

July 2019



# Society of American Indian Government Employees | 2019-2021 Strategic Plan

# Purpose



*Society of American Indian  
Government Employees*

## **What is the purpose of the SAIGE Strategic Plan?**

Strategy and planning is about determining what's most important to do and then figuring out how best to get those things done. Strategic plans are living documents intended to provide a framework for the next two years but it is not intended to constrain additional efforts. Adapting to change is constant and some instances may require taking actions not included in the Strategic Plan.

Through continuous monitoring, the success of actions identified in the Strategic Plan will be determined annually. In some cases, strategic restructuring will be necessary.

## **How was the Strategic Plan developed?**

In 2019, the Board of Directors completed a Strategic Planning survey. The results of the survey were analyzed and then discussed at the June 2019 annual board meeting. Through the survey and subsequent discussions, the Board identified relevant issues and priorities for inclusion in the 2019- 2021 SAIGE Strategic Plan.

# Mission Statements



To increase cultural competence and awareness of American Indians and Alaska Natives, Tribal sovereignty and the history and obligations of the Federal Indian Trust responsibility within government entities.

To establish a supportive national network that empowers American Indian and Alaska Native federal, tribal, state, and local government employees to excel in professional endeavors.

To increase visibility, inclusion and advancement opportunities for American Indian and Alaska Native government employees.

To provide a national forum for the discussion of issues and topics affecting American Indian and Alaska Native government employees and the identification of solutions.

## **The importance and need for SAIGE is undeniable.**

American Indians and Alaska Natives have been described as the highest regulated population in the world. At the same time, American Indians and Alaska Natives are the most underrepresented population in most government departments and agencies and a 2018 research project found that most federal officials know little about Natives and tribal communities. This underrepresentation and absence of American Indians and Alaska Natives contributes significantly to decisions and actions that undermine tribal sovereignty and harm the health and well-being of tribal communities. For instance, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reported in 2018 that Native Americans are being killed in police encounters at a higher rate than any other racial or ethnic group.

The Strategic Plan outlines key priorities that will be accomplished by enhancing educational opportunities, increasing communication, strengthening support networks, and pursuing efforts to increase American Indian and Alaska Native representation in governmental entities.

# Guiding Principles

- 1.** American Indians and Alaska Natives are underrepresented in most government departments and agencies and almost non-existent in leadership roles.
- 2.** A lack of cultural competency and knowledge about American Indians, Alaska Natives, tribal communities, and sovereignty negatively affect policy and program administration.
- 3.** Narratives about American Indians and Alaska Natives set by others can have negative effects, hinder the success of Native employees working in government institutions and harm our communities.
- 4.** Increasing Native representation in government institutions will prove beneficial for both the institutions and tribal communities.

Each year since 2004 SAIGE developed and implemented a national training program (NTP).

Attendance at the NTPs has generally increased over time and SAIGE routinely reaches more than 300 Federal, Tribal, State, and Local government employees.

Attendees leave the NTP with increased knowledge and awareness of the Trust Responsibilities, professional development skills, and an improved ability to develop effective inter-governmental working relationships.

# Society of American Indian Government Employees

Formed in 2002, SAIGE is the first national non-profit organization representing American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Federal, Tribal, State, and local government employees. SAIGE provides a forum on the issues, challenges, and opportunities of American Indians and Alaska Natives in the government workforce and works to foster a professional network among this underrepresented population of government employees.

SAIGE is proud to host an outstanding Annual National Training Program focused on professional development, leadership and topics that are integral to the highly complex relationship known as the Federal Indian Trust Responsibility. As part of this program, SAIGE offers special training sessions for current service members and Veterans, and Youth. Additionally, local native communities in the area assist by providing cultural presentations.

## SAIGE Board of Directors

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# Education

Education is a key component of SAIGE's mission. For more than 15 years, SAIGE has offered a national training program at various locations across the country that are intended to increase knowledge, enhance cultural competency, build capacity and skills, and develop the next generation of American Indian and Alaska Native government employees.

In addition, SAIGE offers and conducts workshops and sessions at numerous government agencies during Native American Heritage Month.





## **Goal 1:**

Plan and implement an annual National Training Program.

## **Goal 2:**

Develop a webinar and training materials that can be accessed on the SAIGE website.

## **Goal 3:**

Identify opportunities to expand the number of training sessions and the number of non-Natives that are recipients of SAIGE's training programs and materials.

## **Actions**

Plan and implement a National Training Program in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

*Target Date: Summer 2020*

Convene a committee of SAIGE members to evaluate and research opportunities for the development of webinars and other informational materials.

*Target Date: 2020*

Conduct outreach to government entities to increase awareness of SAIGE.

*Target Date: Ongoing*

# Communication



Many American Indians and Alaska Natives face similar issues in the advancement of their careers and could benefit from increased opportunities to share knowledge with one another. Yet, a number of factors, such as distance, hinder communication and sharing of practices. We will focus efforts over the next two years on the development of enhanced communication and collaboration tools. These tools are intended to increase information sharing, support coalition building of American Indian and Alaska Native government employees, and build a repository of information that can be utilized by American Indians and Alaska Natives currently working or seeking work in government institutions.

## Key Priorities

- Collaborate openly through information sharing and exchange.
- Foster active communities of practice for current and future American Indian and Alaska Native government employees, current service members and veterans.
- Provide mentor opportunities.
- Develop the next generation of government professionals.
- Increase access to information and resources for American Indian and Alaska Native government employees, current service members and veterans.

# Communication

## Goal 1

Implement new tools and resources to enhance communication capabilities among American Indian and Alaska Native government employees.

### Actions

Update the SAIGE website.

*Target Date: January 2020*

Conduct outreach to notify users of the new resources on the website.

*Target Date: Ongoing*

Evaluate options for a community forum.

*Target Date: March 2020*

# Support Institutional Improvements

Advocacy is a core strategy for bringing our issues to the forefront of the agenda for decision-makers. It is a means of seeking change and improvements in governance, attitudes, and institutional functions.

The success of our advocacy strategy is largely based on the effective delivery of credible and non-partisan evidence to support our priorities. Evidence for advocacy provides credibility and authority to the organization, allowing us to provide messengers with information needed to convince decision-makers to support an issue. Data collection, research, analysis and organization provide the basis for solid evidence.

The evidence must also be communicated at the correct time, to the relevant audiences and in the appropriate manner. Our support of change and improvements will largely focus on providing governmental decision-makers with the tools and information needed to advance our priorities, coalition building, and partnering with organizations that also support our priorities.

# Support Institutional Improvements



## Goal 1

Support positive change within policy and government institutions that results in greater visibility for American Indians and Alaska Natives, enhanced cultural competency, better understanding of sovereignty and Trust obligations, and more representation of American Indians and Alaska Natives in government institutions.

### Actions

Continuously monitor Federal activities to identify opportunities for SAIGE to share information and suggestions with decision-makers on potential institutional improvements that align SAIGE's mission and priorities.



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