



NCAI Policy Research Center Partnership and Collaborative Relationships

The NCAI Research Policy Center works collaboratively with a variety of organizations to support, conduct, and utilize research in Native communities. The Policy Center strategically partners with organizations and individual scholars already conducting work in key areas to leverage resources, avoid duplication of work, and convene networks of people with similar research interests.

With the charge of using data (whether existing or newly gathered) to proactively frame and inform discussion about policy issues on the horizon, the Policy Center necessarily relies on a variety of collaborative relationships. The relationships vary based on the issue being addressed, the type of product required, and the relative capacity and expertise of the partnering organizations. Some collaborative relationships may constitute little more than information-sharing, with research centers or scholars using the NCAI Research Policy Center to disseminate their work and identify other scholars working in the same field. Other relationships may entail joint primary research or data collection, peer review and feedback on draft products, presentations at NCAI research convenings, or collaboration on particular think tank convenings. The partnership model allows for strategic collaborations to develop and evolve as issues are identified for work.

While the Policy Center recognizes the need to work with organizations that have some minimum threshold of capacity to do the work, one of the guiding principles of the Policy Center is the intention of building the capacity for research and data collection at the tribal level as well as providing opportunities for research experience to Native graduate students.

The NCAI Research Policy Center's strong relationship to tribal governments allows for tribal identification of issues worthy of research as well as intentionally injecting tribal perspectives and moving evaluation research toward tribally-determined outcomes. The research of the Center will frame issues and push discussion that can proactively address future issues through influencing policy development. When taken into the policy arena- tribal, federal, and state- the work of the Center can engage tribal leadership and communities in transformational change.

The credibility of the Policy Center lies in its strong connection to Indian Country as well as its relationship to capable, independent research organizations and scholars. The Research Policy Center, an activity of the NCAI Fund, is structurally separate from NCAI's advocacy arm and lobbying work. Housing the Policy Center with NCAI's educational work and appointing an independent, diverse, and balanced Advisory Council to guide the agenda and partnerships undertaken by the Policy Center, reinforces the credibility of the Policy Center.