



National
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During this year's National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Policy Research Center's *Annual Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum*, I shared with our assembly of tribal nations my thoughts about the importance of research in our communities. I reminded them that we want to be sure that research occurring in our communities has its proper place in supporting our people: the health of our people, the education of our people, and the well-being of our people. In addition, we want to make sure that any research project conducted in our communities has an implementation plan. What good is data without an action plan to implement the findings and impact the people that you are doing the research for?

This is why NCAI's new curriculum—*Research that Benefits Native People: A Guide for Tribal Leaders*—is such an important tool for tribal leaders, their staff, and Native citizens. Historically, researchers and anthropologists have visited our communities to extract information from us, frequently misinterpreting and misusing it, and have minimized the validity of our Indigenous knowledge. As sovereign nations, tribes have a role in the research that is conducted in their communities and in regulating that research which occurs on their land and with their citizens.

This five-module curriculum answers the many calls from tribal leaders who for years have wanted resources to make better decisions about the proposed research in their communities and researchers who want to come into their communities. The curriculum provides tribal leaders with considerations for establishing and utilizing research review policies and boards to protect communities from harm, selecting a suitable research partner, applying values and ethics as guides throughout research projects, and understanding program evaluation. Most importantly, the curriculum reinforces the validity of our Indigenous ways of knowing and reminds us and others that their value is equal to western research standards.

I am grateful to NCAI and its Policy Research Center in providing our tribal nations with this invaluable publication and training. Six years ago, our leadership established the Policy Research Center as a place where information could be developed to proactively prepare tribal leaders and support Indian Country in shaping its own future. This Center has engaged with a range of Native and non-Native partners to ensure that our communities are valued partners in research, that tribal sovereignty is paramount, that Indigenous knowledge is valued and respected, and that when a research project ends, communities are stronger for the experience. *Research that Benefits Native People: A Guide for Tribal Leaders* symbolizes the mission of NCAI and its Policy Research Center, and will become a foundational resource that our leaders turn to for generations to come.

JOE GARCIA
NCAI PRESIDENT