

## EMERGING YOUNG LEADERS

Today's Native youth are the tribal leaders of tomorrow. It is important for native youth to have the tools and networks in place to develop into the future leaders that Indian Country needs to thrive.

Currently, there are a range of opportunities for American Indian/Alaska Native youth to demonstrate formal leadership on issues important to them. There are structures like Youth Councils and Youth Commissions, Youth Advisory Member, and Youth Ambassador at national Native organizations, like NCAI, NICWA, NIHB, NIEA, CNAY, and UNITY, at regional and state organizations, and in local, tribal, and urban communities. Serving in these roles provides Native youth with the opportunity to inform youth policy, to ensure their voices are represented in community forums, to gain civic and leadership experience, and to develop essential peer and intergenerational relationships.

A number of new national youth initiatives have been developed in the past few years that solicit the input of Native and other youth on issues of significance to them. With these initiatives also come a variety of resources and events that draw attention to the strength and needs of the youth. Some of these initiatives and resources include:

[Generation Indigenous](#): A Native youth initiative focused on removing the barriers that stand between Native youth and their opportunity to succeed.

- [2014 White House Native Youth Report](#)

[My Brother's Keeper](#): A collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach to build ladders of opportunity and unlock the full potential of our young people, including boys and young men of color.

- [NCAI Backgrounder on Supporting Our Native Boys & Young Men](#)
- [NCAI Infographic, "Our Native Boys & Young Men"](#)

Celebrating Young Native Women & Girls: There are a range of initiatives and resources designed to celebrate and empower young Native women and girls, including:

- [Women Empowering Women for Indian Nations](#)
- [NCAI Spotlight on Native Women & Girls](#)
- [White House Report: Women and Girls of Color: Addressing Challenges and Expanding Opportunity](#)

### **Native Youth Voice on Emerging Young Leaders:**

"Native youth are wise, resilient and strong - we can create real change if we use our voices in a good way. If there is an issue you care deeply about, you CAN organize around that issue and mobilize other youth around it! Work with your own and others' strengths and talents and spread the word to recruit more individuals to join you. Grassroots organizing as well as meeting and speaking with higher-level leaders are both ways to get our messages heard."

"While there are some barriers to success for Native youth, young leaders can work to deconstruct those barriers and empower youth everywhere. Youth leadership comes with many opportunities to empower others and taking action to address the structural and institutional obstacles Native youth often face when interacting with systems."