



AMERICAN INDIAN
COLLEGE FUND
EDUCATION IS THE ANSWER

2019 - 2020 Student Impact Report





Introduction

The American Indian College Fund (College Fund) was founded in 1989 with the mission to invest in Native students and tribal college education to transform lives and communities. The success of Native communities is inseparable from Native student success: 74% of tribal college alumni report being primarily employed in areas related to American Indian communities or tribal lands (2019 Gallup report, Alumni of Tribal Colleges and Universities Better Their Communities).

The College Fund achieves its mission by providing Native students with access to college through scholarships and programs that help them graduate and succeed in their careers. **In 2019-20, the College Fund provided more than \$9 million in scholarships to nearly 4,000 American Indian students.**

Our student success programs are geared for Native American students, helping them make the transition from college to career to become **employable graduates**. They are ready to serve essential roles in tribal governments, schools, healthcare, social work, environmental agencies, and as business owners.

Employable Graduate: A degree holder whose studies align with a career that is meaningful to them, and who is prepared to successfully enter their chosen field.

The Students We Serve

The College Fund is committed to closing the education gap by providing students with the financial support they need to access higher education.

Funded nearly **4,000**
Native American students

Representing **204**
tribal nations

Attending more than **200**
institutions

54% are non-traditional
students (over age of 24)

27% single
parents

71% of tribal college students
are eligible for aid

Top majors: STEM **24%**, business **21%**,
health **19%**, liberal arts **14%**, education **8%**

76% of tribal college students
received scholarship assistance

Associate degree-seeking **28%**, bachelor's
degree-seeking **59%**

50% first-generation students



College Fund Staff and Board

Credentialed College Fund team members provide direct student support, coaching, scholarships, programs, and training to over 4,000 Native students and 35 accredited tribal colleges and universities. Dozens more staff bring support in research, communication, promotion, fundraising, and operations to elevate our organization's work. This capacity is further strengthened by the College Fund Board of Trustees, which includes presidents of tribal colleges and universities, and corporate and Native leaders.



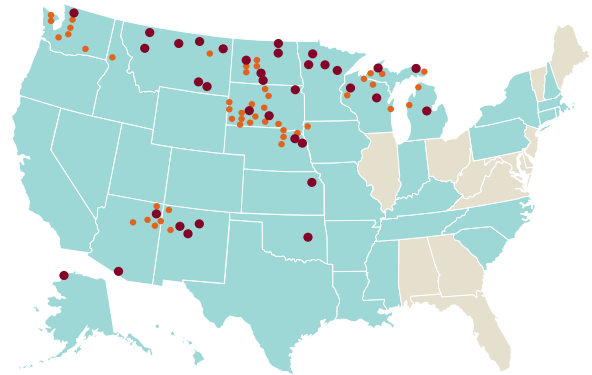
Staff Profile - Sadie Red Wing (Spirit Lake Dakota Nation), an Institute of American Indian Arts graduate and former College Fund Student Ambassador, now serves as a College Success Coach at the College Fund. The inequality that Sadie witnessed in higher education drove her to become an educator. In her career, she has advocated for minority and underrepresented students. Sadie's graduate work developing responsive curricula and mentoring students now informs the College Fund's student outreach and engagement.

Tribal Colleges and Partners:

The College Fund partners with tribal colleges and universities, and organizations that share its goals of building community and student success.



The College Fund supports 35 accredited tribal colleges and universities with 75 campuses in 14 states, which serve students from more than 37 states and over 200 tribes.



Emergency Aid

Prior to the outbreak of the coronavirus, Native student populations already faced significant challenges with basic needs. The Tribal Colleges and Universities #RealCollegeSurvey report of tribal college students, conducted in partnership with the College Fund by The Hope Center in 2019 noted:

Pre-COVID Challenges

62% of respondents were food insecure in the prior 30 days

69% were housing insecure in the previous year and

30% were homeless in the previous year



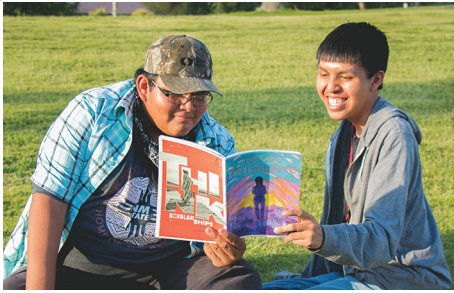
The pandemic exacerbated these existing needs, and during March and April 2020, the College Fund provided:

\$1.2 Million in emergency aid stipends to students to meet needs and help them stay in school

1,000 Amazon Fire tablets and **550** Chromebooks to access online courses

\$700,000 to Tribal Colleges for conversion to online learning and emergency aid programs

86% of aid recipients successfully completed the spring 2020 term (based on 2,000 tribal college students who received emergency aid)



Pre-College

Employing culturally engaging academic and programmatic strategies, our work with the staff and students at reservation-based high schools is increasing and improving the college-going culture and career attainment of Native American high school students.

70 Native youth-serving entities* received funding for promotion of college-going practices to increase high school graduation rates and college enrollment.

* significant majority were reservation-based high schools

51% of Native Pathways High School College Choice seniors enrolled in college in fall 2019.

54% of graduating participants progressed from fall to spring of their 2019-2020 freshman year. (national rate is 19% for Native college freshmen)

Native Pathways Summer Camp

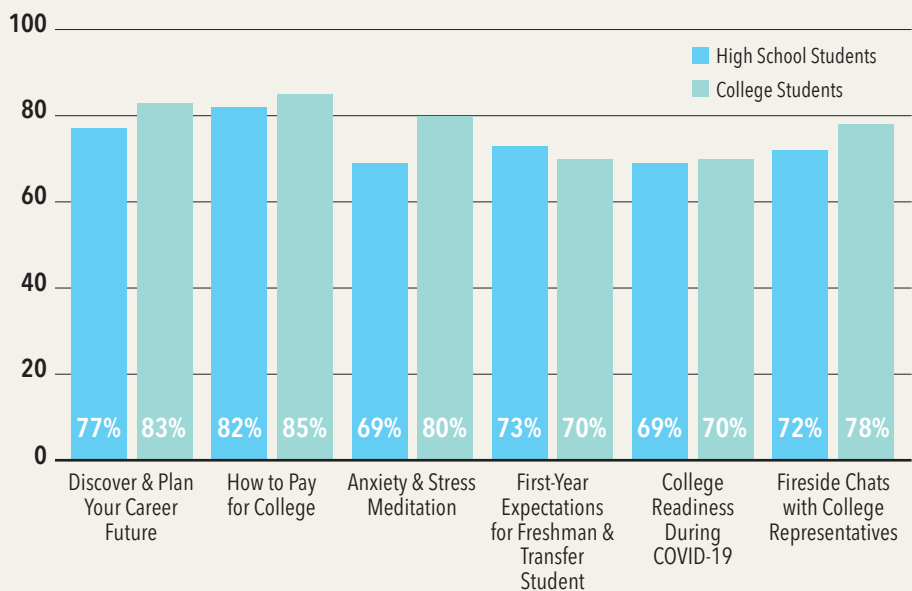
This key annual program familiarizes Native high school students with college life, culture, and expectations through meaningful resources and interactions that meet their academic, career, and cultural needs without compromise.

In 2020, the program was successfully transitioned to an engaging virtual 3-day event, drawing almost 600 hundred registrants.

A survey of Native high school and college participants shows overwhelming satisfaction with the summer camp sessions.



Sessions Offered and Percent of Participants Who Found Them Helpful



"Thank you so much. I enjoyed the seminar on stress management and I am feeling more confident that some of my concerns are normal first-year jitters." – First-year Native college student

Scholarships

In over 30 years, we have awarded more than **137,000 scholarships** and **\$220 million** in direct student support. In 2019-2020 the College Fund provided:



3,967 Native students with scholarships valued at \$9.25 million.

1 in 3 scholarship recipients spend more than 30 hours per week providing care to parents, children, or other relatives who live with them.

93% of scholarship recipients say that a college degree will allow them to give back to their communities.

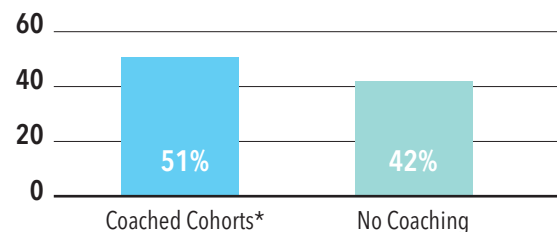


Scholar Profile - As a grandmother and activist, Kenwa Kravitz (Wintu) is not your typical tribal college student. But the Native Leadership Studies major at Northwest Indian College is already advocating for her community, working with city and county entities to bring about official recognition of her people and creating ground-breaking cultural curricula. **Kenwa was one of the first recipients of the Wi'áaşal (Great Oak) Future Leaders Scholarship for California tribal members - the largest expansion of the Full Circle Scholarship program.**

Coaching

The College Fund's coaching team provides critical guidance to help each student discover their plan. Engaging them with light to intensive coaching support, they help scholarship recipients find and follow the paths to achieve their goals. Scholars who receive tailored College Fund coaching reached their graduation goals at higher rates than students who do not receive coaching.

Full Circle Graduate Success Rate



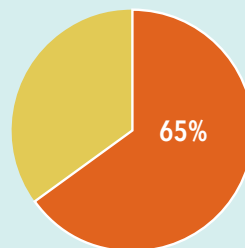
* Rates are based on students' self-reported expected graduation

More than **76%** of Full Circle scholarship recipients found the academic and career coaching they receive helpful.

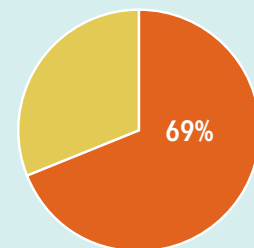
86% of scholarship recipients have completed an academic plan for graduation, making them more likely to succeed in (and complete) college.

Transfer Support

College Fund staff assist in a student-led transition from one institution to another, increasing college persistence rates with targeted academic planning and communication training for transfer students.



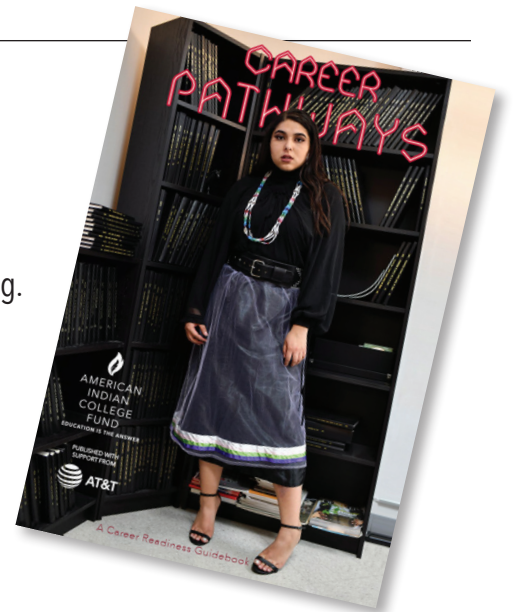
65% of those students enrolled in a four-year degree program persisted to the Spring 2020 semester.



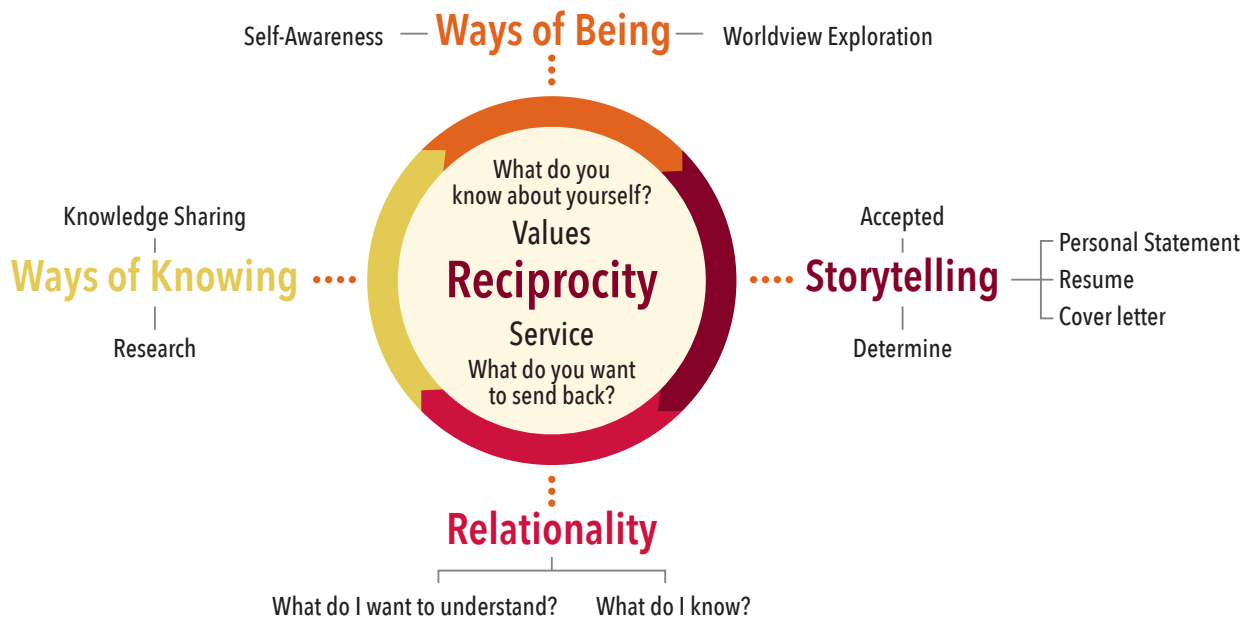
69% of students who graduated with a two-year degree successfully transferred to a four-year degree program in Fall 2019.

Career Readiness and Employment

Using insights and data gathered from work with tribal colleges and students, a career coaching framework and career-readiness guidebook were developed in 2019 to support Native students in culturally-relevant career discovery and planning. The framework was integrated into coaching with selected scholarship cohorts to understand the impact on student persistence and completion. With contributions from Native graduates, professionals, and artists, 5,000 copies of the Guidebook were used in career readiness programming at high schools, colleges, and other Native organizations.



Career Coaching Framework



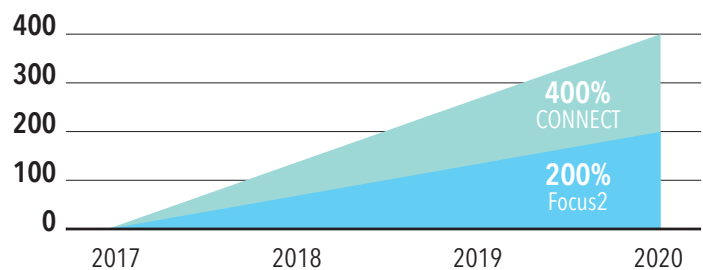
43% of Full Circle scholarship recipients are participating in a career-related experiential education opportunity (internship, clinical, practicum).

55% of scholarship recipients met with faculty or staff about their career plans.

62% of coached College Fund scholars discussed their career plans with faculty or staff.

Assessment and Networking Tools

Student use of assessments and networking tools are key to developing and accomplishing their long-term career goals. The College Fund employs Focus2, a higher education assessment, and the CONNECT networking platform to help students discover interests that align their academic and career track plans - while connecting with professionals and opportunities in their field of interest.



The College Fund has seen a **200% increase in usage of Focus2** assessments and a **400% increased usage of CONNECT** since both launched in 2017.

Experiential Programming

Internships are a starting place for career readiness, but student career goals are diverse and informed through service learning, and professional and leadership development.

Student Ambassador Program – Initially created to support the College Fund’s donor and student outreach, the Student Ambassador Program has developed into an intensive training and leadership program. Instruction in storytelling and presentation compliment project opportunities that empower ambassadors. They lead student success programming and service-learning projects on their campuses and in their communities.

Ford College Community Challenge – These student-led projects address sustainability in Native communities. From inception to implementation, this service-learning program brings students’ visions to life with lessons in grants management and leadership development.

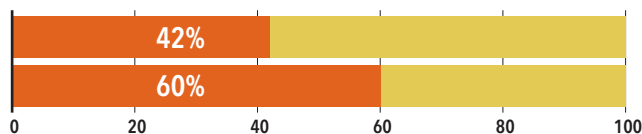
Research Profile – One of 58 environmentally-focused experiential opportunities and fellowships that the College Fund supported was Leech Lake Tribal College’s place-based summer internship program. Through the program, student Giiwitaagiishig Miller (Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians) measured microplastics on her tribal watershed, which led to funding for additional research. The work has captured the attention of the University of Minnesota, and provided additional professional development opportunities.



Student Results

As more resources are dedicated to student education and career planning, outcomes will only improve in student persistence, graduation, post-graduate career attainment and community leadership. The marked increase in performance of College Fund scholars demonstrates that scholarship, coaching and resource interventions are making a difference in the lives and futures of emerging Native American generations.

Graduation rate is 42% for 23,243 scholarship recipients



That rate increased to approximately 60% for students who received four or more years of scholarship funding during their education.



Graduate Success Profile

Ebony Denise Neal (Suquamish) is a single mother and Northwest Indian College graduate who has received multiple scholarships from the College Fund. Denise is now working towards a graduate degree from Arizona State

University and trains tribal nations in pathways to home ownership with the National American Indian Housing Council. She says her studies and experience have revealed the lack of Native representation in education. “My passion is for seeing change... and bringing that change to local and state institutions across the country.”



Our Vision for the Future

The College Fund is still growing its capacity to support student success. We continue to pilot programs, assess impact, and incorporate proven practices. Indigenous culture and values will always be central as we prioritize relationships, respect, and reciprocity in everything we do.

The goal of increasing the number of American Indian and Alaska Native employable graduates is our anchor. We will seek unexplored opportunities and partners, and continue measuring our impact in college-going, persistence, graduation, and employment spaces while never ignoring our Native students’ definitions of success. We must work with governments, advocates, and stakeholders to reach these goals and help our students and institutions overcome systemic obstacles and funding inequity.

Investing in Native students and tribal college education to transform lives and communities is our mission and our journey. We value and thank all our donor and program partners as we walk this path together.



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