Tribal Relations Training
Key Learnings: Action Recommendations

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Akomawt Educational Initiative

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Themes Addressed in Previous Sessions:

1. Terminology, importance of relationships and reciprocity

1. Complexity of Tribal Nations/ Native Communities (Citizenry, blood quantum, descendants, reconnecting relatives)

1. Fraud Prevention (historical context, how to practice fraud prevention today)

Action Realm 1: Education

- Do your homework to learn about the Native populations in your state.
- Identify organizations in your state that are already interacting with Native communities and have garnered their trust.
- Show up.
- Don’t be afraid to ask questions - but do take responsibility for your own learning.
- Seek opportunities for formal training.
- Learn about policies that affect Native arts and cultures.

Action Realm 2: Respectful and Reciprocal Relationships

- Cultivate connections.
- Earn trust.
- Secure Native expertise on your team.
- Ensure continuity of effort.
- Cultivate relationships in three spheres:
  - Indigenous artists/creators
  - Native organizations
  - Tribal governments

Nathan Bush, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, practices traditional Cherokee copper art and blacksmithing. He works at the Oconaluftee Indian Village in Cherokee, North Carolina. Photo courtesy of Jesse Barber and South Arts

Action Realm 3: Access to Resources

- Take stock of funds your agency has provided to tribes, Native - serving organizations and Native artists.
- Provide resources to organizations and programs that Native communities themselves have created for the purpose of cultural development, including:
  - cultural programs or arts councils run by tribes
  - tribal museums, libraries or archives
  - cultural programs offered by urban Indian associations, arts centers or intertribal Associations
  - galleries, collectives or cooperatives led by Native artists
  - arts programs of tribal colleges and universities
  - powwows, Native arts markets and festivals

Action Realm 3: Access to Resources (Cont'd)

- Simplify grant application, reporting and matching requirements.
- Center Native voices and Native assets in program planning.
- Provide technical assistance to support applications from Native artists and organizations.
- Think outside the direct grant - making box.

Chrystal Mars-Baker (Narragansett/ Niantic), community corn braiding event at Ashawaug Farm.
Photo Courtesy of Ashawaug Farm

Action Realm 4: Communications

- Highlight Native contributions to the state's arts and culture.
- Establish regular communications.
- Be transparent about your agency's actions.

Janice Champlin Spears (Narragansett) holding great great nephew Sowaniu Spears (Narragansett/Diné/ Ojibwe/ Choctaw/ Chickasaw) in cradleboard. Photo Courtesy of e.Spears

Thank You

Resources:

NASAA: Strengthening State Arts Agency Relationships with Native Communities

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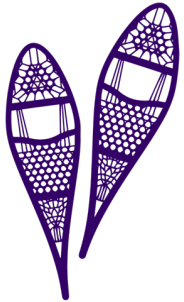
Bonus Reels

Available at NASAA’s Tribal Relations Training Sessions Landing Page

Akomawt is the Passamaquoddy word for “snowshoe path”, the symbol driving our mission. The snowshoe path forges ahead leaving behind a trail others can follow. As the path is used, it becomes easier to traverse. Akomawt Educational Initiative is dedicated to furthering knowledge of Native America through innovative learning approaches designed to impact how we teach history and contemporary social issues. Our goal is to leave this world better than when we found it; our tool is education. Collaborating with educators in schools, institutions of higher learning, and public history sites, we will help generate new learning paths that create awareness and informed dialogue about American Indian history, contemporary Native lifeways and Indigenous futures.

Our vision is to effect a lasting positive and informed change to the dominant narrative of how Native histories and cultures are taught in America. Through our work we hope to foster greater understanding of Indigenous North America with an emphasis on social change. Our educational resources will cultivate better, more complete understandings of the history and contemporary issues of Native American peoples. Akomawt, the snowshoe path, changes and renews with the seasons just as we work to bring change and renewal to the way we educate our world about Native America. You can find us by the tracks we leave behind.



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