

Census Open Innovation Labs
✦ THE OPPORTUNITY PROJECT ✦
2024 Indigenous Communities Focused Sprints

Enhancing Access to Grant and Funding Opportunities for Indigenous Communities

The Native Counts Coalition and National Urban Indian Family Coalition

The Challenge – Improving Indigenous communities’ access and capabilities to successfully secure grant and funding opportunities through the development of community and data driven solutions.

Executive Champion – Nicole Borromeo, Executive Vice President and General Counsel for the Alaska Federation of Natives

The Problem – Federally recognized Tribes are those Tribes that are formally recognized through a government-to-government relationship with the United States. That status generally makes each Tribe “eligible for special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians,” as provided by 25 C.F.R. § 83.2. The federal programs and services broadly include billions of dollars each year for infant and child development, education, food assistance, health care, housing, law enforcement and first responder services, poverty assistance, and Elder care, among other critical infrastructure and support functions.

Each year, Tribal stakeholders, including Tribes and national, regional, and local American Indian and Alaska Native organizations representing or working with Tribes, must navigate a complex hodge-podge of data sources to prepare applications for each of the grant programs that are vital to Tribal communities. Many Tribal stakeholders are under-resourced or lack sufficient technical support in their efforts to timely and accurately identify the data necessary to complete grant applications. A [2003 report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights](#) found that American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) communities did not receive sufficient federal funding to respond to the very urgent needs of tribal citizens in the areas of healthcare, education, public safety, housing, and rural development. The issue consists of many different factors including the lack of comprehensive data collection, inaccessible data that is fueled by disproportionate access to resources across Tribes to access data, complex processes to identify and assemble needed data for grant and funding opportunities etc. This study concluded that tribal leaders and AIAN-serving urban organizations need to be in control of their own priorities and needs in their

respective communities, and that comprehensive data alignment is a key element missing in federal tribal programs. For instance, tribal count data does not account for tribal members living outside tribal statistical areas.

The types of federal programs and infrastructure that tribal nations rely on are similar to Native Hawaiians both on the U.S. mainland and in Hawaii. According to the last decennial Census data sets, Native Hawaiians are residing on the U.S. mainland at a higher rate versus remaining in Hawaii. The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) and an entire research team is reviewing the decennial, 2021 ACS data, and other reports to determine how to build stronger and healthier eco-systems of care for Native Hawaiians regardless of where they reside.

The Opportunity – This sprint will build upon recent collaborations between both Tribal stakeholders and the Census Bureau to identify what data products are most needed by Tribal stakeholders and Native Hawaiians to improve the effectiveness of any existing products, and make the products more accessible, and create new user-friendly tools. Improving accessibility will enable Tribal stakeholders and Native Hawaiian stakeholders to be better prepared to submit grant applications for critical federal programs. At the same time, it also will help Tribal leaders and Native Hawaiian stakeholders expand their understanding of the need to improve participation of Native Hawaiian and American Indian and Alaska Native, households in all federal surveys.

Target End Users – Tribal stakeholders, tribal leaders, Native Hawaiian stakeholders, researchers, and others responsible for preparing grant applications or who utilize the data in those applications for other purposes, including internal use, research reports, policy and legislative efforts, and public education.

Related Data Sets

- ↳ U.S. Census Bureau’s Decennial Census P.L. 94-171 Redistricting Data ([Link](#))
- ↳ U.S. Census Bureau’s 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC) ([Link](#))
- ↳ U.S. Census Bureau’s 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data ([Link](#))
- ↳ U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey ([Link](#))

Sprint Leaders

- ↳ Sandra Mitrovich, Natives Counts Working Group, sandra.mitrovich@outlook.com
- ↳ Nicole Borromeo, Executive Vice President, Alaska Federation of Natives, nborromeo@nativefederation.org
- ↳ James Tucker, Convener, Natives Count Working Group, jttarizona@aol.com
- ↳ Rio Fernandes, Director of Civic Engagement, National Urban Indian Family Coalition, riof@nuifc.org