

Bay Mills Indian Community
Brimley, Michigan 49715

**Grand Traverse Band
of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians**
Suttons Bay, Michigan 49682

Hannahville Indian Community
Wilson, Michigan 49896

**Saginaw Chippewa
Indian Tribe**
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858

**Little Traverse Bay
Bands of Odawa Indians**
Harbor Springs, Michigan 49740

**Nottawaseppi Huron
Band of The Potawatomi**
Fulton, Michigan 49502



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Keweenaw Bay Indian Community
Baraga, Michigan 49908

**Lac Vieux Desert Band
of Lake Superior Chippewa**
Watersmeet, Michigan 49969

**Sault Ste. Marie
Tribe of Chippewa Indians**
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan 49783

Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians
Dowagiac, Michigan 49047

**Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish
(Gun Lake Tribe)**
Dorr, Michigan 49323

**Little River Band
of Ottawa Indians**
Manistee, Michigan 49660

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Six Tribes in Michigan Show Success Expanding Tribal Food Access

“The tribal food programs have assisted my family in making a healthier lifestyle switch that will last a lifetime. We will continue to use the tools gifted to us and share the knowledge with family, friends, and the community,” said Kristine Maki, a tribal citizen at Keweenaw Bay Indian Community.

The Michigan Tribal Food Access Collaborative started in April 2017, a partnership between six Federally Recognized Tribes, Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan, Michigan Health Endowment Fund, and Michigan Public Health Institute. The project enhances the nutrition landscape in tribal communities. Participating tribes included Bay Mills Indian Community, Hannahville Indian Community, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, and Pokagon Band of Potawatomi.

Hannahville Indian Community located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan is one of many tribal communities looking to help families increase their access to healthy whole foods at affordable prices, which is difficult in rural communities. “The Michigan Tribal Food Access Collaborative allowed us to stretch our range of outreach to those community members who would benefit from nutrition education and activities,” said Kelly Hansen, Hannahville Indian Community Health Educator

In two years, participating tribes went from 47 to 106 community partners. Community outreach activities included: nutrition education, cooking classes, food tastings, and distribution of materials. Tribes reported hosting 29 events in year one reaching about 900 people and 286 events in year two reaching about 17,040 people, collectively.

Elizabeth Leffler, Community Health Outreach Supervisor, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Department of Health Services reported “one of the biggest changes the program has helped to impact was getting a policy in place with medical providers to have them initiate conversations around BMI and health concerns during children’s wellness appointments. Providers are having these conversations with families earlier and completing referrals for at-risk children to work with a dietician for three months.”

Tribal healthcare providers were given a variety of resources, education and tools focused on health behaviors, risk prevention, pediatric nutrition, and referrals to improve pediatric obesity screening rates and monitoring for their patient populations. At least four tribal health centers and a number of other communities through the National Native Network received training on improving the effective use of patient data within the electronic health record, education on pediatric obesity, type 2 diabetes and other health and nutrition related topics.

Each tribe completed a food resource assessment to capture a snapshot of food access points in their communities. Emily VanderKlok, Community Health Outreach Manager, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi noted that “our food distribution has really improved on the reservation. We’ve made strong relationships with local farms, with one of them bringing veggie boxes once a week. We’ve also incorporated these veggie boxes into some targeted population programs, including the maternal-infant program and the youth program.

“I feel that the Michigan Tribal Food Access Collaborative has allowed a unique opportunity for our community. We have been able for the first time ever to work with youth in a full circle educational, scientific and cultural process of the importance of gardening and being seed savers for our community. We are hoping to reach more people each year with this effort. Future plans are for the children to sell garden vegetables at the Bay Mills and Brimley Farmer’s Market, along with sharing the knowledge they obtained with family. I am very excited to see this work continue and watch the children become leaders in growing sustainable healthy foods for community members to consume,” said Angela Johnston, MTFAC Coordinator at Bay Mills Indian Community.

Through continued commitment of local and statewide partners, the tribes participating in the Michigan Tribal Food Access Collaborative hope to continue to build on these early multi-component successes in the future by engaging local convenience stores to provide more fresh whole food options, expanding the learning community, continuing to work with health providers and clinics as well as children and families to educate on healthy Anishinaabe lifestyles and eating.

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The Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan, Inc. is a 501(C)3 non-profit corporation duly organized under a state charter filed April 16, 1968. The agency represents all twelve federally recognized tribes in Michigan. The agency is divided into several different divisions, including: Headstart; Early Headstart; health services; behavioral health; environmental services; child, family, and education services; and administration. The agency employs approximately 160 employees. 35 of these employees are based in the agency’s central office in Sault Ste. Marie, while member tribes have offices and staff on site. Visit <http://www.itcmi.org/> to learn more about the agency. The Michigan Tribal Food Access Collaborative is funded by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund.

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