

MINNESOTA INDIAN AFFAIRS COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE REPORT

2020-21



INDIAN AFFAIRS COUNCIL

THE MINNESOTA INDIAN AFFAIRS COUNCIL

Background

This Legislative Report outlines key activities that the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) has been working on in fiscal year 2021. Compiled through a combination of key informant interviews and a review of documents, this report summarizes the range of MIAC's work as the official state agency liaison between state and Tribal government in Mni Sota Makoce/Minnesota. Amidst a global pandemic, social uprisings, and staffing challenges, MIAC had several achievements this year. From the administration of Dakota and Ojibwe language revitalization grants to overseeing the repatriation of the Whitefish Creek site to MIAC's resolutions calling for action from the University of Minnesota, MIAC brings expertise and collaboration to all our work.

About MIAC

Established in 1963 as the first council of its type in the U.S., the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council is the official liaison between Tribal Nations in Minnesota and the state of Minnesota. MIAC is mandated to make recommendations on legislation that is important to Tribal governments and American Indian people and improve services between the state and American Indian communities. MIAC provides a forum for and advises state government on issues of concern to American Indian Tribes and communities, develops and advocates for legislation, and administers cultural resource preservation programs and the Dakota and Ojibwe Language Revitalization Grant program.

MIAC'S MISSION

To protect the sovereignty of the 11 Minnesota tribes and ensure the well-being of all American Indian citizens throughout the state of Minnesota.

MIAC'S VISION

To strive for social, economic, and political justice for all American Indian people living in Minnesota, while embracing our traditional cultural and spiritual values.

Letter from the Executive Director

Aaniin Indinawemaaganug, Han Mitakuyape, Dear Relatives,

The Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) is tasked with the large responsibility of protecting the sovereignty of the 11 Tribal governments that share geography with Minnesota and ensuring the well-being of all American Indian Minnesotans. As I go into my 6th year with MIAC, I am reflecting on some amazing changes within the organization. From overcoming challenges related to transition in leadership within the past few years to the COVID-19 pandemic to addressing internal and external communication gaps to aiding with strengthening Tribal consultation policies to protecting American Indian cemeteries and cultural funerary objects to supporting Dakota and Ojibwe language revitalization, MIAC has a proven track record of adapting to best serve all Minnesotans.



Shannon Geshick
MIAC Executive Director

MIAC carries vast responsibility and, therefore, we have a lot on our plate. The MIAC team has taken on various challenges in creative ways. Over the last couple years, even with limited staffing, our agency has continued to play a critical role in advocating for important issues impacting the American Indian community. It has been a challenge to fill vacancies largely due to the pandemic and state hiring freeze, potential state shutdown, remote work, and navigating a new way of onboarding and training. Despite this, we hired a new grants manager and a cultural resource field investigator. MIAC is committed to being a resource, a sounding board, and a partner in the important work going on throughout Minnesota that impacts American Indian Tribal nations and people. However, as always, our staff are at full capacity (and then some!) and our budget does not reflect the need for human capital and resources necessary to fulfill our mandates or mission. With all of these responsibilities, MIAC works diligently even when faced with shortcomings in allocated resources.

This year, we have continued our effort to repatriate the Ancestors of the Hopi and Pueblo from the U of M Mimbres Collection (this collection includes human remains and associated burial objects). MIAC published several resolutions related to the relationship, or lack thereof, between the University of Minnesota and the Tribal governments in Minnesota.

MIAC's board includes state agency commissioners, a representative from the governor's office--currently Lieutenant Governor Flanagan, two House of Representative and two Senate dignitaries, and elected Tribal leadership from ten of the eleven Tribal Nations who make up our executive board (which is our voting board). We hold quarterly board meetings where state and Tribal leadership engage in conversation via state agency updates and relationship building. In 2021, the Minnesota Legislature passed a historic law which enacted many of the provisions of Executive Order 19-24. This law, codified at Minn. Stat. 10.65, mandates government-to-government consultation between state agencies and Tribal governments on matters that affect them. It is my hope that this law will help to hold state agencies accountable for designing and implementing policies and programs in ways that have a positive impact for Tribal Nations and people in Minnesota. I would like to thank all of the tribal partners and state agency tribal liaisons who helped make the passing of this historic bill possible. It is monumental that the spirit of Executive Order 19-24 and past executive orders will continue on despite changes in leadership.

MIAC is known for developing partnerships throughout the state. I have often talked about the positive changes I have seen recently regarding the interactions between state agency and tribal leadership. I am excited about the progress we have made and the growth in government-to-government work that is happening across Minnesota. As state agencies continue to improve their process for tribal consultation, I would encourage all agencies to consider MIAC a resource and partner.

Finally, I would like to thank the MIAC board of directors and the dedicated staff who work diligently every day to achieve our mission to protect the sovereignty of the 11 Minnesota Tribes and to ensure the well-being of American Indian citizens throughout the state of Minnesota. Chi'Miigwech (thank you very much) for your interest in the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council!

Shannon Geshick
Executive Director

MIAC'S CULTURAL RESOURCE DEPARTMENT

Indian Mounds Regional Park, St Paul, MN, USA. By McGhieever - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=15181134>

Background

The MIAC Cultural Resource Department carries out the duties and responsibilities as specified under Minnesota Statutes, the Field Archaeology Act (M. S. 138.31-.42) and the Private Cemeteries Act (M. S. 307.08), and Federal Statute, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (Pub. L. No. 101-60, 104 Stat. 3048 [1990]). Some of these legislative responsibilities include reviewing and recommending action on construction or development projects and plans on public or private lands or waters in Minnesota when known or suspected American Indian cemetery sites or archaeological sites may be disturbed. This includes responding to inadvertent discoveries; consulting with Tribal Nations; and repatriating ancestors, funerary objects, and objects of cultural patrimony. The MIAC team works with numerous stakeholders on numerous projects every year. Many of these stakeholders and collaborators include the Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, Tribal Governments, the Office of the State Archaeologist, MnDOT, universities, museums, property owners, developers, and local governments within Minnesota.

The MIAC team advocates for Tribal interests while mediating concerns among stakeholders. This process includes incorporating American Indian traditional and cultural knowledge into the archeological process, recommending archaeological and Tribal monitors, or recommending that authenticated burial grounds and cemeteries be avoided from development. Interview respondents noted that even though MIAC staff could not always be on-site, they were always responsive to questions and concerns from those who were on-site.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

WHITEFISH PROJECT

During the rehabilitation of a Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) bridge over Whitefish Creek in Mille Lacs County, an unmarked cemetery was disturbed. Because it was determined to be of American Indian cultural affiliation, MIAC was brought in to coordinate the recovery process. MIAC coordinated with MnDOT, Mankato and Hamline Universities, Florin LLC, and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe in these recovery efforts. Additionally, both Dakota and Ojibwe elders and Tribal members worked on the recovery. Since the project was related to both Dakota and Ojibwe cultural affiliation, it was important that the recovery and repatriation process included representation from both Tribes. Both Dakota and Ojibwe Tribal members worked on the recovery efforts, and Tribal elders directed the repatriation.

Completing the recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic brought forth new challenges and required all organizations to do their work creatively. In addition to implementing COVID-19 safety policies and procedures, MIAC worked to ensure that COVID 19 didn't delay the recovery efforts. MnDOT supported MIAC in ensuring each contractor had separate work spaces to prevent COVID from spreading from contractor to contractor, or directly to the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. This ensured additional room to complete the work while reducing potential exposure to multiple recovery crews. Recovery efforts started in late fall 2019 and finished in December 2020 with the subsequent reburial done in spring 2021. In the two-year span of the project, MIAC coordinated a successful response, recovery, and repatriation of human remains and the associated funerary objects.



Jayson Gill (left) and Josh Gill (right) demonstrating new distancing and PPE procedures for archeological projects. Photo credit Dylan Goetsch

WORKING WITH TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICES

In 2021, MIAC has made a tremendous effort to better collaborate with Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs). Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs) were established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 to help Tribal Nations consult, identify, and protect sites on or eligible for the National Register. THPOs aid in repatriations under NAGPRA, consult on federal undertakings, and promote preservation of American Indian cultural resources. Because of their expertise and experience, THPOs are consulted on how things should be protected on a federal level (projects that involves federal lands, funding, or permits).



Vermillion Powwow. Photo credit: Shannon Geshick

As a state entity, MIAC Cultural Resources Department works on similar projects as THPOs on public and private land and waterways in Minnesota. With MIAC's work falling under state laws and THPOs' work falling under federal laws, in the past THPOs have often been left out of critical conversations in Minnesota. Even if there is not a formal role for THPOs within state legislation, THPOs continue to provide a wealth of knowledge and are representing Minnesota Tribes in this work. Over the past year, MIAC has worked with a number of Tribal leaders to include THPOs in their work. THPOs provide MIAC staff feedback that is critical to building better working relationships, which creates opportunities to learn about THPOs' and Tribes' concerns. Right now, MIAC Cultural Resources Department and Minnesota THPOs have standing monthly meetings to talk about a number of different projects. Additionally, MIAC staff and THPOs have worked more collaboratively, visited burial grounds and cemeteries together, and assisted one another in monitoring efforts across the state. MIAC staff now have stronger relationships with the THPOs from the Tribes in Minnesota and hope to further strengthen this relationship. One THPO believes that because of the mutual opportunity to learn more about concerns and projects, this has become a sustainable relationship between THPOs and MIAC.

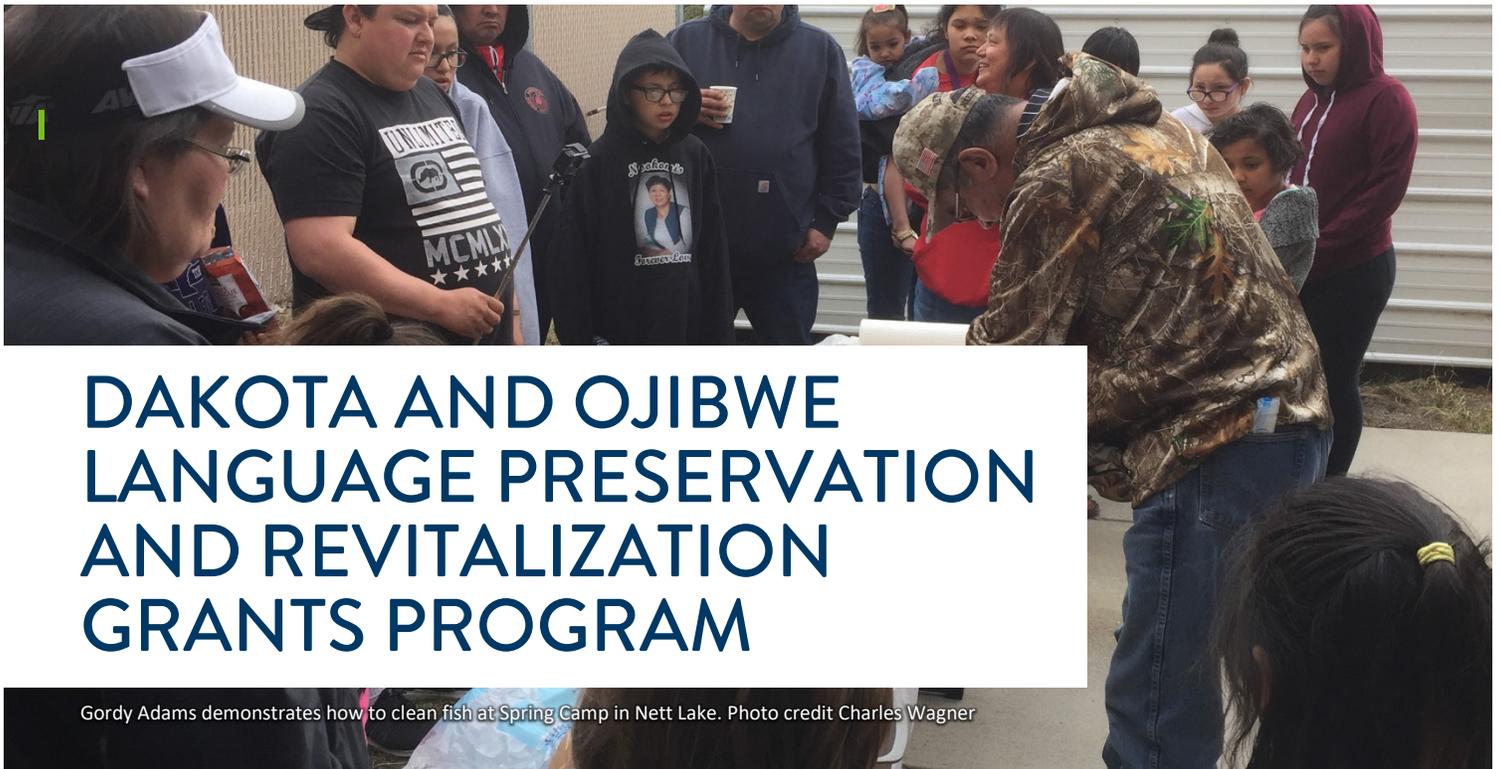
*“Working with MIAC has allowed us to have more involvement with specific sites, be more hands on, and do work more directly.”
–A THPO who has worked with MIAC*

WORKING WITH THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MNDOT)

In 2021, MIAC started having biweekly meetings with two state agencies, MnDOT and the Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA), to help further collaboration and communication between the two perspective agencies. The need for these meetings arose as both agencies navigated working together on the Mission Creek and Whitefish Creek burial recoveries which originated from MnDOT projects that disturbed American Indian burials. Both recoveries required long time frames, many contacts, and large budgets for completion. Following a discussion between MIAC staff, Tribal leaders, OSA, MnDOT's commissioner, and the MnDOT government affairs office, all agencies prioritized working together to prevent future disturbances from happening.

In these biweekly meetings, concerns about current or upcoming projects are addressed, questions about reviews are answered, and recommendations are clarified for all offices. This year, MIAC assisted in over 200 MnDOT projects, either through a review under MS 307.08 or an information request. These reviews come when a MnDOT project may threaten a known or suspected burial on public lands or private lands and seeks MIAC's recommendations. These meetings created a space for work to get done efficiently and effectively and streamlined communications among agencies that previously did not communicate as often.

“The value of MIAC is understated.” – Tribal Government Affairs Director



DAKOTA AND OJIBWE LANGUAGE PRESERVATION AND REVITALIZATION GRANTS PROGRAM

Gordy Adams demonstrates how to clean fish at Spring Camp in Nett Lake. Photo credit Charles Wagner

Background for language revitalization

Revival of Dakota and Ojibwe languages through immersion programs and other language acquisition strategies is a critical component of revitalizing and preserving the culture and traditions of the Dakota and Ojibwe peoples, as well as an impactful way to exercise and facilitate Tribal sovereignty. It is particularly important and time-sensitive for Dakota Tribal Nations because there are only a few Dakota first language speakers still living in Minnesota. This means the Dakota language is close to becoming an extinct language (Dakhóta íápi Okhódakičhiye, n.d.).¹

In 2020-2021, MIAC distributed and oversaw \$1.5 million in funding for language revitalization. The funding comes through the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund appropriation of the Legacy Amendment, which is funded by Minnesota's state sales tax. There are three funding streams: a competitive grant, a grant for language immersion schools, and a grant specifically for Tribal Nations. To apply for the grant, organizations or Tribes propose a project that has a long-term vision to achieve language proficiency and uses short-term steps to achieve the vision. Grantees also develop an evaluation component so MIAC can learn what is successful and sustainable for Dakota and Ojibwe language revitalization programs. These programs operate across the state and serve a diverse group of American Indian communities.

MIAC receives funds for and coordinates the Dakota and Ojibwe language volunteer work group with representatives from Tribal Nations and urban centers who are invested in revitalizing Dakota and Ojibwe languages. These funds generally support costs to bring the work group together to evaluate the state of the Dakota and Ojibwe languages and make recommendations on how to bolster revitalization. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in person meetings did not take place this year.



Dakota Language Symposium Lower Sioux. Photo Credit: Shannon Geshick

Grant appropriations

Organization	FY 21 Award
Competitive	
American Indian OIC	\$40,124.00
Dakota Iapi	\$75,000.00
Dakota Wicohan	\$75,000.00
Fond du Lac Tribal College	\$74,758.00
Minneapolis American Indian Center	\$75,000.00
Mille Lacs Band Nay Ah Shing Schools	\$71,196.52
Saint Paul Public Schools	\$74,586.00
White Earth Tribal Community College	\$53,000.00
Tribal	
Bois Forte Band of Chippewa	\$60,000.00
Fond du Lac of Lake Superior Chippewa	\$60,000.00
Grand Portage Band of Ojibwe	\$60,000.00
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	\$60,000.00
Lower Sioux Community	\$60,000.00
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe	\$60,000.00
Prairie Island Indian Community	\$60,000.00
Red Lake Nation	\$60,000.00
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community	\$60,000.00
Upper Sioux Community	\$60,000.00
White Earth Nation	\$60,000.00
Immersion programs	
Bdote	\$70,233.34
Lower Sioux Immersion	\$70,233.32
Niigaane Immersion	\$100,000.00
Red Lake Immersion	\$70,233.00
	\$1,509,364.18

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

MINNEAPOLIS AMERICAN INDIAN CENTER

MIAC has provided funding support for the Minneapolis American Indian Center since 2017. A number of Dakota and Ojibwe language programs, ranging from beginner through advanced courses, as well as family language courses, are part of the Center's Culture Language and Arts Network (CLAN).

Thanks to a MIAC language revitalization grant, the Minneapolis American Indian Center was able to fund two staff positions – an Ojibwe language teacher and an internship coordinator. The internship coordinator oversees the recruitment of 10 interns with interests in Dakota and Ojibwe language learning. In the past year, interns have found creative ways to engage others virtually to foster love of language learning. Projects have included a variety of mediums, from creating translated games to daily "Ojibwe word of the day" social media posts to creating informational TikTok social media videos. Since the start of the COVID pandemic, the Minneapolis American Indian Center has had to adjust their work to an online platform, and now even some people from out of state participate in their language programs. This year, with the addition of a new grants manager on the MIAC staff, coordination of the language grants became a much smoother process.

This past year, more than 1,900 people participated in a language program through the Minneapolis American Indian Center. Grants from multiple funding sources have contributed to the success of their programming. With more classes offered and more language learners signing up for classes, it is clear that there is significant interest in learning and preserving Indigenous languages within the communities. It is critical that support for these programs continue past their current grant cycles.



LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS

One of MIAC's 2019 legislative accomplishments was coordinating Sovereignty Day in the House of Representatives. Pictured is the flag procession into the House Chambers. Photo credit Paul Battaglia, House Photography

Background

MIAC staff are a resource for Minnesota legislators to understand tribal concerns and priorities, directly advocate for legislation, and work to support legislative efforts that align with MIAC's mission. MIAC also monitors and communicates pertinent legislation to Tribal Nations and keeps the MIAC executive board informed of legislative happenings that may affect their Nation and people. MIAC staff work in partnership with the Tribes to gather information and ensure effective communications related to legislation that affects American Indian people and Tribes.

"Coming together is always a challenge for everyone. It is difficult to convene a group to listen to a point. Leaders may not be aware of different issues happening if Indian Affairs didn't organize people to come together and present around the table."
– Tribal Government Affairs Director

"I'm glad that they are there to do the work that they do. It's really helpful for me because I have a go-to person with MIAC."
– Minnesota State Senator

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force

From 2010 to 2018, 8% of all murdered Minnesotan women and girls were Indigenous, despite making up just 1% of the state's total population (MartinRogers & Pendleton, 2020).²

In 2019, a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force was established by the Minnesota Legislature. The Task Force's recommendations were released with their final report in December 2020. The Legislature included funding in the Judiciary and Public Safety budget bill to create a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) Office. Along with a number of other duties, this office will facilitate implementation of the recommendations outlined in the report, coordinate with other organizations and state agencies, and report on activities and outcomes with the directive of preventing and ending the targeting and exploitation of Indigenous women, children, and Two-Spirit people.



Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Bill signing, Photo credit: <https://mn.gov/indianaffairs/index.html>

The 2021 Minnesota Statute 299A.85, which creates the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office, calls for state agencies, including MIAC, to help implement the recommendations outlined in the report. MIAC is listed as one of the entities that will play a role in supporting and advocating for missing and murdered Indigenous relatives. Even before this bill was passed, MIAC played a significant role in this work. They have been successful in promoting and educating legislators regarding work around missing and murdered Indigenous women, as well as getting protections for women. With the creation of this office, MIAC will have more opportunities to engage with other entities involved in ensuring the safety of Indigenous women.

"Without MIAC, there would be many violations of rights and history." – Lawyer who has worked with MIAC

Government-to-Government Consultation bill

In the 2021 special legislative session, the Minnesota Legislature passed Statute 10.65, the Government-to-Government Relationship between the state of Minnesota and Tribal Governments. This formally recognizes the status of 11 federally recognized Indian Tribes as sovereign nations and outlines the mutually beneficial relationship between the Tribes and the State of Minnesota. Furthermore, the new law requires that state agencies consult annually with each of the Minnesota Tribal governments on matters that may impact Tribes and American Indian people. Having the Tribal consultation process codified demonstrates significant improvement in how the state interacts with Tribes on a government-to-government basis.



Government to Government bill signing.
Photo credit: Shannon Geshick

MIAC is the official liaison between Minnesota's state government and the 11 federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota. MIAC's connections with their executive board foster understanding on issues of importance to Tribal leaders and makes them a great resource for state agencies and the public. MIAC is dedicated to improving relationships and communication among the state and Tribes.

Since 2012, MnDOT has coordinated the Tribal-state relations training that is required for many state employees. All agencies must direct certain staff to complete training to foster a collaborative relationship between the State of Minnesota and Minnesota Tribal Nations. In addition to all Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, and Assistant Commissioners, all agency employees whose work is likely to impact Minnesota Tribal Nations will attend TSRT training. MIAC plays a large role in facilitating these trainings that are intended to help state employees be more effective when working with Tribes. Specific goals of these trainings include educating state employees about American Indian people and sovereign tribal governments, creating unique, mutually-beneficial partnerships, building respectful relationships between the state and tribal nations, and creating an enduring commitment by the state to learn about tribal governments.

One lawyer shared that this bill was a huge victory for the Tribes and the state.

“They have been around for so long and have weathered the politics. They serve as a way for gathering a lot of these voices together.” – Archeologist that has worked with MIAC



Educational panels from the *Why Treaties Matter* exhibit displayed at White Earth Nation's Tribal Headquarters, photo courtesy of Casey DeMarais, MN Humanities Center

Mimbres Collection

In 2002, the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council published a notice of inventory completion for Native American human remains that were in their possession. These human remains are part of a collection of Mimbres objects and human remains that came from excavations conducted by the University of Minnesota in the 1920s and 1930s in the Mimbres Valley, New Mexico. The history of this collection is a complicated one. In 1928, the University of Minnesota participated in a project with the School for American Research and the University of New Mexico with sponsorship by the Minneapolis Institute of Art. This was followed by three years focused on the Galaz site. However, there was unclear collaboration between the institutions, resulting in the division of the remains (especially pottery vessels). University of Minnesota archaeologists further engaged in several exchanges of pottery, including funerary objects, in the 1970s. In 1989, the University of Minnesota's Anthropology Department under MN State Law 307.08 the Private Cemeteries Act transferred all human remains that were identified as American Indian descent to MIAC. Among the remains transferred were those of the Mimbres people excavated by Albert E. Jenks in the 1920s and 1930s at the Warm Springs, Cameron Creek, Galaz, and Hudson sites. The associated objects, which were still in the care of the Anthropology department at that time, were transferred to Weisman Art Museum in 1993 where they remain. In 2005, MIAC Cultural Resources staff traveled to Albuquerque to meet with some of the Pueblo communities at a Mesa Verde National Park Consultation meeting that was hosted by the NPS. While the group was in private session, MIAC gave a presentation about the collections in their possession. The group recommended that MIAC bring together the human remains in their control with the associated funerary objects in the possession of the Weisman Art Museum.

In 2013, MIAC cultural resources staff conducted consultation meetings with several of the affiliated Tribes. For a variety of reasons related to access to specific field documentation and other University of Minnesota records, this did not happen until 2018-2019. MIAC staff are now able to identify specific funerary objects, warranting an updated inventory. MIAC collaborated with the University of Minnesota and Hamline University to bring all this information together and took a consultation trip to meet with a number of the Pueblo communities from the Southwest region where the Mimbres remains originated to discuss possible repatriation of the remains and the associated funerary objects. In fall 2020, the Weisman Art Museum acknowledged that they have failed to previously provide a complete inventory.

In June 2020, MIAC published a resolution that called for the return of the collection to the Pueblo Tribes in New Mexico, where these human remains and associated funerary objects originated. Repatriation, which is the return of human remains and funerary items to the Tribal communities they are from, has been called for by MIAC and other Indigenous voices. This includes a specific call for Indigenous expertise and consultation throughout this process to ensure that it is done with respect and dignity and in alignment with appropriate cultural protocols.

University of Minnesota Partnership

In 2020, MIAC sent the U of M a resolution to “fulfill its obligation to the eleven American Indian Tribal Governments within the state of Minnesota.” MIAC called on the U of M to recognize the historical events that have benefitted the U of M and have harmed Tribal Nations in Minnesota. The resolution also acknowledges that though previous University administrations have been dismissive of the Indigenous community’s voices and concerns, the University’s current leadership has shown that they are committed to developing better relationships.

In this Resolution, MIAC calls for a number of actions. One of which is for the U of M to establish several new policies that will create and strengthen sustainable relationships between the U of M and Tribal Nations. The U of M has yet to acknowledge the Tribal governments as partners. MIAC also resolved that the U of M should recruit and support Indigenous faculty and students with funding and resources to increase Indigenous expertise on campus, a benefit for both the U of M and Tribal Nations. One of the responses to the resolution was the U of M’s TRUTH (Toward Recognition and University Tribal Healing) project between the Tribal Nations, MIAC, and the U of M. Additionally, university leadership, including President Gable, have been meeting with the tribal nations to begin to develop relationships with them.



Prairie Island buffalo heard. Photo credit: Shannon Geshick

"I found [MIAC] easy to work with and very welcoming. They have been very kind to me. It's the one place I can talk to most of the Tribal leaders ... [since it is] very hard to get two Tribal leaders together." - U of M Professor

¹ Dakhóta iápi Okhódakičhiye. (n.d.) *Status of Dakota language*. <https://dakhota.org/status-of-dakota-language/>

² MartinRogers, N., Pendleton, V. (2020). *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women: A report to the Minnesota Legislature*. <https://www.wilder.org/wilder-research/research-library/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-task-force-report-minnesota>

Tribal Nations

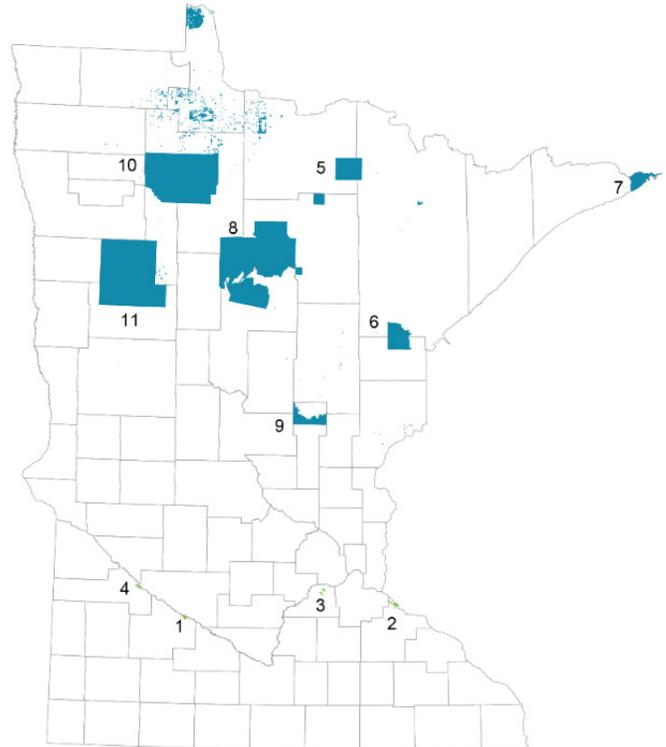
There are 11 Tribal Nations that share geography with the state of Minnesota:

Dakota nations:

1. Lower Sioux Community
2. Prairie Island Indian Community
3. Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
4. Upper Sioux Community

Ojibwe nations:

5. Bois Forte Band of Chippewa
6. Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
7. Grand Portage Band of Ojibwe
8. Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
9. Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
10. Red Lake Nation
11. White Earth Nation



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Board (Voting Members)

- Board Chair: President Robert Larsen, Lower Sioux Community
- Board Vice-Chair: Shelley Buck, Prairie Island Indian Community
- Chairwoman Cathy Chavers, Bois Forte Band of Chippewa
- Chairman Kevin Dupuis, Sr., Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Chairman Robert “Bobby” Deschampe, Grand Portage Band of Ojibwe
- Chairman Faron Jackson, Sr., Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
- Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
- Secretary Samuel Strong, Red Lake Nation
- Secretary/Treasurer Rebecca Crooks-Stratton, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
- Chairman Michael Fairbanks, White Earth Nation

Non-Voting Board Members

- Alice Roberts-Davis, Commissioner of Administration
- Paul Schnell, Commissioner of Corrections
- Heather Mueller, Commissioner of Education
- Jan Malcolm, Commissioner of Health
- Steve Grove, Commissioner of Employment and Economic Development
- Jennifer Leimaile Ho, Commissioner of Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
- Jodi Harpstead, Commissioner of Human Services
- Sarah Strommen, Commissioner of Natural Resources
- Margaret Anderson Kelliher, Commissioner of Transportation
- Rebecca Lucero, Commissioner of Human Rights
- Larry Herke, Commissioner of Veterans Affairs
- Mark Phillips, Commissioner of the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation
- Representative Heather Keeler (4A, DFL)
- Representative Dean Urdahl (18A, R)
- Senator Paul Utke (2, R)
- Senator Mary Kunesh (41, DFL)

Urban Indian Advisory Board

Minnesota Statute 3.922 is the basis of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council. In the statute, MIAC is formed with membership of representatives from each of 11 Tribal Nations, the governor’s office, state agency commissioners, and members of the House and Senate. The MIAC executive board appoints 6 members to the Urban Indian Advisory Board to advise the council on unique problems and concerns of American Indians residing in urban areas of the state with at least one representative from each of the following urban areas: Minneapolis, St. Paul, Bemidji, and Duluth. As a board, they commit to being present, focused, optimistic, strategic, honorable, and inclusive.

Board members:

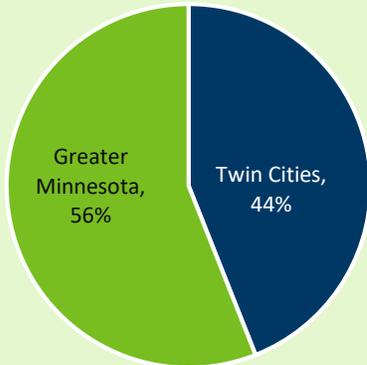
- Jason Loons, Duluth representative
- Marisa Miakonda Cummings, Minneapolis representative
- Dr. Kate Beane, Minneapolis representative
- John Day, Saint Paul representative

MIAC Staff

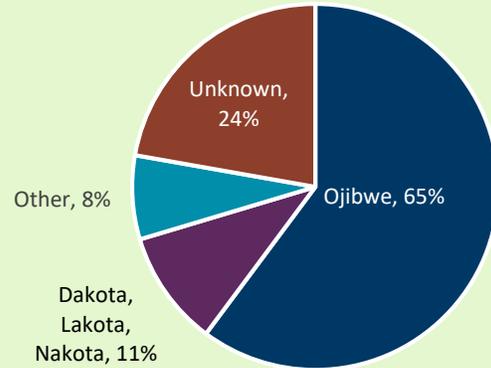
- Shannon Geshick- Executive Director
- Kaytlyn Lundstrom- Executive Assistant
- Melissa Cerda- Cultural Resources Specialist, Senior
- Dylan Goetsch- Cultural Resources Specialist
- Keegan Flaharty- Grants and Contracts Manager

Total population of American Indians in Minnesota: 167,380

I. Population by geography¹



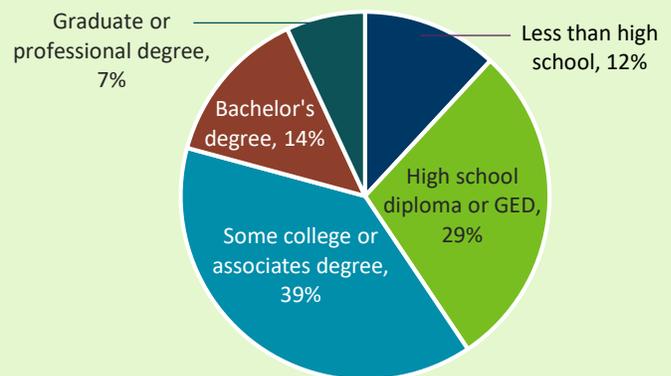
II. Tribal grouping for individuals who identified their race as American Indian Alone¹



III. Household income¹



IV. Educational attainment (population age 25 and older)¹



Source: ¹ 2019: U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-Year estimates.

Note: The census only records Tribal affiliation for those who only report their race/ethnicity as American Indian alone. The census labels Tribal grouping as Chippewa (Ojibwe) and Sioux (Dakota, Lakota, Nakota). Wilder has changed the terms in the chart to reflect accepted terms.

Wilder Research[®]

Information. Insight. Impact.

451 Lexington Parkway North
 Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
 651-280-2700
www.wilderresearch.org

About this report: Wilder Research was contracted to complete this report on behalf of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council. We conducted 7 interviews and reviewed a variety of documentation and notes from MIAC staff about their work over the past year, as well as consulted with MIAC staff about which work and priorities should be emphasized in this legislative cycle.

For more information about this report, contact Nicole MartinRogers at Wilder Research, nicole.martinrogers@wilder.org or 651-280-2682.

Authors: Nicole MartinRogers and Anne Li

February 2022