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# STRATEGIC PLAN

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## The National Indian Council on Aging

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Page 4: Albuquerque, New Mexico; by Leslie Maly

Page 5: National Indian Council on Aging, Inc. members; Photographer Unknown; “*The Indian Elder, A Forgotten American*”, by Juana Lyon, 1978, page 33

Page 6: The Great Oak; Photographer Unknown; pechanga-nsn.gov

Page 8: Portrays the Shoshone guide, Sacajawea, of the Lewis and Clark Expedition wrapped in a Hudson Bay Candy Stripe trade blanket; Location Unknown; by Marilyn Angel Wynn; nativestock.com

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# NICOA Strategic Plan

## MISSION:

To advocate for improved comprehensive health, social services and economic wellbeing of American Indian and Alaska Native elders.



## VISION:

A meaningful, abundant and fulfilling life for all American Indian and Alaskan Native elders that sustains, reinforces and reaffirms their Native values, customs, traditions and language.

## HISTORY:

For over 40 years, the National Indian Council on Aging has been the recognized leader in advocating for American Indian and Alaska Native elders.

The National Indian Council on Aging, Inc. (NICOA), a nonprofit organization, was founded in 1976 by members of the National Tribal Chairmen's Association. The group recognized the need for a national organization focused on aging services for American Indian and Alaska Native elders.

NICOA is governed by a 13-member Board of Directors composed of American Indian and Alaska Native elders representing each of the 12 Bureau of Indian Affairs regions, and a representative of the National Association of Title VI Grantees. NICOA's voting membership consists of American Indian and Alaska Native elders age 55 and over. Non-voting associate members include American Indians under the age of 55 and non-Indians and supporters of all ages.



**2018-2020 NICOA Board of Directors** (from top left, Larry Curley, Executive Director; Eddie Tullis, Eastern Region; Edna Riley, Alaska Region; Billie Tohee, Southern Plains Region; Mary Jo Hunter, Midwest Region; Benjamin Charley, Pacific Region; James DeLaCruz, Northwest Region; Betti Delrow, Navajo Region; Phyllis Antone, Western Region; Lucia Trujillo, Southwest Region; and Lillian Thomas, Eastern OK Region)

NICOA was instrumental in the development and passage of the Older Americans Act, Title VI legislation in 1976, which provided funding for elder programs across Indian Country. In addition, we have maintained the Department of Labor Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) for over 15 years, providing much needed skills training in readying elders to return to work. We have developed and implemented the Savvy Caregiver in Indian Country, a program specifically designed for caregivers of American Indian and Alaska Native elders. NICOA continues to have other grants from the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living (DHHS/ACL) and the Administration for Native Americans (ANA). These grants have focused on providing information to elders about financial exploitation, elder abuse, caregiving, diabetes prevention and other issues. We also received a \$50,000 Caregiver Grant from the Diverse Elders Coalition, which allows us to continue to work on more training for our caregivers.

We continue to look for other ways to benefit our elders. The latest grant received from DHHS/ACL is the Long-Term Services and Supports Native Resource Center, which will enable us to be the clearinghouse and training center for long-term services and supports throughout Indian Country.

NICOA publications include: Preventing and Responding to Abuse of Elders in Indian Country; A Review of the Literature: Elder Abuse in Indian Country; Research, Policy, and Practice; Using Your Tribal Values to an Develop Elder Protection Code; and numerous AI/AN fact sheets, current blog posts and a vital social media presence on Twitter and Facebook.

Beginning in 1976 NICOA held 22 successful national Indian aging biennial conferences. The NICOA conference is the only national aging conference in the country focusing exclusively on the needs of American Indians and Alaska Native elders.



National Indian Council on Aging, Inc. - 1978

**VALUES:**

**CULTURE & TRADITIONS:** To promote cultural understanding and preservation.

**RESPECT:** To honor and hold in high esteem each individuals' values.

**WISDOM:** Sharing personal experiences, traditions, knowledge and values.

**RESILIENCE:** To always bounce back from adversity, making it work for us.

*“Like the Great Oak, Elders have Strength, Wisdom, Longevity, and Determination”*



## INTERNAL ANALYSIS

This is a realistic analysis of the National Indian Council on Aging's internal resources. The analysis includes consideration for communication with American Indian and Alaska Native elders, projects and programming, resources of the organization, skills of the governing board and staff and administrative infrastructure. The following core strengths and weaknesses are resource-based and focus on the present environment of the organization.

### STRENGTHS

- ❖ Board of Directors and staff's dedication and passion for the wellbeing of the American Indian and Alaska Native elders
- ❖ Historical foundation from which to build and grow as an organization
- ❖ Diversity and knowledge of the Board of Directors and the staff
- ❖ Stability through the biennial conference for all American Indian and Alaska Native elders
- ❖ Ability to adapt to a changing environment

### WEAKNESSES

- ❖ Lack of a diversified funding base
- ❖ No comprehensive system for effectively communicating with American Indian and Alaska Native elders, tribal nations, elected officials and government agencies
- ❖ Organizational documents that are obsolete and not adhered to
- ❖ Lack of outreach materials about the organization for use by the Board of Directors and staff
- ❖ New members to the Board of Directors are not provided orientation

## EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

The National Indian Council on Aging examined the environments and used resource-based data to examine the key connections needed to achieve the mission of the organization. This requires the organization to adapt to resource availability, government regulations, access to information and multiple methods of communication. Administratively it requires operational adjustments, staff development and the realignment of staff responsibilities.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- ❖ Trust of the American Indian and Alaska Natives elder community members
- ❖ Support from tribes and tribal leaders
- ❖ Support from federal agencies
- ❖ Support from private businesses

### THREATS

- ❖ Public agencies, services providers and private businesses are not aware of National Indian Council on Aging
- ❖ Limited communication with tribes, elders, elected officials and public and private organizations
- ❖ Key partnerships have not yet been established





**PLAN GOAL:**

In formulating the three-year strategic plan, the National Indian Council on Aging strives to achieve economic self-sufficiency through programs and services to ensure that services provided to American Indian and Alaska Native elders are comparable to services provided to all elders, and to serve as a National Center on Excellence for American Indian and Alaska Native elders.

**LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES**

**COMMUNICATION.** To enhance communications and cooperation with community service providers and other aging organizations that represent and advocate for American Indian and Alaska Native elders.

**NATIONAL CENTER OF EXCELLENCE.** To provide information and technical assistance for Native American communities to improve health care for American Indian and Alaska Native elders. Also, to serve as a clearinghouse for information on issues affecting American Indian and Alaska Native elders.

**ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION.** To provide information, reports and expert testimony requested by tribal nations and the United States Congress.

**PARTNERSHIPS.** To network with appropriate agencies to maximize resources and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service delivery systems for American Indian and Alaska Native elders.

**SUSTAINABILITY.** To develop and secure resources and assets that will support and expand the activities which align with the mission of the National Council on Aging.



## COMMUNICATION

**Strategy:** The development of a comprehensive communication system that facilitates two-way communication between American Indian and Alaska Native elders, community service providers and organizations supporting American Indian and Alaska Native elders.

### Tactics:

- ❖ Support the existing State Indian Councils on Aging and support for the reactivation and/or establishment of new State Indian Councils on Aging.
- ❖ Develop and implement an electronic communication system which will support the timely receipt and dissemination of information between American Indian and Alaska Native elders, agencies and organizations.
- ❖ Develop Public Service Announcements designed to provide awareness to the public about issues impacting American Indian and Alaska Native elders.

### Measures

- ❖ State Indian Councils on Aging that are fully engaged with the American Indian and Alaska Native elders.
- ❖ Expanded electronic communication with American Indian and Alaska Native elders.
- ❖ Increased public awareness about American Indian and Alaska Native elders.

### Next Steps

- ❖ Develop a media package for use by board members, staff and community members to communicate the activities of the National Indian Council on Aging (NICOA).
- ❖ Provide information to 12 gatherings of elders, one in each NICOA region.
- ❖ Expand outreach to American Indian and Alaska Native elders through electronic, paper and public media.



## NATIONAL CENTER ON EXCELLENCE

**Strategy:** The National Center of Excellence will encompass two major functions. First, it will be a repository for information on American Indian and Alaska Native elders. Second, NICOA will develop a training curriculum for multiple populations in areas that support improved comprehensive health, social services and economic wellbeing of American Indian and Alaska Native elders.

### Tactics:

- ❖ Establish a training program and accredited curriculum for American Indian and Alaska Native service providers.
- ❖ Establish a national resource center that serves as the trusted expert on areas that impact American Indian and Alaska Native elders as identified by tribal nations, service providers, government officials and subject matter experts.

### Measures

- ❖ An accredited curriculum targeted for service providers for American Indian and Alaska Native elders.
- ❖ A repository that houses research studies, resource and training materials, congressional studies and reports, legislation and legal information about American Indian and Alaska Native elders.

### Next Steps

- ❖ Establish the framework for the National Center on Excellence.
- ❖ Establish and prioritize focus areas.
- ❖ Develop a plan for addressing each of the focus areas.
- ❖ Assess the feasibility of re-establishing an office in the Washington, D.C. area.



## ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION

**Strategy:** To develop and implement an effective strategy that will secure active support and influence opinions and decisions of people and organizations for improved comprehensive health, social services and economic wellbeing of American Indian and Alaska Native elders.

### Tactics:

- ❖ Develop and implement a short term and long-term plan for structured advocacy.
- ❖ On-going identification of the policy issues that impact the health, social and economic needs of American Indian and Alaska Native elders.
- ❖ Securing support from stakeholder groups.

### Measures

- ❖ Comprehensive analysis of all policy that directly or indirectly effects American Indian and Alaska Native elders.
- ❖ Expansion of the network of people and organizations that support the advocacy efforts of the National Indian Council on Aging.
- ❖ Changes to policy that positively affects the health, social, and economic well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native elders.

### Next Steps

- ❖ Identify existing educational materials and/or advocacy information and assess current relevancy.
- ❖ Conduct two meetings with tribal leaders to gain input and secure support for the advocacy efforts of the National Indian Council on Aging.
- ❖ Develop six fact sheets targeted at the top policy issues for American Indian and Alaska Natives elders.

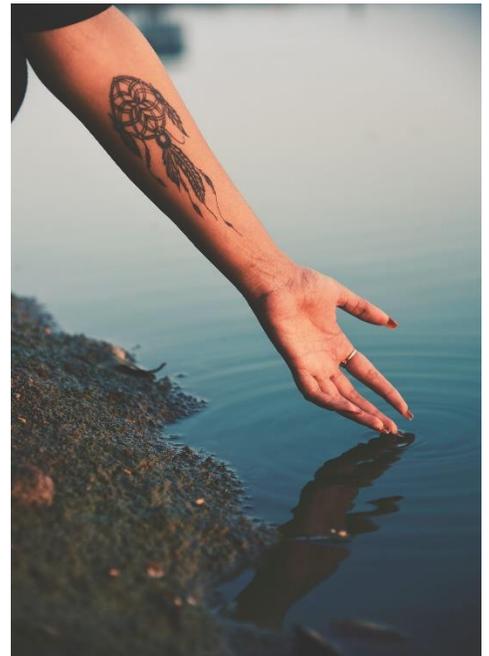


## PARTNERSHIPS

**Strategy:** To establish strategic partnerships that will increase organizational efficiency, increase organizational effectiveness, drive broader social and systems change and provide resources for the National Indian Council on Aging.

### Tactics:

- ❖ Establish procedures for management of existing partnerships.
- ❖ Develop a plan and protocol for initiating new partnerships.
- ❖ Establish multi-disciplinary partnerships that support the health, social and economic wellbeing of American Indian and Alaska Native elders.



### Measures

- ❖ Analysis of current partnership relationships.
- ❖ Organizational infrastructure for the initiation and management of partnerships.
- ❖ Increased number and diversity of partnerships that have a shared vision, improve the operations and provide resources for the National Council on Aging.

### Next Steps

- ❖ Establish the administrative infrastructure to support organizational partnerships.
- ❖ Evaluate existing partnerships to determine functionality and adjust current roles and responsibilities to increase impact.
- ❖ Identify and prioritize potential partners from business, nonprofit sector, government and community that share common goals to support the activities of the National Indian Council on Aging.

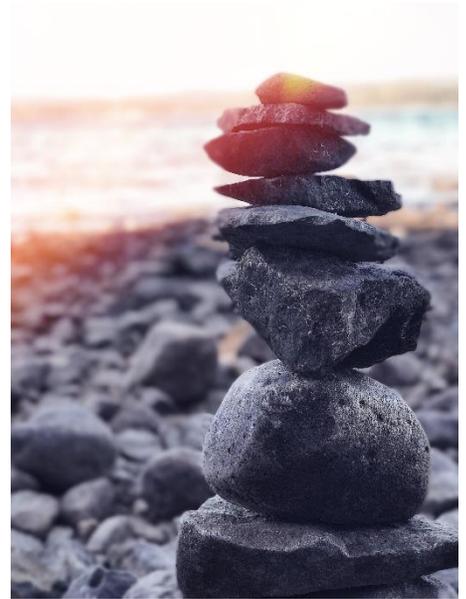


## SUSTAINABILITY

**Strategy:** To develop a diversified funding base and assets that will support the National Indian Council on Aging to allow the organization to fulfill the mission over the long term.

### Tactics:

- ❖ Expand the funding sources of the organization to include federal, state, foundation and private businesses.
- ❖ Acquire assets that will support the activities of the organization and stabilize the financial position of the National Indian Council on Aging.
- ❖ Establish a for-profit subsidiary to support the operations of the National Indian Council on Aging.



### Measures

- ❖ Increased resources from public and private sources to support the organization.
- ❖ Expansion of the assets of the National Indian Council on Aging.
- ❖ Increased resources from for-profit operations that allow for the expansion of activities of the National Indian Council on Aging.

### Next Steps

- ❖ Increase resources from public and private sources by ten (10) percent.
- ❖ Increase resources by five (5) percent through financial support from tribes.
- ❖ Develop a business plan for the acquisition of a facility to serve as the offices for the National Indian Council on Aging.
- ❖ Conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of a for-profit subsidiary.



National Indian Council on Aging, Inc.

*"The Indian people, at one time, were the greatest landowners of this country. Not only were they the greatest landowner, but the Indian people have been the greatest donors this world has ever known, for they have shared their land, their gold, their coal, their gas, their men and women, and, for a group of people who have given so much, we receive very little in return. The elderly Indian, down through the years, has been the preserver of the Indian race, Indian culture, Indian history. Today, we salute the Indian elder for preserving what is left of our Indianness. All that we hold so dear and so precious in our Indianness comes from those who have gone before us."*

— Wendell Chino, president of the Mescalero Tribe, 1976

**Developed and written by:  
NICOA 2018-2020 Board of Directors &  
Staff**

Financing  
provided by

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