

# Program Impact

## 2020, by the Numbers



Cover photo:  
Wicahpi Cokan NajinWin (Stands  
in the Stars Woman) Cuny  
(Oglala/Minneconjou Lakota  
and Hunkpati Dakota)

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**Championing hope for a brighter future in remote and underserved Tribal communities**

**Our Mission:** Serving immediate needs, supporting long-term solutions

**Our Vision:** Strong, self-sufficient Native American communities

## Intro & Background

Partnership With Native Americans (PWNA) believes Native Americans have the power within themselves to build strong communities. The Tribal partners we work with know the challenges that exist and are finding solutions to them. We serve as a trusted partner and resource to lift their efforts, building on local assets and bringing together individuals, programs and outside resources for local engagement and positive outcomes.

As one of the largest Native-led and Native-serving charities in the U.S., PWNA partners with programs across hundreds of tribal communities to support their self-determined goals and priorities. We focus on the most rural, geographically isolated and resource-poor reservations with the highest need in the U.S.

For any community partner's focus (nutrition, education, health, etc.), our overarching goals are to help improve the impact of their programs and develop local leaders who can drive social change for their tribes. PWNA achieves high impact through a dual approach: addressing immediate needs by providing food, water, school supplies and other critical materials, and supporting community-led projects that sustainably address the core symptoms of poverty and contribute to social equity.

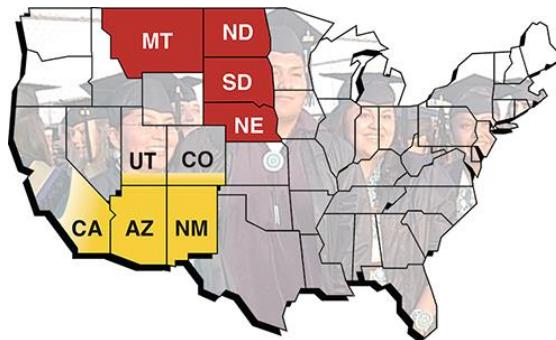
Our relief work addresses food insecurity, educational attainment for K-12 students, seasonal needs and disaster relief. Through this, PWNA and our community partners are bringing immediate impact for Tribal communities across the Northern Plains and Southwest.

Our long-term solutions focus on higher education, food sovereignty, community health, leadership development and emergency preparedness to build capacity. We share with our Native partners, donors and collaborators the hope that lasting change will follow for Tribal communities, programs and citizens.



**Joshua Arce, President & CEO**

### PWNA Service Area

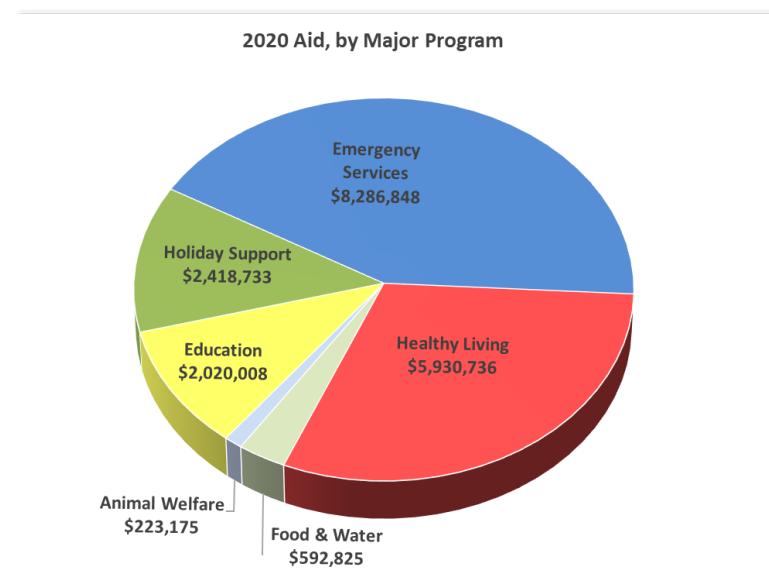


**Serving 9 priority states, and scholars nationwide**

## Major Programs: Overview

Related PWNA Programs: NPRA, SWRA, AIEF, RAR, NRF, SNRF, SWIRC and NAA

- ▶ Year-round, PWNA helps its reservation-based partners address the multifaceted issues in their remote and impoverished communities. Working together, we concentrate on short-and long-term needs linked to six pillars of service: food and water, education, health, holiday support, animal welfare and emergency services (including disaster relief and disaster planning).



*This pie chart will be updated once the 2020 form 990 is completed.*

- ▶ PWNA maintains a fleet of trucks to distribute critical supplies and services to the reservations, and our delivery drivers traveled more than 126,000 miles in 2020 alone. PWNA staff also traveled thousands of miles to support Tribal community distributions, training and other activities, working carefully as an ‘essential service’ amid the pandemic to ensure the safety of others.

The remainder of this report outlines 2020 impact and aid delivered by PWNA in collaboration with its Tribal partners across nine priority states – and nationwide with college partners for our AIEF scholars.

## Major Program: Emergency Services

Related PWNA Programs: NPRA, SWRA, AIEF, RAR, NRF, SNRF, SWIRC and NAA

- ▶ **Situational Impact:** Despite picturesque landscapes, the reservations PWNA assists have harsh environments giving rise to floods, forest fires, blizzards, ice storms, tornados and hurricanes. A first responder for the reservations, PWNA is quick to respond when disaster relief is needed. Some communities experience acute or chronic contaminated-water emergencies, and many face contaminated water year-round. Some 90,000 Native Americans are homeless; 40% live in sub-standard, overcrowded housing and the typical wait time for Tribal housing is three years or more. When disaster strikes, mainstream news coverage is low and outside aid is slow to come.
- ▶ **Program Purpose:** The purpose of PWNA's emergency services is to provide disaster relief, seasonal support and critical supplies for Native communities, shelters and Elders, and to support Tribal readiness to respond when disasters strike. PWNA rotates its seasonal readiness services to different Tribal communities each year to avoid creating dependency, but the level of need suggests increasing these services as funding permits.



PWNA was deemed an essential service by Tribal communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- ▶ **PWNA Impact:** The 2020 pandemic sparked continuous requests for emergency relief, and PWNA emergency services collectively helped about 73,921 people through:
  - More than 1 million pounds of staple foods, bottled water, hygiene kits, diapers, blankets and PPE, aiding more than 55,300 people impacted by COVID-19 and supporting stay-at-home orders to keep Elders safe across 25 reservations
  - Supplies for 14,402 residents at shelters for the aged, homeless, disabled and abused
  - Winter fuel for about 163 Rosebud, Northern Cheyenne, Zuni and Navajo Elders
  - Winter and summer emergency kits for about 2,405 Elders across 13 reservations in the Northern Plains and Southwest, providing blankets, batteries, candles, water, nonperishable food and other items to weather winter storms and/or water, sunscreen, bug spray and other basics to endure summer heat, storms and outages

With support of Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, FEMA members and Emergency Managers PWNA previously trained, we supported Tribal readiness for emergency response through:

- 507 people focused on CERT (community emergency response team) and online training
- Nearly 1,110 participants in community engagement activities and 35 in Zoom focus groups
- Continued emergency preparedness planning to build tribal readiness to respond when disaster strikes the Pine Ridge, Crow Creek, Cheyenne River and Lake Traverse nations

## Major Program: Food & Water

Related PWNA Programs: NPRA, SWRA, NRF, SNRF, SWIRC and NAA

- ▶ **Situational Impact:** Food insecurity increased nationwide due to COVID-19, demonstrating to many what Native Americans have been up against all along. Low food security – insufficient food quality or variety for dietary health – fuels high rates of diabetes and obesity when Native families must turn to less expensive packaged foods and meals devoid of fresh vegetables.  
Food hardship — the inability to afford enough food for yourself and your family — also increased (even pre-pandemic), especially for homes with children, according to a 2018 study by the Food & Action Center. The food hardship rate is 23% for Native families versus 16-19% for families nationwide. In fact, food aid has become a long-term solution for many, including those we serve. COVID-19 also magnified another hardship in Tribal communities – limited access to clean water.
- ▶ **Program Purpose:** The purpose of PWNA's Food & Water services is to ease food insecurity by increasing local food supply for Native Elders, children and families and supporting food sovereignty through gardens and local access to healthy foods.
- ▶ **PWNA Impact:** In 2020, we continued essential deliveries of food and water, aiding about 43,024 people through:
  - Food pantry boxes that helped about 15,186 people
  - Staple foods that helped senior centers/soup kitchens feed hot meals to about 11,392 Elders
  - Emergency, breakfast and bulk food for about 3,767 people
  - Holiday meals (Thanksgiving, Christmas) for about 12,679 people
  - Additional food and water provided through our COVID relief shipments
  - \$84,500 invested in community garden projects, with support of the Latter-Day Saints Church of Jesus Christ (LDS Charities) and the Melba Bayers Meyer Trust.

The food hardship rate is 23% for Native families, versus 16-19% for families nationwide.



Taking a longer view of food sovereignty, PWNA is now the facilitator of the Arizona Food Network working toward tribal food solutions statewide. Our VP of Programs holds a seat on the Arizona Food & Agriculture Policy Committee, and we continue to support the Native American Food Cohort sponsored by Newman's Own Foundation to identify improvements to Native food systems.

## Major Program: Education

Related PWNA Programs: AIEF

- ▶ **Situational Impact:** Education is one of the most important cornerstones of economic mobility and quality of life. It's a key to addressing the long-term poverty and other challenges facing the tribal communities we serve. Access to education was worsened in 2020 due to the extended mandate for distance learning, leaving many Native students to access WiFi in parking lots or on rooftops. High school dropout rates range from 30 up to 70% (varies by community), often due to lack of the basics (e.g., school supplies, clothing, adequate housing, transportation). About 17% of Native American students start college, and only 13% of Native Americans hold a college degree. Contrary to public perception, college is not free for Native Americans, but Native students are often slow to ask for aid, believing college is not an option for them. Thus, non-Native students are twice as likely to achieve an undergraduate degree.
- ▶ **Program Purpose:** The purpose of PWNA's Education services is to increase resources for Native education, support access and retention of Native students from pre-kindergarten through college and support professional development for emerging leaders.



**Education is a cornerstone of economic mobility and quality of life.**



- ▶ **PWNA Impact:** In 2020, PWNA continued impacting education on all fronts, reaching K-12 students, college students and professionals through leadership training, as follows:
  - School supplies for about 14,825 students at 56 partner schools
  - Literacy supplies to motivate reading and parent-child time for nearly 6,500 children
  - About 6,300 pairs of TOMS shoes distributed to Native students for school enhancement (and another 6,200 included in our school supply backpacks)
  - \$200,225 awarded in undergraduate and graduate scholarships
  - More than \$10,000 in grants to tribal colleges, universities, and other groups committed to Native education, impacting 57 Native scholars
  - Laptops awarded to numerous first-year students, with support of the Walmart Foundation
  - Mentoring of AIEF scholars and 4D Strong Women Cohort graduates by our collaborative partner, the PepsiCo RISE Native American employee resource group
  - 4D cohort training with White Mountain Apache tribal leaders in January 2020, adding to the 149 prior 4D graduates who continue to make positive strides for Tribal communities

## Major Program: Health

Related PWNA Programs: NPRA, SWRA, NRF, SNRF, SWIRC and NAA

- **Situational Impact:** The pandemic took a harsh toll, causing tribes to lose 1 in every 475 citizens (compared to 1 in every 825 whites). On rural reservations, the main medical care is the Indian Health Service (I.H.S.) – federally-operated clinics that are understaffed, underfunded and ill-equipped to respond to a pandemic. Only 500 clinics serve the 574 federally recognized tribes (less than 1 per reservation). Transportation is limited and crowded housing adds to health risk.



- **Program Purpose:** The purpose of PWNA's Health services is to support preventative care and health education offered by our Tribal partners and to help them motivate healthy lifestyles and community service. In 2020, PWNA supported Tribal programs providing home health check ins by phone and no-contact education such as by doorstep or tele-meetings when possible. They addressed diabetes at epidemic levels, obesity even for youth, tuberculosis seven times higher than for whites, more cancer-related disparities than any U.S. minority group, higher infant mortality, lower life expectancy for some men (mainly Plains), and the community need for PPE.

**Only 500 I.H.S. clinics serve the 574 federally recognized tribes (less than 1 per reservation).**



- **PWNA Impact:** PWNA supported healthy lifestyles for about 88,521 people, continued capacity building services, and aided community investment projects, as follows:

- Supplies for about 331 partners who supported COVID-19 check ins, quarantines, elderly needs, pre- and post-natal care, parenting, the homebound and others unable to access services
- Hygiene and infant supplies to motivate 82,299 people for health screening or education
- Supplies to assist 27 partners who conducted (pre-pandemic) community events focused on youth development, language and culture preservation, reaching 5,975 participants
- Building capacity by launching a virtual Train-the-Trainer (T3) series of Native chefs teaching healthy meal prep with ancestral and locally available foods, reaching 171 professionals who prepare meals for Elders and can impact the diets of 1,026 people, with support of Newman's Own Foundation (NOF)
- Hosting STRIVE, a virtual Indigenous foodways forum with 35 Native farmers, producers, ranchers and food as medicine practitioners sharing knowledge and skills, with NOF support
- Co-hosting the First Annual Lakota Food Summit with Lakota Food Sovereignty to help 41 Native youth integrate food, culture and food as medicine, with NOF support
- Helping fund a community agricultural center to support organic bee-keeping, honey processing and seed care for Yakanal: Indigenous Youth Cultural Exchange in New Laguna-NM, with support of LDS Charities
- Helping fund a freezer and cooler for food storage at Tu'i Bwa'ame (Good Food) Pantry, Tucson-AZ, with support of LDS Charities

## Major Program: Animal Welfare

Related PWNA Programs: RAR

- ▶ **Situational Impact:** Animal welfare and the problems created from overpopulated and stray animals are immense for some reservation communities, including disease, animal bites, rabies and other safety concerns. Because of this, PWNA supports reservation programs that spay, neuter and vaccinate animals of the reservation; educate communities on proper care of animals; and enable animal groups to care for more animals.
- ▶ **Program Purpose:** The purpose of our Animal Welfare services is to support programs concerned with animal welfare and related human health risk in remote, underserved tribal communities.
- ▶ **PWNA Impact:** In 2020, PWNA supported immediate and long-term community concerns related to animal welfare through:
  - \$88,000 in grants, enabling spay/neuter services for 290 animals and countering overpopulation and related community health risk on eight reservations, including Omaha, Fort Peck, Flathead and Lake Traverse reservations in the Northern Plains and the Cocopah, Colorado River, Hopi and Navajo reservations in the Southwest
  - Nearly 16,300 pounds of supplies to assist RAR partners during rescue, rehab and placement of about 2,344 animals
  - 27 shipments of supplies to support animal welfare on 6 reservations



**Animal welfare and the problems created from overpopulated and stray animals are immense for some reservation communities.**

## Major Program: Holiday Support

Related PWNA Programs: NPRA, SWRA, AIEF, NRF, SNRF, SWIRC and NAA

- ▶ **Situational Impact:** Native American families, including Elders and children on the reservations PWNA assists, are unable to celebrate the holidays with sufficient food, resources and ability to gather with family. Up to 61% of Native American children live in poverty or low-income households, many of them raised by grandparents on severely limited, fixed incomes such as social security – and 29% of Native Americans who are employed full-time live below poverty level. The overall rate of impoverishment across the hundreds of tribal communities PWNA serves ranges from 38% to 63%.
- ▶ **Program Purpose:** The purpose of our Holiday Support services is to assist our reservation partners with community engagement at times when Native families may be experiencing above-average disenfranchisement and mental health challenges related to the holidays.

**Up to 61% of Native children live  
in poverty or low-income  
households, many of them raised  
by grandparents.**

- ▶ **PWNA Impact:** After a difficult 2020, PWNA's holiday support brightened nearly 15,000 lives through:
  - Holiday stockings for approximately 9,492 delighted children
  - A socially distant visit from Santa with holiday stockings for 690 children
  - Holiday gift bags for approximately 4,648 Elders, filled with practical items such as blankets, gloves and hats, personal care items and/or fire extinguishers for immediate needs
  - Support for program partners who coordinated drive-through pickup and individual home deliveries of holiday stockings and gift bags, reaching Elders and children alike despite the pandemic

In addition to spreading cheer and meeting practical needs, PWNA partners also used these coordination activities to promote volunteerism and skill-building across 14 Northern Plains reservations and 14 Southwest reservations.



## Major Program: Public Education & Awareness

PWNA and Related Programs: NPRA, SWRA, AIEF, RAR, NRF, SNRF, SWIRC and NAA

- ▶ **Situational Impact:** Amid the rich culture and unity of tribal citizens, many Americans miss the other norm in many Tribal communities – the poverty and hardship. The harsh living conditions on the distant reservations we serve have conditions comparable to those in the developing world. Adding to this, stereotypes and misconceptions fuel false beliefs that Natives enjoy casino wealth or government entitlements (free housing, health care and education). PWNA is committed to dispelling these long-held misconceptions and encouraging inclusivity and support for the self-determined goals of the tribes.
- ▶ **Program Purpose:** The purpose of our Public Education and Awareness effort is to provide accurate information about Native American cultures and conditions on the reservations, as well as PWNA programs and impact, while addressing persistent misconceptions that deter opportunity and social equity for Native peoples.



**Amid the rich culture and unity of tribal life, Americans often miss the other norm in Tribal communities – the poverty and hardship.**



- ▶ **PWNA Impact:** As COVID-19 took its severe toll on Native Americans in 2020, many U.S. groups and individuals awoke to the decades of disparities our Tribal citizens have faced. Many Americans grasped for the first time how those disparities translate to daily challenges such as food insecurity, overcrowded housing, lack of internet and inadequate healthcare. PWNA helped by:
  - Reaching a potential audience of more than 1 billion people with public education about current challenges and realities on the reservations – including the factors unique to tribes such as Navajo and others. We achieved this through 130 news articles, press releases, radio and TV mentions, expanded social media channels, videos, coffee chats with groups like the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, relevant content on our website, and timely original content on our blog.
  - Pre-pandemic, running a five-minute PSA on PBS channels nationwide, featuring award-winning actor Wes Studi (Cherokee) to highlight disparities for tribes and solutions that are underfunded.
  - Partnering with Studi in second quarter of 2020 to develop a PSA alerting America about the tribes being hard hit by COVID and asking for donations to support our emergency COVID deliveries to the tribes, and initiating a health PSA with Studi and the CDC, leading to more than 1 million views for public education in tribal communities.

To learn more, we invite you to read our [2020 Annual Report](#) or to contact us by email or phone.

## Contact Us

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**Founded in 1990, PWNA is a go-to resource  
for solutions-oriented philanthropy in Tribal communities.**

**The most important thing PWNA provides is hope.**