several universities for its Summer Medical and Dental Education Program noted earlier in the report.

**TABLE 5. Foundation Giving Benefiting Native Americans by Region, 2009**

Region	No. of Foundations Awarding Grants	Grants Received				Grants Awarded			Percent of Total AI/AN Population <sup>1</sup>	Percent of Total AI/AN Population
		Amount	%	No. of Grants	%	Amount	No. of Grants	Population of American Indian/Alaskan Native <sup>1</sup>		
<b>Northeast</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>\$15,161,733</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>\$27,893,129</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>466,455</b>		<b>11.8</b>
Connecticut	3	567,716		1		115,000	3	24,488	0.7	
Maine	4	230,000		8		196,592	6	13,156	1.0	
Massachusetts	5	645,000		8		225,000	7	38,050	0.6	
New Hampshire	2	25,000		1		47,000	3	7,885	0.6	
Vermont	1	—		—		45,000	3	6,396	1.1	
New Jersey	4	581,090		1		10,497,059	31	49,104	0.6	
New York	26	6,225,900		19		15,628,641	72	171,581	0.9	
Pennsylvania	4	25,000		1		75,000	4	52,650	0.4	
Delaware	4	—		—		230,000	5	6,069	0.8	
Virginia	3	1,344,950		7		49,950	3	52,864	0.7	
District of Columbia	5	5,492,077		22		375,000	5	4,775	0.8	
Maryland	2	25,000		1		408,887	10	39,437	0.7	
Rhode Island <sup>2</sup>	—	—		—		—	—	10,725	1.0	
<b>Midwest</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>\$16,250,331</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>27.4</b>	<b>\$18,555,115</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>607,330</b>		<b>15.3</b>
Illinois	12	680,000		6		972,237	17	73,161	0.6	
Indiana	5	1,549,831		8		2,425,700	11	39,263	0.6	
Michigan	10	410,000		2		8,596,950	30	124,412	1.3	
Ohio	2	613,061		2		58,517	5	76,075	0.7	
Wisconsin	3	472,000		7		62,000	3	69,386	1.3	
Iowa	3	—		—		151,134	3	18,246	0.6	
Minnesota	16	8,602,076		109		5,777,077	113	81,074	1.6	
Nebraska	3	720,000		9		65,000	5	22,204	1.3	
North Dakota	3	787,627		13		80,000	3	35,228	5.5	
South Dakota	4	2,415,736		49		366,500	12	68,281	9.0	
<b>Northwest</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>\$ 9,511,726</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>\$ 7,205,450</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>472,417</b>		<b>11.9</b>
Idaho	3	110,000		5		193,900	7	27,237	2.1	
Montana	6	4,026,937		38		608,251	23	66,320	7.4	
Wyoming	—	65,000		2		—	—	15,012	3.0	
Alaska	4	2,313,662		47		1,422,353	26	119,241	19.0	
Oregon	7	512,000		12		445,000	13	85,667	2.5	
Washington	8	2,484,127		29		4,535,946	43	158,940	2.7	
<b>Pacific</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>\$ 7,262,847</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>\$ 6,976,416</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>652,444</b>		<b>16.5</b>
California	20	7,102,847		97		6,866,416	120	627,562	1.9	
Hawaii	2	160,000		3		110,000	2	24,882	2.1	
<b>Southeast</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>\$ 1,906,423</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>\$ 2,593,051</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>371,814</b>		<b>9.4</b>
Florida	4	73,000		2		1,136,251	14	117,880	0.7	
Georgia	3	—		—		258,000	6	53,197	0.6	
North Carolina	6	1,210,300		7		1,137,800	23	131,736	1.6	
Kentucky	1	598,123		1		36,000	2	24,552	0.6	
Alabama	1	25,000		1		25,000	1	44,449	1.0	
Mississippi <sup>2</sup>	—	—		—		—	—	19,555	0.7	
South Carolina <sup>2</sup>	—	—		—		—	—	27,456	0.7	
Tennessee <sup>2</sup>	—	—		—		—	—	39,188	0.7	
West Virginia <sup>2</sup>	—	—		—		—	—	10,644	0.6	
<b>Southwest</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>\$15,385,096</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>\$ 2,833,570</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>646,383</b>		<b>16.3</b>
Arizona	7	4,232,059		55		244,775	12	292,552	5.7	
Colorado	8	3,374,341		43		618,295	18	79,689	1.9	
Nevada	—	60,000		2		—	—	42,222	2.1	
New Mexico	6	7,193,696		86		1,455,500	41	191,475	10.5	
Utah	5	525,000		13		515,000	12	40,445	1.8	
<b>Central</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>\$ 2,483,328</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>\$ 1,904,753</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>747,527</b>		<b>18.9</b>
Missouri	1	10,000		1		20,000	2	60,099	1.1	
Arkansas	3	—		—		451,735	9	37,002	1.4	
Louisiana	1	65,000		2		50,000	1	42,878	1.0	
Oklahoma	4	1,112,622		14		259,000	6	391,949	11.4	
Texas	11	1,295,706		15		1,124,018	14	215,599	1.0	
Kansas <sup>2</sup>	—	—		—		—	—	—	—	
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>\$67,961,484</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>\$67,961,484</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>3,964,370</b>		<b>100.0</b>

SOURCE: The Foundation Center, 2011. Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a sample of 1,384 larger foundations.

<sup>1</sup>Based on 2000 American Indian/Alaskan Native population as reported by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, as of February 2002.

<sup>2</sup>There were no grants awarded or received that benefited Native American causes by these states that were represented in the circa 2009 grants sample.

## Geographic Focus of Funding Targeting Native Americans

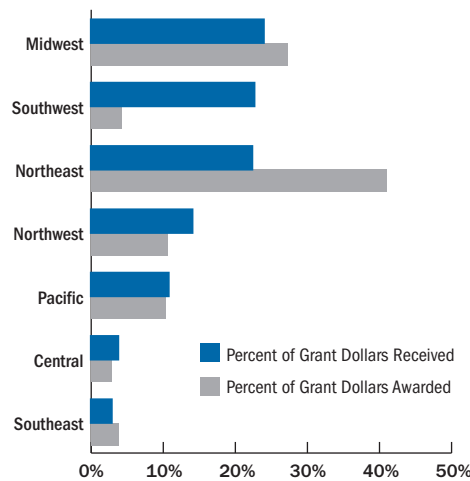
Recipient organizations and tribal governments located in three of the country's seven major regions captured the bulk of funding intended explicitly to include a benefit for Native Americans (Figure 7 and Table 5). Overall, grant dollars in the 2009 sample primarily focused on recipients in the Midwest (23.9 percent), Southwest (22.6 percent), and Northeast (22.3 percent). The Northwest region captured another 14 percent of grant dollars, followed by the Pacific region (10.7 percent). The Central and Southeast regions benefited from a combined 6.5 percent of grant dollars. Among individual states, those receiving the largest shares of grant dollars included Minnesota (12.7 percent), New Mexico (10.6 percent), and California (10.5 percent).

Funders located in the Northeast provided by far the largest share of grant dollars (41 percent) targeting Native American causes and concerns in the 2009 sample. Among the top 10 funders for Native Americans, three were based in the Northeast. Grantmakers located in New York State alone accounted for nearly a quarter of grant dollars (23 percent). The Midwest ranked second with 27.3 percent of grant dollars for Native Americans. Foundations based in the Northwest and Pacific regions each provided roughly 10 percent of grant dollars, while those in the Southwest, Southeast, and Central regions allocated between 3 and 4 percent each.

## Giving to Rural Areas

Rural communities benefited from about one-quarter (25.8 percent) of grant dollars targeting Native Americans in 2009 (Figure 8).<sup>2</sup> Among the largest grants benefiting rural communities was the Blandin Foundation's \$555,000 award to the University of Minnesota for project support for the Native Youth Leadership Program in rural Minnesota.

**FIGURE 7. Foundation Giving Benefiting Native Americans by Major Region, 2009**

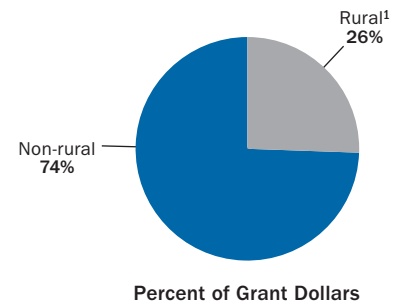


SOURCE: The Foundation Center, 2011. Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a sample of 1,384 larger foundations. See Table 5 for regional breakdowns.

## Endnotes

1. A separate analysis of grants of less than \$10,000 that were included in the Foundation Center's database and provided a specified benefit for Native Americans typically offered either general or unspecified support for human services organizations, arts/humanities organizations, and educational institutions.
2. Grants were identified as serving rural communities if they supported rural development, specified serving a rural area in their grant description, included the term "rural" in any part of the grant record, or if the recipient organization was located in a county identified as rural by the U.S. Census Bureau.

**FIGURE 8. Rural and Non-rural Foundation Giving Benefiting Native Americans, 2009**



SOURCE: The Foundation Center, 2011. Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a sample of 1,384 larger foundations.

<sup>1</sup>Grants were identified as rural if the grant was coded with a geographic focus serving a rural area, had the keyword "rural" in the grant record, had a rural development recipient or activity code, or the recipient organization was located in a county identified as rural by the U.S. Census Bureau.

## The Role of Tribal Funds

Private and community foundations represent only one source of institutional philanthropic support for Native Americans. A number of tribal nations have established grantmaking funds to support activities in areas ranging from the arts to education to the environment.<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Center currently tracks eight of these funds, with the largest being the Minnesota-based Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux (Dakota) Community Contributions Program. Over the past 13 years, the SMSC Contributions Program has donated more than \$193 million to Indian tribes, Native American organizations, charitable organizations, and scholarships. It awarded

\$30.3 million in 2009. Other funds maintain a broader grantmaking focus. For example, the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund supports organizations involved with arts and culture, pre-K and K-12 education, youth athletics, the environment, and wildlife conservation in Washington State, with an emphasis on King, Skagit, and Snohomish counties. In 2009, the fund reported total giving of \$2.8 million.

1. For more information on tribal funds and other Native American-controlled grantmakers, see Delgado, L.T. et al., *A Demographic Profile of Independently Incorporated Native American Foundations and Selected Funds in the United States*. Minneapolis, MN: Native Americans in Philanthropy, 2005.



# 2 A Call to Action: The Need for More Funding Benefiting Native Americans

By Louis T. Delgado

“These reports...all reach a similar conclusion that funding benefiting Native Americans is low.”

## Why Does Foundation Funding for Native Americans Remain Low?

After two decades of education and advocacy in the philanthropic community to generate more funding for Native American causes and concerns, total giving continues to remain only a fraction of 1 percent. While a small number of foundations have given generously for Native causes, the overall low level of support is troubling and is perceived by Native people as demonstrating a lack of foundation interest in their plight and efforts to rebuild communities.

The first study conducted on funding for Native causes was prepared by William Brescia in 1990. Brescia presented his findings at the founding meeting of Native Americans in Philanthropy, held in Chicago that year. Shockingly, his study revealed that less than two-tenths of one percent of foundation giving went to support Native American causes during the previous four and one-third years, and that a significant number of those grants were awarded to non-Native-controlled organizations.<sup>1</sup> The study recommended an increase in funding to a level at least comparable to the proportionate size of the Native population, which, if achieved, would grow to more than five times the level of funding at the time. Unfortunately, in spite of an increasing number of sympathetic and supportive voices, both within and outside of philanthropy, an adequate increase in funding never came close to becoming a reality.

“To reach a level of equity, funding for [Native Americans] would have to grow to more than five times the 2009 level.”

In a subsequent study by Hicks and Jorgensen in 2005, foundation funding for Native causes during the 1990s was only slightly better, staying in the range of two-tenths to three-tenths of one percent for most of the decade. One year, 1996, experienced a more significant jump to one-half of one percent, only to decline in subsequent years.<sup>2</sup> New data in the current study by the Foundation Center shows the decade (2000–2009) again experienced an additional increase in giving to benefit Native Americans, staying in the range of four-tenths to seven-tenths of one percent in all but one year, 2009, when it fell back to three-tenths of one percent. Differences in research methodology may account for some of the variation in findings between these reports. However, they all reach a similar conclusion that funding benefiting Native Americans is low.

While it is important to recognize improvement in the level of support when it occurs, on a percentage basis, support falls far short for the Native population, currently estimated nationwide at 1.6 percent by the U.S. Census Bureau.<sup>3</sup> To reach a level of equity, funding would have to grow to more than five times the 2009 level, the same rate of growth recommended in 1990.

It appears many foundations give little credence to recommendations that the aggregate giving level should, at a minimum, be at or near population percentages. Some funders have even argued it is not a good way to evaluate giving and that it is not good philanthropy. However, in the absence



**“Are Native causes perceived by foundation staffs and boards as less central to the core mission of their foundations...?”**

of any other generally accepted formula, aggregate funding based on population provides at least one barometer for determining philanthropy’s commitment to Native populations. Perhaps a clarion call to increase foundation funding proportionate to the population would move those foundations doing little to nothing to do more meaningful giving, and encourage those foundations doing something to do more.

Another concern related to giving for Native activities is the reoccurring peaks and valleys that appear every few years as funding levels increase for a period of time, followed by a similar period of decline. These uneven waves of investment undoubtedly affect stability in the field. While economic conditions in the country contribute to this fluctuation in giving to all funded programs, the impact on Native programs should be examined. For example, giving benefiting Native Americans dropped a whopping 30.8 percent from 2008 to 2009, but only 14.1 percent overall among the foundations analyzed in this study. Further, according to *Giving USA*, total giving among all foundations dropped only 8.6 percent in 2009.<sup>4</sup>

The year 2009 witnessed the most severe economic recession since the Great Depression and one might expect to see a decline in funding levels across philanthropy. However, the size of this decline in funding for Native-focused activities was significantly disproportional compared to the overall decline in giving. What are the reasons for this disproportionate impact? Are Native causes perceived by foundation staffs and boards as less central to the core mission of their foundations, consequently less of a priority in times of dwindling resources? Is there less concern for Native communities? Foundations should take a hard look at their performance in this harsh economic climate and address these questions, particularly since Native populations are even more vulnerable

**“There is a growing and vibrant Native nonprofit sector in Native communities.”**

in recessionary times (the poverty rate among Native Americans was 23.6 percent in 2009).<sup>5</sup>

## **The Importance of Supporting Native-controlled Organizations**

In reviewing the list of 25 recipient organizations receiving the most funding in 2009, it is startling, but not totally surprising, that only eight (32 percent) of the organizations are Native controlled. Study after study has stated that a substantial amount of funding identified as benefiting Natives is awarded to non-Native-controlled organizations. It is imperative that funders who make grants thoroughly investigate the requests to ensure that money and services do actually benefit Native people, and that Native people actively participate in directing services.

Overall priority should be given to supporting Native-controlled organizations when making grant decisions. There is a growing and vibrant Native nonprofit sector in Native communities that is grounded in the Native experience, understands the pressing issues and concerns in Native communities, and provides vehicles for leadership and capacity building. Most importantly, Native-controlled organizations answer the call for self-determination by giving the people a voice and direct involvement in community revitalization activities.

Large foundations have historically played a significant role in the establishment of highly developed nonprofit institutions. These foundations can play a similar role in Indian Country if they are willing to accept the challenge and make the commitment. For example, large foundations like the Northwest Area Foundation launched the Indian Land Tenure Foundation, and the Ford Foundation took a lead in establishing the Native Arts and Culture Foundation. These efforts required intensive planning and a

sizable financial commitment. Both foundations provided additional grants to numerous other Native nonprofits throughout the past decade. Other large foundations also have the potential and opportunity to support and strengthen the Native nonprofit infrastructure so crucial to the community rebuilding process. They should be encouraged to accept a higher level of leadership and responsibility in this area.

### **Where is the Mission Alignment?**

Incredibly, 1,149 (82 percent) of the almost 1,400 foundations in this study gave no grants benefiting Natives in 2009. It is almost impossible to rationalize this number in any meaningful way. What is the reason for this disconnect? Is it intentional or is it a result of historical distance? Is there an element of fear and ignorance? Foundations that fall into the category of non-supporters should engage in a process of education that helps them understand more fully that there is a role for them to play in supporting Native endeavors, and that these endeavors directly connect to their foundations' interests and missions.

The geographical focus of foundations should not prevent them from reaching out to Native organizations. Whether locally based or national in scope, there are Native organizations active across the country that provide constructive and often innovative approaches to addressing the needs and issues of Native people, connecting to interests in broader society.

In addition, foundation programmatic interests are not foreign to the needs, aspirations, and community development objectives found in Native communities. Whether it is health, education, the environment, or any of the myriad issues foundations are interested in, there is corresponding work going on in Indian Country that complements foundation interests. Native endeavors are in need of financial

support. Foundations that do support Native organizations frequently state that their mutual interests are being met, new learning takes place, and foundation missions are being satisfied. Of course, an occasional grant may not go as expected, as do grants in the general populace, but foundations understand risks and failures are to be expected. When a grant project does not achieve the intended results in a non-Native community, the foundation does not cease funding there; instead, they frequently try new approaches. The same standard should apply to Native grants.

All too often, foundation officials accept a lack of funding for Native organizations as simply the way things are rather than trying to understand how they can make a difference. This can no longer be accepted; the blindfolds must come off and the problem corrected. There are ample opportunities for funders to learn how and where they can be helpful, and to forge new relationships with Native people that lead to mutually satisfying funding experiences. For example, Native Americans in Philanthropy regularly conducts conferences, forums, and other educational activities to help funders build relationships and become more effective grantmakers in Native communities. In addition, the Northwest Area Foundation, working in partnership with the Foundation for Community Vitality, has recently convened a series of meetings between funders and Native resource people to build and enhance funding strategies going forward. The First Nations Development Institute has provided education and research to help the philanthropic field become more effective in its work. Funders unsure of how to begin grantmaking in Indian Country should take advantage of these learning opportunities so as to become responsible and effective grantmakers in Native communities. The current practice of unresponsiveness conducted by so many foundations can no longer be accepted.

**“1,149 (82 percent) of the almost 1,400 foundations in this study gave no grants benefiting Natives in 2009.”**

**“There are ample opportunities for funders to learn how and where they can be helpful, and to forge new relationships with Native people.”**

**“Special efforts to buttress the work of tribal governments are warranted, particularly those activities that increase the capacity to meet the challenges ahead.”**

## **Supporting Native Communities**

Interestingly, the highest level of funding went to organizations working in the field of education (colleges, universities, and educational support organizations), followed by arts and humanities. It is not surprising that these organizations received the highest aggregate funding; they work in fields that are also of high priority for Native people. A study on independently controlled Native foundations identified the fields of education and arts and humanities as receiving the most attention.<sup>6</sup>

The 6.4 percent of grant dollars going to tribal governments is slightly less than the 6.7 percent level of funding that went to them between the years 1989 and 2002.<sup>7</sup> While foundations are generally hesitant to award grants to governmental bodies, it should be understood that tribal governments carry the responsibility for the provision of basic human services, including health, housing, and child care, as well as public safety, economic development, and land management activities in tribal communities. Therefore, while there are growing numbers of nonprofit organizations operating in reservation areas that deserve to be funded, tribal governments should not be overlooked, because they remain the leading source of service provision. Given this scenario, special efforts to buttress the work of tribal governments are warranted, particularly those activities that increase the capacity to meet the challenges ahead. The Bush Foundation serves as an example for this type of work. It launched a program to support the self-determination of 23 Native nations in Minnesota and the Dakotas. Through this program, the Foundation works closely “with the tribal leaders on individual tribal agendas for strengthening their governing institutions.”<sup>8</sup>

Civil rights groups that conduct programs and activities to promote the broad civil rights and liberties of individuals, improve relations between races, and work to change public policies are as essential in Native communities as they are in the broader U.S. society. In essence, civil rights organizations uphold and fulfill the promise of a democracy by engaging the citizenry in social and structural reform. Native people have certainly experienced their share of external oppression, and continually struggle with policies and systems that are counterproductive to community rebuilding aspirations. Therefore, to see funding almost double from 4.3 percent in the Hicks and Jorgensen study,<sup>9</sup> to 8.5 percent, is well received. Hopefully, such funding will continue in this upward swing. This type of work is so critical across society, and particularly in disadvantaged communities, that the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy has recommended funders commit “at least 25 percent of their grant dollars to support advocacy, organizing and civic engagement to promote equity, opportunity, and justice in our society.”<sup>10</sup> The Marguerite Casey Foundation (MCF) does extensive work in this area and ranks fifth in giving benefiting Natives. MCF dedicates all of its funding to support “movement building” that engages low-income people in policy reform efforts. Most importantly, MCF maintains a flexible approach to movement building that accommodates the various strategies implemented by Native organizations. MCF can serve as a valuable resource to other grantmakers interested in supporting Native advocacy, organizing, and policy development pursuits.



## Addressing Regional Disparities and Multi-population Funding Issues

There are two overriding concerns related to the population served by the Native grants portfolio in this study. First, there is a geographic bias in the distribution of funds. Second, the extensive use of multi-racial funding assumes that grant dollars actually benefit Native populations. Both of these concerns should be examined.

The geographic disparity in funding for Native causes appears most glaringly in the Central and Southeast regions, where the combined population constitutes 28.3 percent of the total Native population in the U.S. Yet, organizations based in these areas receive only 6.5 percent of the total grant funds benefiting Native Americans. Part of the problem may be that the region generates only 6.6 percent of the foundation funds, so the level of philanthropic activity originating locally for Native causes is relatively small. However, the same is true for the Southwest, with 16.5 percent of the Native population. That region generates only 4.2 percent of funding locally, but it receives 22.6 percent of grant funds.

This situation begs the question of whether a comparable nonprofit infrastructure is in place to address Native needs and issues in the Central and Southeast regions. Further, why the region receives such a low level of foundation support? There may be national organizations based outside of these regions that receive funding to conduct work that benefits Native communities in these regions. However, even if that is the case, it does not sufficiently build local leadership and capacity to address their issues and concerns. A concerted effort to meet with Native leadership in the regions and identify ways in which the foundation community could be more supportive would definitely be worthwhile. Also, information should be gathered that identifies the

organizations that are located there and what they are focused on. This information can be used to better connect those organizations with funders through focused relationship-building strategies. This proactive effort could prove beneficial to reduce the funding disparity.

The major U.S. cities are home to some of the largest Native populations in the country and over the last 60-plus years have experienced the creation of many multi-tribal Indian centers, as well as various types of programs and organizations developed by Natives to address the social, cultural, and economic needs of the population. Today, these include activities from pow wows and cultural events to education, health, and housing. According to U.S. census data, in 2000, 61 percent of the Native population did not live on reservations or Native lands, and tens of thousands lived in large metropolitan areas, including New York (87,241), Los Angeles (53,092), Phoenix (35,093), and Chicago (20,698).<sup>11</sup>

Urban population growth was enhanced by the federal government's relocation program of the 1950s and 1960s, which moved thousands of families from tribal lands to cities with the promise of employment and a better life. The fulfillment of this promise has been the center of debate for decades, as pockets of deep Indian poverty can be found across urban America. Foundations, large and small, are frequently located in metropolitan areas; therefore, Native organizations in cities are provided a higher degree of access to funders than is likely found among rural, reservation areas. High urban populations account for the large portion (74.2 percent) of funding for Native causes. The geographic proximity factor also applies to the many non-Native-controlled colleges, universities, museums, and other large organizations located in cities. According to the findings in this study, such institutions attract substantial foundation resources to their institutions that allegedly benefit Native people.

**“A concerted effort to meet with Native leadership in the region and identify ways in which the foundation community could be more supportive would definitely be worthwhile.”**

**“The ideal strategy to correct for the geographical disparity in funding is not to shift money from one region to another, but rather to expand the total amount of funds awarded to activities benefiting Native people.”**

The ideal strategy to correct for the geographical disparity in funding is not to shift money from one region to another, but rather to expand the total amount of funds awarded to activities benefiting Native people. As already shown, the total amount of money is at a low level and shifting it around doesn't address the need for increased support. If just 20 percent of the 1,149 foundations currently giving nothing at all were to become engaged and begin making grants for Native-centered programs and organizations, that would be 230 new foundations supporting the field, almost doubling the current number. If coupled with an increase by those already giving, additional funding would make a substantial impact in Native communities throughout the U.S., including those in under-resourced regions of the country.

Finally, more than one-fifth (22.6 percent) of the grant money awarded goes to support programs and activities that are described as benefiting multi-racial groups, yet there is a concern that some programs and services purporting to do so aren't actually reaching Natives in substantive ways. The implications of broad “multi-racial” funding are that Native organizations providing comparable service may not get funded because of the belief that the population is already served. Therefore, grantmakers should be vigilant in obtaining proof that Native involvement is real, and that there clearly are identifiable Native beneficiaries as suggested by grant applicants. Site visits that allow funders to actually meet the people and discuss their involvement are extremely helpful in this process. Organizations that say they “plan to” or “will” serve or involve a nearby Native community should be thoroughly scrutinized. Why should funders believe the organization will build effective relationships if it has not shown any interest or success in the past? Funders should seek out the Native community's perspective on proposals that include Natives among the populations served.

**“Grantmakers should be vigilant in obtaining proof that Native involvement is real, and that there clearly are identifiable Native beneficiaries as suggested by grant applicants.”**

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# 3 Native American and Foundation Priorities: Commonalities and Disconnects

By Sarah Hicks, Ph.D.

“The fields of interest of Native foundations align closely with...mainstream foundations.”

## Native American Community and Mainstream Foundations' Priorities

The dominant issue areas of mainstream foundations' grantmaking to Native Americans can be compared to the grantmaking focus of foundations that are Native-controlled, independently incorporated, with 501(c)3 status. In his 2004 study on the grantmaking of Native American foundations and funds, Louis Delgado asked 36 foundations about their “fields of interest.”<sup>1</sup> Foundations were able to select multiple fields of interest. The top fields of interest were: Education (28 foundations, 77.8 percent of foundations), Arts and Cultural Preservation (14, 38.9 percent), and Community Improvement/Economic Development (8, 22.2 percent).<sup>2</sup> The fields of interest of Native foundations align closely with the grantmaking activity of mainstream foundations.

Another way to think about issue areas to which mainstream foundations are making grants is the alignment of these priorities with the priorities of programs benefiting Native people. While no inclusive list of such programs exists, two information sources provide some insight on this issue. First, Salway Black conducted the seminal study of the Native American nonprofit sector in 1998.<sup>3</sup> While outdated, this report provides the only compiled data about the nonprofit sector in Native America. According to Salway Black, the top 10 priorities of nonprofits serving Native Americans are: (1) Education; (2) Art, Culture, and Humanities; (3) Economic Development; (4)

Traditional Tribal/Native Culture; (5) Health; (6) Children and Youth; (7) Employment/Jobs; (8) Mental Health; (9) Legal Services; and (10) Housing.<sup>4</sup> While the categories are not strictly comparable, the distribution of mainstream foundations' grants to Native American causes and Salway Black's list of nonprofit focus areas shows some similarity. Education, Arts and Culture, and Human Services top both lists.

Another comparison that can be made to assess the fit between programs benefiting Native people and areas of mainstream foundations' grantmaking to Native American causes and concerns is an analysis of the focus areas of award-winning programs administered by American Indian/Alaska Native tribal governments. *The Honoring Contributions in the Governance of American Indian Nations (Honoring Nations)* program was established at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government in 1998.<sup>5</sup> Administered by the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, the program identifies and disseminates information about outstanding tribal government programs and practices. Tribes apply to be considered for an award, sharing information about their outstanding program, including the program's area(s) of focus. Programs are evaluated based on: effectiveness, significance to sovereignty, cultural relevance, transferability, and sustainability.<sup>6</sup> Since 1999, 112 programs have received honors or high honors.

While previous research has shown that mainstream foundations' grantmaking to tribal governments as a proportion

**“A large proportion of Arts and Culture-related foundation grantmaking to Native American causes is for preservation activities, and such grants are generally made to non-Native-controlled organizations.”**

of grantmaking to Native causes and concerns is very low—6.5 percent of grants and 6.7 percent of grant dollars from 1989 to 2002<sup>7</sup>—comparing the focus areas of award-winning tribal government programs and mainstream foundations’ grantmaking gives us a sense as to the match or lack thereof between priorities of tribal institutions and grantmaking patterns.

*Honoring Nations* awardees fall into eight categories: cultural affairs, economic and community development, education, environment and natural resources, government performance, health and social services, intergovernmental relations, and justice. When applying for consideration, tribes select one or more of these categories to describe their program focus. As such, distribution of awardees by focus area involves some double-counting (or even triple-counting, if a tribe considers its’ program to fall into three categories). Nonetheless, comparing the distribution of awardee programs by focus area to the issue areas supported by mainstream foundations’ grantmaking yields some interesting results.

The top focus areas for *Honoring Nations* awardees were: Economic and Community Development (22.2 percent), Environment and Natural Resources (15.3 percent), and Education, as well as Health and Social Services (tied at 12.2 percent each). The rank order of *Honoring Nations* program focus areas does not align completely with mainstream foundation grantmaking, at least in part because the categories are not precisely comparable. It is interesting to note, nonetheless, that Education, Human Services, and Public Affairs/Society Benefit, which top the list of foundations’ grantmaking issue areas by number of grants or total grant dollars, are reflected in the top *Honoring Nations* program focus areas.

The areas of greatest misalignment seem to be Arts and Culture/Cultural Affairs (ranked second in grant dollars and number of grants, but sixth in *Honoring Nations* program focus) and Environment

and Animals/Environment and Natural Resources (ranked seventh in grant dollars and sixth in number of grants, but second in *Honoring Nations* program focus). Three plausible explanations for the misalignment in Culture exist. First, it may be that many of the programs that tribal governments administer have a cultural foundation or are culturally based, and therefore, there is less of a tendency to specify programs as Cultural Affairs, as culture is an inherent part of tribal programming. Alternately, some tribes may view culture as beyond the responsibility of government, an aspect of identity and community that should be nurtured first and foremost in the nonprofit or grassroots sectors. Finally, the type of cultural projects, activities, and institutions that foundations support may not match the cultural projects and activities that tribes and Native communities prioritize. Although it is heartening that Arts and Culture rank so high on foundations’ grantmaking priorities, we need to know more about what specifically foundations are supporting. As prior studies have pointed out, a large proportion of Arts and Culture-related foundation grantmaking to Native American causes is for preservation activities, and such grants are generally made to non-Native-controlled organizations, including mainstream museums.<sup>8</sup>

While supporting grantmaking for Native Arts and Culture is definitely a positive trend, foundations ought to ask themselves whether they are supporting living, breathing culture in Native communities and institutions. Such on-the-ground culturally focused grantmaking is at least equally important to museum-like preservation activities, especially when a growing body of literature directly identifies Native culture, including community identity, values, and participation, as an important factor for protecting Native youth against a variety of negative outcomes. Studies have reported the positive effects of cultural identity on negative outcomes such as suicide,<sup>9</sup> school dropout,<sup>10</sup> and substance abuse.<sup>11</sup> Awareness of and

**“Foundations ought to ask themselves whether they are supporting living, breathing culture in Native communities and institutions.”**



loyalty to one's culture of origin<sup>12</sup> is also linked to positive outcomes such as school success,<sup>13</sup> higher self-esteem,<sup>14</sup> and improved physical and psychological health.<sup>15</sup> Foundations that fund Arts and Culture projects, as well as foundations with human well-being and social justice interests, should look for opportunities to fund Native American community-based Arts and Culture projects and activities.

The clear tribal government focus on environmental programs provides an opportunity for foundations with environmental grantmaking priorities to increase their grantmaking to Native America. Further, such an extensive list of award-winning programs provides one potential starting point for foundations interested in learning more about Native America and thinking about ways to increase their Native-focused grantmaking.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Need for Unrestricted Support**

In 2009, according to the Foundation Center's analysis, 75 percent of grant dollars and 60 percent of grants to Native American causes and concerns were in the form of Program support. While Program support is the predominant type of support awarded by foundations overall, the proportion of Native-focused grantmaking that consists of Program support far outpaces that of overall grantmaking. Prior research notes the apparent reluctance of foundations to provide Core or General/Operating support to Native American causes and concerns.<sup>17</sup>

The likely consequences of more programmatic support and less core support include more administrative burden and less flexibility in using resources to meet organizational needs and priorities. Program support, a restricted source of support, can affect the financial strength of an organization. An over-reliance on programmatic support may also lead to "mission creep," in which recipient organizations take on projects that do not necessarily closely align with their missions because

they need the resources to support the organization. This is undesirable for all parties, as foundations may not be funding the most well-positioned recipient for the project; the recipient may be working outside their realm of expertise at worst, or at best, working on something not core to its mission, and other potentially more well-qualified organizations are not given the resources to do work for which they are well-positioned.

In some cases where foundations have a strong history of grantmaking to a particular Native-serving organization, they should at least consider providing general or operating support. Foundations also ought to consider whether to support a long-time recipient with an endowment, as such a gift can dramatically change the capacity and financial strength of an organization. For example, in 2006, the Ford Foundation, a long-time supporter of the First Nations Development Institute (FNDI), a national Native nonprofit focused on restoring Native control and stewardship of assets, as well as building new assets, awarded FNDI a \$3 million endowment grant to fund the First Nations Eagle Staff grantmaking program.

### **Low Grantmaking to Rural Native Communities**

About 1.8 percent of the rural population, or about 978,300 persons, are American Indian/Alaska Native. Sixty-three point nine percent of rural Native Americans live in counties in one of seven states: Alaska, Arizona, Montana, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, or South Dakota.<sup>18</sup>

In 2009, 25.8 percent of grantmaking dollars benefiting Native Americans were coded as rural, that is: had a geographic focus serving a rural area, had the keyword "rural" in the grant description or recipient name, or were awarded to a recipient organization located in a county identified as rural by the U.S. Census Bureau. In 2000,

**"Where foundations have a strong history of grantmaking to a particular Native-serving organization, they should at least consider providing general or operating support."**

“There is a growing literature documenting the extent to which urban/metro areas benefit from philanthropy at the expense of rural places.”

30.9 percent of Native people lived in rural (or non-metro) areas.<sup>19</sup> According to this measure, a slightly higher than proportionate share of grant dollars to Native causes are awarded to non-rural (or metro) areas relative to the population, 74.2 percent of grant dollars as compared to 69.1 percent of the Native population.

The pattern of foundation underfunding of rural areas and causes is established in the literature.<sup>20</sup> As summarized by the National Committee on Responsive Philanthropy (2007), there is a growing literature documenting the extent to which urban/metro areas benefit from philanthropy at the expense of rural places. They cite:

- ◆ Of the more than 1,000 grantmaking foundations included in the 2001–02 grants sample, only 184 made grants that the Foundation Center categorized as “rural development grants.”
- ◆ The Southern Rural Development Initiative (2004) found that foundation assets of rural America represented only 3 percent of foundation assets nationwide.
- ◆ The Big Sky Institute for the Advancement of Nonprofits found that, in 2006, states with the most foundation assets and that received the highest per capita grant dollars were urban. Per capita grantmaking averaged \$41 per person in the most philanthropically disadvantaged states and, nearly four times as much, \$156 per person, in the most philanthropically advantaged states.

While the proportion of grant dollars benefiting Native American causes and concerns reflects the overall pattern of foundation underfunding to rural areas, the extent of this bias is not as strong. Foundations could increase their grantmaking both to rural and Native American causes by focusing on rural Native populations. To increase grantmaking in some of the most under-supported regions, foundations

might examine opportunities to make grants in North Carolina and Oklahoma, where a substantial portion of rural Native Americans reside. Where the priorities of these communities and service providers align with foundation missions and grantmaking focus areas, there is a real opportunity for awards that increase foundations’ investment, not only in their mission, but in rural and Native communities.

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