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Economic & Workforce Development

The federal government has a trust responsibility to support sustained prosperity and economic security for tribal nations, their communities, and citizens throughout Indian Country. For Indian Country to progress and achieve prosperity, tribes must be able to protect and enhance their tribal lands and generate self-sustaining income from them. For FY 2014, the federal government must take actions to address Indian Country's chronic business and employment disparities by funding economic drivers that could make a real difference in reservation businesses and economies—such as business and procurement technical assistance, planning and feasibility study funding, financing of all sorts (loans, loan guarantees, equity investments, surety bonding, bond financing) and export assistance. Tribes cannot attract or grow competitive businesses on tribal lands that do not have a supportive infrastructure—transportation, broadband and wireless communication, streamlined property acquisition and leasing of Indian lands, and more infrastructure deployment on those lands to facilitate economic growth and job creation. More emphasis must be placed on programs that can maximize Indian Country's access to the funding, tools, and markets to promote domestic and international business opportunities.

President Obama and key Congressional leaders have stressed the importance of creating a strong and competitive workforce. Although tribal nations have often been overlooked, tribal governments have created effective avenues to educate and train its citizens through tribal colleges and vocational training. Despite these remarkable efforts, however, 25 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives are living in poverty, while 13 percent of the US lives at or below the poverty line. As tribes continue to engage in business development and economic growth, the Department of Labor has an opportunity to strengthen and sustain job creation in some of America's most rural and underdeveloped areas.

Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis has established a vision to achieve “good jobs for everyone.” The Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) workforce programs have a critical role to play in realizing the Secretary's vision of good jobs.

ETA provides high quality employment assistance, labor market information, job training, and income support through the administration of the following programs: adults, dislocated workers, youth, and targeted populations authorized by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA); Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) authorized by the Trade Act of 1974, as amended; Employment Services authorized by the Wagner-Peyser Act; Unemployment Insurance (UI) authorized by the Social Security Act; Foreign Labor Certification (FLC) activities authorized by the Immigration and Nationality Act; apprenticeship programs authorized by the National Apprenticeship Act; the Office of Job Corps; YouthBuild; the Indian and Native American training program; the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker program; the Workforce Data Quality Initiative; and the Senior Community Service Employment Program authorized by the Older Americans Act. When adequately funded, several of these initiatives have the potential to strengthen workforce development across Indian Country.

By prioritizing the creation and support of programs and funding that expand tribal economic security, the federal government can partner with tribes to build sustained prosperity that benefits tribal nations, regional economies, and the nation as a whole. Indian Country's recommendations call for sustainable federal funding for programs that provide incentives and leverage non-federal dollars to catalyze economic growth for American Indians and Alaska Natives. To partner with tribal nations to spur economic development, growth, and job creation, Congress must enact appropriations measures that enable federal departments and agencies to streamline and implement Native programs more efficiently and effectively in FY 2014, with at least the same funding levels as FY 2013.

Key Recommendations

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agriculture Appropriations Bill

Rural Development Programs, Rural Business-Cooperative Services

- *Provide a minimum of \$2.5 billion for USDA Rural Development, including a minimum of \$915 million in Loan Authority for the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS).*

The Department of Agriculture's Rural Development programs (USDA-RD) support a broad array of economic development activities in Indian Country by providing loans, loan guarantees, grants and other assistance for business development, telecommunications, water systems, and other infrastructure deployment. From 2001 to 2012, USDA-RD assistance to tribal communities exceeded \$3.4 billion to support job training, business development, community economic development, strategic community planning and self-help initiatives, entrepreneurial training, and broadband deployment. In FY 2012, the USDA-RD programs provided more than \$16 million in economic support to American Indian and Alaska Native enterprises through its Rural Business and Cooperative Service programs.

- *Provide a minimum of \$825 million in loan authority for the Rural Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program, including a target of more than \$10 million for Indian Country applicants.*

In 2012, USDA-Rural Development investments in businesses and job creation in Indian Country totaled more than \$9.2 million from the Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program, out of the slightly more than \$812 million available (down from \$1 billion in recent years).

The purpose of the Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program is to improve, develop, or finance business, industry, and employment, and improve the economic and environmental climate in rural communities. This purpose is achieved by bolstering the existing private credit structure through the guarantee of quality loans that provide lasting community benefits. Providing loan guarantees to tribal businesses and governments helps entities gain access to capital that is otherwise unavailable. With its focus on developing business, industry, and employment in rural communities – as well as its relative lack of expense or risk to the federal government – this is a smart investment in tribal nations that should be continued.

- *Provide a minimum of \$30 million for the Rural Business Enterprise Grant program, with funding for tribal communities provided at a minimum of \$3.8 million.*

In FY 2012, the USDA awarded more than \$3.5 million under the Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG) program to 32 grantees to support small business and job creation opportunities and train workers in Native communities. The purpose of the RBEG program is to foster the development of small and emerging business enterprises with less than \$1 million in projected gross revenues in rural areas. Grant funds may be used for a variety of projects to build local and regional food systems, including land development, road and building construction, the purchase of equipment, training and technical assistance, and the start-up and/or operation of revolving loan funds. The RBEG program's momentum should be sustained by funding the program at no less than \$3.8 million.

- *Maintain funding of \$1 million or more for Rural Business Opportunity Grants (RBOG) funds for tribal communities.*

In FY 2012, almost \$1 million was awarded specifically to Native grantees under the Rural Business Opportunity Grants (RBOG) program (down from \$2.478 million in FY 2011). The program focuses on strategic planning activities to improve economic conditions in rural areas, particularly in underserved communities. The RBOG program was not included in the President's budget for FY 2013. Given the need for continued business and economic development in rural communities, and the regional focus and the mission of this program, the tribal funding under this program must be maintained at a level of \$1 million or more. Alternatively, funding for the Rural Business Enterprise Grant program could be increased to \$4.8 million with a \$1 million set-aside for tribal communities.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agriculture Appropriations Bill

Foreign Agriculture Service, Market Access Program

- *Maintain a minimum of \$200 million in funding for the Market Access Program, with a minimum of \$1.25 million in funding for American Indian and Alaska Native agriculture and ranching support.*

Under the Market Access Program (MAP), Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funds are used to support the cost of overseas marketing and promotional activities for tribal, state, regional, and non-profit organizations, cooperatives, and small businesses on a cost-share basis. The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 set mandatory funding for the MAP at \$200 million annually through Fiscal Year 2012. For FY 2014, it is imperative that the MAP be reauthorized and funding remain level or exceed prior funding to support the Administration's export goals, as well as the export of US agricultural products. Equally important to Indian Country is continuing the financial support provided by the MAP program to tribal agriculture via the Intertribal Agriculture Council (a participant in the MAP program) to support the increasingly successful Native export activities and ensure continued successes in exporting—and the related growth in jobs for American Indian and Alaska Native agriculture.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Bill

Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)

- Provide \$30 million for the Minority Business Development Agency.

When created by Executive Order in 1971, the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) was established with the key mission of supporting minority business development centers and received substantial funding (about \$63 million). Over the years, MBDA's funding has shrunk by over 50 percent to \$30.3 million for FY 2012 and \$28.6 million requested for FY 2013. MBDA recently revamped its cooperative assistance grants to Minority Business Centers (MBCs), eliminating the specific Native American Business Enterprise Centers. About \$13 million of MBDA's budget is disbursed to the MBCs to provide business consulting, advice on business financing, and some procurement technical assistance to minority businesses and entrepreneurs, and tribal enterprises.

With an increased level of funding, MBDA could sustain and expand support for these centers which provide important assistance for businesses to grow and contribute to our nation's overall economic recovery. The MBDA also supports minority contractors' teaming efforts to pursue federal contracts, directs efforts to track minority business data, collaborates with the Office of Native American Affairs, and is increasing its focus on global trade.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Bill

Office of Native American Affairs

- Fund the Office of Native American Affairs at a minimum of \$1.25 million as part of the Commerce Department Management Budget.

In the late 1990s, the Secretary of Commerce established an Office of Native American Affairs (ONAA) within the Secretary's office that was codified by the enactment of the Native American Business Development, Trade Promotion and Tourism Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-464) (the 2000 Act). Since then, funding for the Office has been piecemeal and very limited. To ensure the ONAA receives adequate support to serve its essential mission, there should be independent funding made available through Commerce's Departmental Management budget to enable the ONAA to implement Indian policy initiatives and to expand Native American business development initiatives both domestically and internationally, especially given the reduced focus of MBDA's MBCs on specific Native American business assistance. Independent funding would allow the Office to draw support from and collaborate with other components in Commerce to address the unique economic challenges and opportunities in Native communities and to fulfill the Secretary's duties prescribed by the 2000 Act that cannot be achieved adequately with the current funding level. Those duties include: serving as the economic development lead within the Department to coordinate with other cabinet departments and agencies; conducting outreach to tribes, tribal enterprises, and Native businesses focused on domestic and international trade promotion; supporting tourism-related activities and demonstration projects; conducting trade and tourism missions abroad; and hosting, co-hosting, and supporting Native programs and conferences devoted to business and economic development, business and financial management training, marketing and procurement technical assistance, domestic and international trade promotion, and intertribal, interstate, and international tourism. The Office could also be instrumental in fostering business incubators that assist Native-owned businesses.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Office of Native American Affairs

- *Fund the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Office of Native American Affairs at a minimum of \$1.25 million.*

Funding for Native outreach in the Small Business Administration is too low, especially when compared to other SBA program investments and in light of the entrepreneurial potential in Indian Country that could benefit tribal and regional economies and help fuel our national recovery. Outreach by the Office of Native American Affairs (ONAA) has been increasing with ongoing initiatives in business development and tribal and business executive training. Funding this office at \$1.25 million is important as ONAA continues its efforts to increase SBA's impact in Native communities. At this level, ONAA may continue to provide assistance to Native communities through training programs such as the Emerging Leaders Program (10 Native communities were selected as training sites in 2012 and over 150 Native American small business owners participated), and to help facilitate access for tribally-owned and individual Native-owned businesses to SBA's various loan programs, loan guarantees, and surety bond guarantees. As outreach expands, SBA's presence in Native communities is growing, evidenced by its support in SBA lending to Native American-owned small businesses to a level of \$90 million in FY 2012. Furthermore, ONAA has been integral in the facilitation of Native contractors' participation in SBA's 8(a) Business development program, HUB Zone, women business, veteran and service disabled veteran business, and other small business contracting programs. ONAA is a critical resource for tribally-owned and Native-owned businesses as it works to ensure these businesses gain access to needed capital, build capacity, generate increased revenues, create more jobs, create tribal business ordinances, and strengthen the economic security of Native communities suffering from decades-long economic hardship. At a time of economic recovery and with increasing tribal participation in SBA programs, it is crucial to provide \$1.25 million to continue SBA outreach to tribes, tribal enterprises, and Native entrepreneurs to help strengthen national prosperity.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Defense Appropriations Bill, Operations & Maintenance – Defense-Wide

Procurement Technical Assistance Centers, Defense Logistics Agency

- *Fund the American Indian Procurement Technical Assistance Program at \$3.6 million within the \$36 million funding for the Procurement Technical Assistance Program.*

For decades, the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) has supported the Procurement Technical Assistance Program (PTAP) with cooperative agreement assistance to regional, statewide, and local centers (PTACs). Many of these centers are housed within educational institutions that help support their operations. In the early 1990s, DLA began to fund American Indian Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (AIPTACs) under the proviso that such centers serve at least one Bureau of Indian Affairs area. Six such AIPTACs now operate across the country in California, Georgia, Montana, Oklahoma, Washington, and Wisconsin. Each center is run by a non-profit organization that supports itself by augmenting its DLA funds with other outside income derived from training events and business conferences. AIPTACs offer valuable assistance to tribal and other Native-owned companies in navigating the large, complex federal procurement market, winning government contracts, and complying with myriad government procurement and other regulatory requirements. With contractors struggling due to the impact of the recession, Congress has consistently supported funding increases for the PTAP—up to \$34.3 million for FY 2012, with \$3.6 million set-aside for six AIPTACs operated by Native American organizations. Minimum PTAP FY 2014 funding should be provided at \$36 million, including the \$3.6 million set-aside for AIPTACs.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Defense Appropriations Bill, Procurement – General Provisions

Indian Incentive Program

- *Fund the Indian Incentive Payment Program at a minimum of \$15 million.*

Authorized by Section 504 of the Indian Finance Act (25 U.S.C. 1544), a contractor may receive additional compensation of five percent of the amount paid or to be paid to a Native American subcontractor or supplier under a federal contract. Since FY 1991, Congress annually has appropriated funds for DOD to make these Indian Incentive Payments (IIP) to contractors that subcontract work to Native-owned subcontractors under DOD contracts. Since FY 2009, Congress has appropriated \$15 million annually for the IIP program, but demand has always outstripped the funding made available to pay requests by contractors that must submit documentation to substantiate their use of Native subcontractors and suppliers. The backlog of IIP requests that have already been approved for payment continues to grow, fully justifying the need for at least the same level of funding for the IIP.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Interior - Environment Appropriations Bill

Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (OIEED) Guarantees for Indian Loans, Surety Bonds, Development Bonds

- *Fund the OIEED Indian Loan Guarantee Program at a minimum of \$15 million.*

The Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development's Division of Capital Investment oversees the Indian Loan Guarantee Program and loan subsidy program, and has authority to support surety bonding for Indian contractors. The OIEED Loan Guarantee Program is the only federal guarantee program that facilitates the process for eligible tribal and individual Native borrowers to obtain conventional lender financing for businesses and economic development projects. BIA-certified lenders are those willing and able to lend to tribes and Native businesses on reservations and which submit to tribal court jurisdiction (whereas SBA-certified lenders must adjudicate loan defaults in federal court). OIEED also operates a revolving credit facility, where the SBA has no such support. As lending conditions begin to improve, the OIEED can readily assist Native borrowers seeking guarantees for loans and lines of credit for working capital, payrolls for hiring new employees, and even assurances sufficient for sureties to provide performance bonds to tribal- and other Native-owned contractors. One BIA-certified lender alone received Native business borrowers' requests that could have exhausted the FY 2011 limit of \$82.74 million in loans subject to guarantee. For FY 2012, the program received \$7.114 million for its credit subsidy to leverage for use in guaranteeing about \$73.4 million in loan principal. For FY 2013, the House recommendation was \$10 million for the credit subsidy to support total loan principal of \$157,937,648—a more appropriate level given high demand for financing in Indian Country. Recognizing that financial security and prosperity are impossible to achieve without sufficient access to capital, Congress should authorize a substantial increase in the aggregate limit on Indian loan and surety bond guarantees for FY 2014.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Interior - Environment Appropriations Bill

Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (OIEED)

- *Fund a minimum of \$25 million for OIEED, with at least \$5 million specifically to advance its energy and economic development initiatives, fund business plans and feasibility studies, and assist with model tribal leasing and environmental ordinances.*

The Department of the Interior's Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (OIEED) has launched many creative and successful initiatives to encourage energy resource development on tribal lands, spur economic and business development assistance and training, expand job and skills training opportunities, and leverage limited federal funding to provide access to capital for business development.

OIEED receives about \$21 million annually, but very little of its budget is available specifically for economic development support. For FY 2013, OIEED-related budget requests included \$2.3 million for economic development, \$11 million for job placement services (funding that flows directly to tribes through the Division of Workforce Development), and \$18.4 million for minerals and mining. OIEED has been increasingly effective in stretching its limited funding to launch creative and successful initiatives, including: technical assistance and capacity building workshops and support for feasibility studies to advance energy resource development on tribal lands, spur economic and business development, expand job and skills training opportunities, and improve and streamline the delivery of financing to tribes, tribal enterprises and individual Indian-owned businesses for business development. Key to the OIEED's effectiveness is its direct report to and collaborative working relationship with the Office of the Secretary. That structure should be maintained, even if the Division of Workforce Development is moved to Indian Services within the BIA.

In addition to continuing OIEED's successful activities, tribes are requesting more funding to enable it to:

- 1) provide funding to requesting tribes through their 638 contracts for business plans or feasibility studies for business and economic development projects;
- 2) expand the scope and usefulness of its Indian Loan Guarantee Program to finance more business operations and expansions, provide standby letters of credit that could encourage sureties to provide needed surety bonding, and finance start-up energy and economic development projects;
- 3) expand use of the Section 477 program and other job training initiatives and provide more technical assistance (including hosting workshops, developing best practices guides and otherwise providing guidance on preparing business plans, repairing credit records, and completing loan applications);
- and 4) in light of the passage of the HEARTH Act in 2012, launch a new initiative to develop a model tribal environmental code that tribes can consider, adapt to their own circumstances, and implement along with new tribal ordinances governing the leasing of their tribal lands for energy and economic development projects and other purposes. Also, with additional funding, OIEED could establish the grant program authorized under Title V of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 that has never been funded and that would provide important funding to develop tribal capacity in managerial and technical capabilities, to develop energy resource integration projects, and to establish and maintain environmental programs in support of energy programs. This funding would be especially useful to tribes seeking to establish leasing/environmental programs pursuant to the provisions of the HEARTH Act because such grants can be used to establish the tribal regulatory programs necessary to qualify.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Interior - Environment Appropriations Bill

Community and Economic Development

- *Restore funding for the Community and Economic Development Program at a minimum of \$1.4 million.*

The Community and Economic Development Program was not funded in FY 2012. With the recognition that community and economic development in Indian Country require strategic planning and technical assistance for long-term programs designed to provide economic stability and jobs for surrounding communities, tribes request restoring funding for this program to its FY 2011 level.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Financial Services Appropriations Bill

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund

- *Maintain a minimum of \$15 million for technical and financial assistance under the Native American CDFI Assistance Program.*

The Native Initiative of the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund has expanded access to capital for individuals and small businesses in Indian Country. Each year the CDFI Fund's Native Initiatives Financial Assistance and Technical Assistance component, the Native American CDFI Assistance Program (NACA Program), makes awards that assist financial institutions with a primary mission of serving Native communities to increase their lending services and financial products, as well as to build their own internal capacity to serve their target markets. Native CDFIs offer a broad range of loan products and development services. The NACA Program funds Native CDFIs to provide micro loans, small business loans, anti-predatory lending options, and housing loans, including first and second mortgages, rehab loans and refinancing. Native CDFIs also offer financial literacy and entrepreneurial development training, homebuyer education and foreclosure prevention counseling, credit counseling, small business planning, debt relief counseling, information to warn against predatory lending, Individual Development Accounts, and free tax preparation services in Native communities across the country.

Each year the CDFI Fund has been operating, it has received more applications from existing Native CDFIs to expand their lending capacity and from new applicants for technical assistance to start up new Native CDFIs. In FY 2012, the NACA Program received 71 applications for funding, totaling \$23 million in requests. With 73 certified Native CDFIs and an equal amount in the certification pipeline, it is expected that the demand for support under the NACA Program will increase. Increased funding should be appropriated for the NACA Program to support current initiatives and emerging Native CDFIs and to continue specialized capacity building training as part of the CDFI's Funds Capacity Building Initiative. Additional resources should be dedicated to updating the Native American Lending Study, now more than 10 years old, which will provide crucial data not available elsewhere on the status of financial infrastructure and lending practices across Indian Country.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations Bill

Employment and Training Administration, YouthBuild Program

- Restore the YouthBuild Program funding to a minimum of \$102.5 million, restore the rural and tribal set-aside in the YouthBuild program, and reinstate a dedicated 10 percent rural and tribal set-aside of at least \$10.25 million.

The YouthBuild program is a workforce development program that provides significant academic and occupational skills training and leadership development to youth ages 16-24. YouthBuild provides services to approximately 7,000 youth annually by re-engaging them in innovative alternative education programs that provide individualized instruction as they work towards earning either a GED or high school diploma, as well as fosters work skills so that youth can be competitive candidates in the job market. Youth participate in public construction projects while attending classes to obtain their high school diploma or GED.

YouthBuild reports that since it was established as a federal program in 1992, 120,000 YouthBuild students have built 22,000 units of affordable housing in low-income communities in 46 states and the District of Columbia. When the program was transferred from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to the Department of Labor in 2007, the 10 percent set-aside for rural and tribal programs was eliminated. Additionally, in 2011, due to a 28 percent cut in YouthBuild appropriations, over 18,000 applicants to YouthBuild programs were turned away.⁴¹

The YouthBuild program recruits youth that have been adjudicated, aged out of foster care, dropped out of high school, and others at risk of not having access to workforce training. In 2010, 4,252 youth participated in the program and had a completion rate of 78 percent. According to YouthBuild, 60 percent of those that completed the program were placed in jobs or further education.⁴² There are a number of tribal YouthBuild programs in several states, and at least four percent of YouthBuild participants are Native. Given the recent reduction in tribal YouthBuild programs, significant unemployment and housing challenges in Indian Country, and the growing Native youth population, it is essential that the 10 percent rural and tribal set-aside be restored.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations Bill

Employment and Training Administration, Indian and Native American Program

- Fund the Department of Labor's Indian and Native American Program (INAP) at a minimum of \$60.5 million.
- Fund the Native American Employment and Training Council at \$125,000 from non-INAP resources.

Reducing the education and employment disparity between Native people and other groups requires a concentrated effort that provides specific assistance to enhance education and employment opportunities, to create pathways to careers and skilled employment, and to secure a place for Native people within the nation's middle class. The Workforce Improvement Act (WIA) Section 166 program serves the training and employment needs of over 30,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives via a network of 178 grantees through the Comprehensive Service Program (Adult) and Supplemental Youth Service Program (Youth) and the Indian Employment and Training and Related Services Demonstration Act of 1992, Public Law 102-477.

Because the WIA Section 166 program is the only federal employment and job training program that serves American Indians and Alaska Natives who reside both on and off reservations, it is imperative that funding be maintained for this program. For Native citizens living on remote reservations or in Alaska Native villages, it can be difficult to access the state and local workforce systems. In these areas, the WIA Section 166 program is the sole employment and training provider.

Since 2003, the Workforce Investment Act (the Act) has been up for reauthorization; and over this ten-year period, the Act has not accounted for the population growth of tribal communities, nor the economic environment that has drastically changed. The Act authorizes the INAP to be funded at “not less than \$55 million,” but Section 166 is currently funded at approximately \$47 million. The Act also authorizes the Native American Employment and Training Council to advise the Secretary on the operation and administration of INAP, but it uses funds that are intended for INAP grantees. Since the current INAP funding is already below \$55 million, the Secretary should use other streams of funding to support its advisory council. Without an increase in funding, few tribes are able to benefit from the support and training activities for employment opportunities in Indian Country.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Bill

Census Bureau

- *Continue support for the Census Bureau, the American Community Survey, 2020 Census planning and other federal statistical programs that tribal leaders and advocates use to understand the social and economic health of their communities.*

Effective policymaking to address the challenges of improving the socioeconomic status and well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native people depends on accurate and reliable data. Policymakers at the tribal, federal, and state levels depend on the Census Bureau’s data, including the ACS, to develop policy that effectively meets the needs of Native people. Fulfilling the federal government’s trust responsibility to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes requires accurate data on tribal needs and resources.

Analysis of American Indian and Alaska Native communities all rely heavily on data from the US Census Bureau, including the American Community Survey (ACS), Current Population Survey, and other surveys. The continuation of funding for the ACS and 2020 Census planning will be critical to the sustained progress of Indian Country and all Native people in the United States. Census data has been decisive in guiding the development of effective federal policy that promotes economic development in Indian Country. Before the recession in 2007, tribes had made tremendous progress under the policy of Indian self-determination in reversing decades of poverty and unemployment. Census data was important for documenting the success of investing in tribal self-governance. As tribes partner with the federal government, state governments, and other allies to address the challenges around improving the status and wellbeing of Native people, accurate and reliable data is paramount.