Celebrating 20 yrs
2017-2018 Annual Report

AIANTA
American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association
OUR STORIES
OUR VOICES
### Mission Statement

Our mission is to define, introduce, grow and sustain American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian tourism that honors traditions and values.

### About Us

As the only organization specifically dedicated to advancing Indian Country tourism across the United States, the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association, Inc. (AIANTA) serves as the voice and resource for Tribes and Tribal organizations engaged in cultural tourism. At AIANTA, we help Tribes develop, sustain and grow tourism destinations through technical assistance, training and educational resources.

### Table of Contents

- Letter from the Executive Director ........................................... 2
- Facts & Figures ........................................................................ 3
- 20 Years at a Glance ................................................................. 4
- AIANTA Partners & Members .................................................. 8
- Scholarship ............................................................................. 11
- Education ................................................................................ 12
- American Indian Tourism Conference ..................................... 14
- International Outreach ............................................................. 16
- Public Relations & Media .......................................................... 18
- NativeAmerica.travel ............................................................... 19
- National Coalitions & Initiatives ............................................. 20
- Financial Highlights ............................................................... 22
- AIANTA Board & Staff ............................................................ 24
September 1, 2018

Dear Members, Partners and Friends:

We are pleased to present the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) annual report. As AIANTA celebrates the 20th anniversary of its annual conference, it is a good time to reflect on the growth of Indian Country Tourism.

For the past 20 years, AIANTA has worked hard to provide a national network of technical assistance, training and state-of-the-art resources to grow, enhance and sustain Tribal tourism.

This past year has been especially productive, culminating in support of the NATIVE Act for the first time via Congressional appropriations support. This report documents the growth and value of Tribal tourism, celebrates the supporters who have helped AIANTA along the way and shares exciting new opportunities.

Our gratitude goes out to our Tribal elders, leaders and to the dedicated people who had the foresight to see tourism as a means for economic development, cultural perpetuation and an authentic voice to amplify the untold histories and cultural stories of American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians.

As the only organization specifically dedicated to advancing Indian Country tourism across the country, AIANTA continually takes an active role working with Tribes and Tribal organizations engaged in cultural tourism. We are proud and excited to continue engaging with our partners, members, Tribes and tourism leaders around the world to grow Tribal capacity, offer education and training opportunities, and expand markets across the globe so that Tribes can realize their full potential in this powerful industry.

Gunałchéesh -- Thank you,

Camille Ferguson
AIANTA Executive Director

AIANTA History

Camille Ferguson first joined AIANTA in 2003 as a member of the Board of Directors. She returned to the organization in 2013 to assume the role of Executive Director.
**Facts & Figures**

**Tourism Statistics & Economic Impact**

**1.95 Million**
Overseas visitors to Indian Country (2016)

**2.4 Million**
Overseas visitors to Indian Country (projected, 2021)

**180%**
Increase in visitors since 2007

**$8.5 Billion**
Direct spending by international visitors in Indian Country (2016)

**41,353**
Jobs created by growth in international visitors to Indian Country (2015)

*Data courtesy of U.S. Department of Commerce, National Travel & Tourism Office*

**Native-Owned Businesses**

AIANTA is working directly with Tribes to identify tourism assets available throughout Indian Country. With the data, AIANTA is creating a tourism asset database which will standardize and optimize the collection of tourism data across all Tribal enterprises. The data, being aggregated through a central tourism database, is maintained by AIANTA and updated with the input of individual Tribes.
200 Years At-A-Glance

1999
First American Indian Tourism Conference (AITC)
Hosted by New Mexico Indian Tourism Association, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Department of the Interior
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Hired first Tourism Consultant

2000
AITC hosted by
Oneida Nation of Wisconsin
Green Bay, Wisconsin

Federal agencies initiate MOU with Western States Tourism Policy Council (WSTPC) and include Indian Country and AIANTA in the language

Newly created Circle of Tribal Advisors to the National Council of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial (NCLCB) includes members from recognized and non-recognized Tribes

AIANTA signs MOU with Circle of Tribal Advisors in partnership with NCLCB

2001
AITC hosted by
Three Affiliated Tribes
Bismarck, North Dakota

2002
AITC hosted by
Tlingit & Haida Tribes
Juneau, Alaska

AIANTA is incorporated as a non-profit in Wisconsin with Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC) as a sponsoring organization

2003
AITC hosted by
Gila River Indian Community
Phoenix, Arizona

2004
AITC hosted by
Oneida Nation of Wisconsin
Green Bay, Wisconsin

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2005
AITC hosted by
Seminole Tribe of Florida
Hollywood, Florida

2006
AITC hosted by
Quinault Nation
Ocean Shores, Washington

Launched AIANTA website

2007
AITC hosted by
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
Cherokee, North Carolina

Opened national office in Albuquerque, New Mexico

First Executive Director hired

AIANTA begins tribal tourism international outreach program in cooperation with U.S. Department of Commerce

2008
AITC hosted by
Coeur d'Alene Tribe
Worley, Idaho

Outreach by Native Music Rocks & AIANTA in New York City

2009
AITC hosted by
Pueblo of Pojoaque

AIANTA obtains 501(c)(3) status
AIANTA creates Discover Native America magazine in six languages

AIANTA participates for the first time in world’s largest international tourism marketplace--ITB Berlin

2010
AITC hosted by
Tulalip Tribes
Tulalip, Washington

Cooperative agreement initiated with BIA

First Native America section included in Discover America magazine published by Brand USA

2011
AITC hosted by
Ft. McDowell Yavapai Apache Nation
Scottsdale, Arizona

AIANTA re-enters cooperative agreement with BIA

AIANTA initiates MOU with National Park Service (NPS) Intermountain Region
MOU including AIANTA renewed with Western States Tourism Policy Council (WSTPC) and federal agencies

**2012**

AITC hosted by Crow Nation
Billings, Montana

AIANTA hires first Membership Coordinator

U.S. President’s National Travel and Tourism Strategy includes AIANTA

AIANTA participates in IPW (formerly International Pow Wow)—U.S. Travel Association’s international marketplace for the first time

AIANTA re-enters cooperative agreement with BIA

AIANTA initiates MOU with the U.S. Department of the Interior

AIANTA initiates MOU with National Geotourism Council

AIANTA participates in Destination Capitol Hill with U.S. Travel Association

AIANTA’s Tribal Tourism scholarship program begins

First financial audit

**2013**

AITC hosted by Cherokee Nation
Tulsa, Oklahoma

AIANTA attends China International Travel Mart (CITM) in partnership with Brand USA

American Indians and the Civil War published in collaboration with NPS

AIANTA Board President appointed to U.S. Department of Commerce Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (TTAB)

AIANTA’s Enough Good People Awards formally established

Native Hawaiian tourism included in AIANTA mission and vision

**2014**

AITC hosted by Tunica Biloxi Tribe
Marksville, Louisiana

AIANTA hires IT & Website Coordinator

AIANTA helps shape the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act sponsored by Senator Brian Schatz (HI) and encourages bill co-sponsors

AIANTA initiates project to build Tribal destination website NativeAmerica.travel

AIANTA awards first Tribal Tourism Scholarships

AIANTA booth receives Top 10 Award at ITB Berlin International Marketplace

Facilitation of Grand Canyon Desert View project in partnership with NPS, Grand Canyon National Park, Grand Canyon Inter-Tribal Advisory Council, Grand Canyon Association, National Park Service Youth Programs, National Park Service Denver Service Center, Bureau of Indian Affairs, ArtPlace America National Grants Program, OSIYO Group

AIANTA awarded Route 66 NPS matching grant

Board of Directors regional outreach begins

AIANTA takes financial operations in house

AIANTA completes five-year strategic plan

AIANTA Board President participates in U.S. Senate Democratic Outreach & Steering Committee Roundtable with other tourism leaders

AIANTA co-sponsors Southeast Tourism Society (STS) Congressional Summit

AIANTA joins National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) on Economic Development Committee

Resolutions or letters of support for permanent funding for AIANTA received from Standing Rock Tribe, Midwest Association of Sovereign Tribes (MAST), Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada (ITCN) and U.S. Representative Don Young (AK)

Board President testifies before U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Oversight Hearing: Economic Development Encouraging Investment in Indian Country

AIANTA initiates MOU with Native American Rights Fund (NARF)

AIANTA re-enters cooperative agreement with BIA
2015
AIANTA hosted by Southern Ute Indian Tribe Ignacio, Colorado

AIANTA hosts Taste of America at ITB Berlin

AIANTA expands international outreach to include Visit USA Italy

AIANTA launches new database of Indian Country tourism assets

ArtPlace America collaborates with AIANTA to support Tribal placemaking at the Grand Canyon Desert View Watchtower

Tribal Interpretation Project with Bureau of Land Management begins

AIANTA Board President is appointed to second term on TTAB

AIANTA holds outreach programs in three regions (Alaska, Southwest and Midwest)

AIANTA initiates MOU with National Tour Association (NTA)

NativeAmerica.Travel website launched

NATIVE Act of 2016 introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senator Brian Schatz and 11 co-sponsors

Companion NATIVE Act of 2016 bill introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Rep. Markwayne Mullin with eight co-sponsors

MOU with NIGA initiated

2016
AIANTA receives media coverage in Travel Weekly, the Associated Press and the “World’s Greatest!” television show

AIANTA hosted by Tulalip Tribes Tulalip, Washington

Cultural Heritage Tourism Workshop launched with the George Washington University (GW)

American Indians and Route 66 published in collaboration with NPS

Hired Public Lands Manager

Hired Development Director

AIANTA receives U.S. President’s “E” Award for organizations contributing significantly to increase U.S. exports

Initiates partnership via letter of intent with GW for education and training programs

American Indians and Route 66 Guidebook researched, produced and published

Awarded Market Development Cooperator Program Grant from U.S. Department of Commerce

Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act of 2016 passed and enacted

Phase II of destination website launched

Board President testifies before U.S. House of Representatives

Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaskan Affairs

Partnered with Tribal Business Journal (TBJ) to create advertising/advertorial program

AIANTA receives media coverage in Men’s Journal, Cheap-O-Air Blog, LA Times, Indian Country Today, Native Peoples Magazine

Resolution of support for NATIVE Act implementation from All Pueblo Council of Governors (APCG) and 30+ Tribes and organizations received

2017
AIANTA hosted by Oneida Nation of Wisconsin Green Bay, Wisconsin

In partnership with Brand USA, AIANTA co-hosts first fam (familiarization) tour for Italian journalists

AIANTA hosts first Go International training for Tribes

International Outreach Coordinator hired

Launched Agritourism Pilot in partnership with the Food & Farm Communications Fund

Public Lands Inter-Agency Working Group formed

National Trails MOU put in approval process

MOU initiated with Indigenous Tourism

NATIVE Act of 2016 introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senator Brian Schatz and 11 co-sponsors

Companion NATIVE Act of 2016 bill introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Rep. Markwayne Mullin with eight co-sponsors

MOU with NIGA initiated

20 Years At-A-Glance
Association of Canada (ITAC)

BLM Letter of Intent for NATIVE Act projects enters approval process

Resolutions of support received from the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada, Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes and Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI), with unanimous vote of 56 Tribes, and Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) for implementation funding for the NATIVE Act

Letter of support for implementation funding of the NATIVE Act received from Governor Jay Inslee and Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs, Washington State

Outreach to Rocky Mountain Tribal Leadership Council and Arizona Tribes with Arizona Governor’s Conference on Tourism

Partnered with First Nations Development Institute for three educational webinars

Executive Director testifies before the U.S. House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee requesting implementation funding of the NATIVE Act

2018

20th Anniversary AITC hosted by Pueblo of Isleta Albuquerque, New Mexico

AIANTA hosts second Go International training for Tribes

AIANTA co-hosts first Pacific Northwest fam trip for Italian journalists and tour operators in partnership with Brand USA

Indian Country Tourism recognized through federal appropriations for Fiscal Year 2018 and 2019 via NATIVE Act implementation

AIANTA initiates MOUs with Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership and the National Center for American Indian Economic Development (NCAIED) and updates MOU with NIGA

Initiates MOU with Department of the Interior and Department of Commerce

Initiates cooperative agreement with Department of the Interior and National Park Service

AIANTA/Federal Inter-Agency Working Group expanded and meetings established.
New Partnerships

In FY2017-2018, AIANTA strengthened its existing relationships while also attracting new partners to expand our reach. New partners include:

- The Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership
- National Park Service/National Trails Intermountain Region
- U.S. Department of the Interior & U.S. Department of Commerce

Building Strategic Partnerships

AIANTA is dedicated to creating strong relationships between Tribes, the tourism industry and federal and congressional leaders. We thank all our partners for helping us amplify the voice of Tribal tourism.

Our Partners Through the Years

American Association of Parks and Recreation
American Indian Law Center
American Recreation Coalition
ArtPlace America
Coalition of Large Land Based Tribes (COLT)
The George Washington University
International Institute of Tourism Studies
Grand Canyon Association
Grand Canyon National Park
Historic Hotels
Hobbs Straus Dean & Walker LLP
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center
Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada
International Tourism Marketing (ITM)
Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Inc.
Intertribal Transportation Association
Kilpatrick Townsend and Stockton
Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes
National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED)
National Congress of American Indians
National Geographic Society Sustainable Destinations
National Indian Gaming Association
National Scenic Byways
National Tour Association
National Trails Intermountain Region
National Tribal Geospatial Information Support Center
Native American Finance Officers Association
Native American Rights Fund
Native American Tourism of Wisconsin
New York University
Northern Arizona University
Powers Pyles Sutter & Verville PC
Recreation One Stop
Route 66 The Road Ahead Partnership
Southeast Tourism Society
Southwestern Association for Indian Arts (SWAIA)/Santa Fe Indian Market
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
U.S. Department of Commerce
Office of Travel and Tourism Industries
International Trade Administration
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Tribal Technical Assistance Programs
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Small Business Administration
U.S. Travel Association
United South and Eastern Tribes
University of Wisconsin at Stout
Western States Tourism Policy Council

AIANTA History

2010
The first Native America section is included in Discover America magazine published by Brand USA

2015
AIANTA launches new database of Indian Country tourism assets
AIANTA is grateful to our members who are working to advance Tribal tourism. AIANTA members from Tribes, the tourism industry, other national nonprofits, federal, state and local governments, and colleges and universities form a significant resource network that shares information and experience to support one another.

**Tribes & Tribal Enterprises**

Ak-Chin Indian Community
Alaska Native Voices Educational Institute, Huna Totem Corporation
Blackfeet Manpower & Campgrounds
Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
Cherokee Nation
Chickaloon Native Village
Chickasaw Country
Choctaw Country
Citizen Potawatomi Nation
Coeur D’Alene Casino & Resort, Coeur D’Alene Tribe
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Confederated Tribes of Umatilla
Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians
Discover Salt River, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
Eastern Shoshone Tribe
Grace Hospitality, Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe
Grand Canyon Resort, Hualapai Indian Tribe
Hilton Santa Fe Buffalo Thunder, Pueblo of Pojoaque
Hoonah Indian Association
Hyatt Regency Tamaya, Pueblo of Santa Ana
Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada
Isleta Resort & Casino, Pueblo of Isleta
Jilkkaat Kwaan Cultural Tours, Chilkat Indian Village
Kake Tribal Tourism LLC
Kodiak Brown Bear Center, KONIAG Alaska Native Corporation

Lac du Flambeau Business Development Corporation
Legends Casino Hotel, Yakama Nation
Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nation Tourism
Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin
Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
Moenuk Legacy Inn & Suites, Hopi Tribe
The Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Native American Tourism of Wisconsin
Native American Travel LLC, Seminole Tribe of Florida
Navajo Nation Hospitality Enterprise
Navajo Nation Tourism
Navajo Parks & Recreation Department
Nevada Indian Territory
Nez Perce Tribe Enterprise Board
Organized Village of Kasaan
Paragon Casino Resort, Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana
Pedro Bay Corporation
Pueblo of Pojoaque
Quileute Oceanside Resort
Radisson Inn Green Bay, Oneida Nation of Wisconsin
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe
Seneca Nation of Indians
Shoshone Bannock Hotel, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
Port Madison Enterprises, Suquamish Tribe
TDX St. Paul Island Tour, TDX Alaska Native Corporation
The People’s Center, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes
Tulalip Tribes
United Houma Nation
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
Ute Tribal Enterprise, Ute Indian Tribe
Washoe Tribe of Nevada & California
We-Ko-Pa Resort, Fort McDowell Yavapai
Wind River Hotel & Casino, The Northern Arapaho Tribe

**Native-Owned Businesses**

Adventurous Antelope Canyon Photo Tours
Alaska Native Heritage Center
Alaskan Dream Cruises
Antelope Canyon Navajo Tours
Exhibit Solutions
Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association
Navajo Tours USA
Opiq Adventures, LLC.

**AIANTA History**

In 2015, AIANTA members and Tribal tourism entities are offered an exciting new marketing tool with the launch of NativeAmerica.travel, the first-ever consumer-facing website promoting authentic experiences in Indian Country.
AIANTA Members

- Are leaders in the travel, tourism and recreation industry who elect AIANTA leadership
- Network with other Tribal professionals and industry leaders
- Keep up-to-date with Tribal tourism and recreation news, opportunities and issues
- Receive notices of funding, training, scholarships and promotional opportunities
- Can promote new services, products and events in AIANTA newsletters
- Are listed in the online Membership Directory
- Participate in regional projects and technical assistance opportunities
- Support advocacy efforts in Washington, D.C.
- Enjoy reduced registration rates at the AITC and other events
- Can receive AIANTA Destination Awards.
- Are eligible to serve on one of AIANTA’s ad-hoc committees.

Businesses/Organizations

Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce
Alcatraz Cruises LLC
AMERICA Journal
American Indian Chamber of Commerce of Arizona
American Indian Chamber of Commerce of New Mexico
American Indian Resource Center, Inc.
Arizona Office of Tourism
BHW1 Advertising
City of Gallup Tourism
Colorado Tourism Office
Florida Governor’s Council on Indian Affairs, Inc.
Fort Belknap Community Economic Development Corporation
Hawaii Tourism Authority
Indian Arts & Crafts Association
Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP
MacLeod Farley & Associates
Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development
National Federation of Tour Guide Associations
Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, Inc.

Members by Region
Education

Scholarship

To support the next generation of Tribal tourism industry leaders AIANTA introduced its Hospitality and Tourism Scholarship Program in 2013. Native students pursuing a degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management, Culinary Arts and other related fields can apply for scholarships set at $500 per semester and $1,000 per academic school year.

AIANTA has raised nearly $40,000 for the program and has awarded a total of 14 scholarships to Native students.

AIANTA also supports the next generation of tourism industry leaders through an internship program with the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC) and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI).

2012

AIANTA raised more than $8,000 for its scholarship program at its first silent auction and Destination Awards ceremony at the AITC in Billings, Montana.

2013

Kyle Tafoya, Pueblo of Jemez (Central Community College)
Jennifer Abeita, Laguna/Choctaw Tribes (Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute)

2014

Del Curfman, Crow Nation (Institute of American Indian Arts)
Jordan Dresser, Northern Arapaho (University of San Francisco)

2015

Hajshrei Brown, Navajo Nation (Arizona State University)

2016

Shawn M. Aragon, Pueblo of Acoma (New Mexico State University)
Marcus Seymour, Pueblos of Acoma and Laguna (Institute of American Indian Arts)
Vanessa Fernando, Pueblo of Laguna (New Mexico State University)
Tracee Abeita Torres, Pueblo of Isleta (University of New Mexico).

2017

Myron Lee, Navajo Nation (Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute)
Monica Gregory, Colville Confederated Tribes (Washington State University)
Nicole Russell, Echota Cherokee Tribe of Alabama (University of South Alabama)
Indian Country Training

AIANTA is committed to laying a sustainable foundation for tourism development and fostering growth, and we work closely with our members, partners and the tourism industry to provide the educational support Tribes need to build authentic cultural tourism experiences. In FY2017-2018, AIANTA initiated a number of programs for Indian Country participants.

Go International

Responding to the needs of Indian Country organizations and enterprises wanting to attract an international audience, AIANTA produced its second annual Go International training in Albuquerque, New Mexico, January 22-23, 2018. More than 40 people participated in the two-day program, which was designed to help businesses learn how to build capacity, develop product and gain the skills needed to be ready for the international marketplace.

Agritourism

Food sovereignty is a growing movement in Indian Country, as agritourism provides another way for Tribes to gain income from their farms and ranches. To support the growth of agritourism, AIANTA launched a Tribal agritourism page, provided tailored trainings at the American Indian Tourism Conference (AITC) and developed three case studies of Tribal agritourism programs published at AIANTA.org in partnership with the Food and Farm Communications Fund.

Webinars

To further facilitate Tribal learning, especially for Native communities located in remote communities, AIANTA developed three training webinars in partnership with First Nations Development Institute.

Subjects included Trends, Challenges and Opportunities in Tribal Agritourism Development, Using New Media to Control the Message and Using NativeAmerica.travel to Promote Tourism and Your Agritourism Products.

More than 100 participants registered for each webinar.

Professional Certificate in Cultural Heritage Tourism

AIANTA partnered with the George Washington University to launch an online professional Cultural Heritage Tourism Certificate program.

The six-module program provides participants with the knowledge to leverage tourism as an engine for community and economic development.

The inaugural certificate program drew 46 registrants with 39 participants receiving certificates.

“I highly recommend the course for all who are involved in any aspect of Tribal tourism!”

--Dorothy FireCloud, Superintendent of Montezuma Castle and Tuzigoot National Monuments, National Park Service
In 2014, AIANTA’s Board of Directors began an organized outreach program to provide training and education programs to Tribal enterprises around the nation.

AIANTA reaches audiences across the nation and the globe with increased support from regional board members who actively assist in meetings within their regions.

Nationally, AIANTA staff and board of directors attended such events as the Southeast Tourism Society’s Congressional Summit on Travel and Tourism, the National Indian Gaming Association’s annual convention, the National Congress of American Indians and Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, as well as serving on national committees. Internationally, participation at ITB Berlin, Showcase USA-Italy, WTM London and IPW contributed to our strong global outreach efforts.

In FY2017-2018, our direct outreach efforts resulted in exposure to approximately 172,2550 individuals in Indian Country and the tourism industry including federal, Tribal, industry, international and consumer contacts.

Travel for the purpose of providing training to AIANTA staff and board of directors represents 22 percent of all of the organization’s travel. Further, 77 percent of travel was related to national and international outreach efforts, providing information on AIANTA’s programing and resources to help tourism development and capacity building.

Between September 2017 and August 2018, AIANTA received 32 percent of its total travel expenses as in-kind relief for outreach and technical assistance for tourism development from Tribal and industry partners across the nation.

AIANTA History

In 2014, AIANTA’s Board of Directors began an organized outreach program to provide training and education programs to Tribal enterprises around the nation.
American Indian Tourism Conference

AITC Conference

To help Tribes develop and grow their tourism capacity, AIANTA brings together Tribes, thought leaders and tourism industry professionals at its annual American Indian Tourism Conference (AITC). For FY2017-2018, the conference celebrated its 19th anniversary in Green Bay, Wisconsin in partnership with the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin.

As the only national conference on tourism in Indian Country, AITC is a premier showcase for sharing knowledge, experience and best practices from tourism programs around the United States.

Every conference features mobile workshops, networking events and expert speakers and presenters in order to create a quality educational forum to help attendees with their travel and tourism initiatives.

At the annual conference, AIANTA also hosts a silent auction, the proceeds of which go to AIANTA’s scholarship program—supporting Native students in their tourism and hospitality studies.

Destination Awards

Tribal Destination of the Year

2017-2018: Talking Stick Resort
Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
2016-2017: Icy Strait Point
Huna Totem Corporation
2015-2016: Acoma Sky City Cultural Center & Haak’u Museum
Pueblo of Acoma
2014-2015: Chickasaw Country of Oklahoma
2013-2014: Indian Pueblo Cultural Center
2012-2013: Cherokee Nation Cultural Tourism; Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe (Honorable Mention)

Best Cultural Heritage Experience

2017-2018: Stewart Father’s Day Powwow
2016-2017: Puye Cliff Pueblo of Santa Clara
2015-2016: Alaskan Dream Cruises
2013-2014: The Poeh Center, Pojoaque Pueblo Standing Rock Tribal Tourism
2012-2013: Chickasaw Cultural Center; Arizona Indian Festival (Honorable Mention)

Excellence in Customer Service

2017-2018: Donovan Hanley, Navajo Nation Hospitality
2016-2017: Tina Whitegeese, Hilton Buffalo Thunder, Pueblo of Pojoaque
2015-2016: Grand Canyon Skywalk (Monica Sedillo, Elroy Havaton, Rory Majenty)
2014-2015: CIRI Alaska Tourism Corporation
2012-2013: Dawn Melvin, Arizona Department of Tourism

Conference Sponsors

Arizona Office of Tourism
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Cherokee Nation Businesses
Chickasaw Country
Choctaw Country
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada
Inn of the Mountain Gods
Navajo Parks & Recreation Department
Nevada Indian Territory
Paragon Casino Resort
Port Madison Enterprises
Puyallup Tribe of the Puyallup Reservation
Radisson Green Bay, Oneida Nation of Wisconsin
Society of American Indian Government Employees
Tribal Business Journal
Vision Maker Media

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Enough Good People

“Through all the fits and starts, challenges and triumphs, we never doubted that good things would happen because there were, in every situation, enough good people to push or pull or argue us through to the next step.” – Louis Adams, Salish

2017-2018

Marcie Metropolis, Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council – (In Memoriam) In recognition of her dedicated work to AIANTA
Danny Marti, Kilpatrick Townsend Stockton LLC
Keith Harper, Kilpatrick Townsend Stockton LLC
Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, Inc.

2016-2017

Principal Chief Bill John Baker, Cherokee Nation
Senator Brian Schatz of Hawaii

2015-2016

David Uberuaga, Former Superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park
Joe Garcia, Former Governor, Ohkay Owingeh and former President of the National Congress of American Indians.
Kristen Lamoureux, PhD
Ron Erdmann, former Deputy Director of Research, Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, U.S. Department of Commerce.

2014-2015

Diane Chalfant, former Deputy Superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park
Vicki Dixon, former Program Analyst, Intergovernmental and External Affairs, Office of the Secretary, Department of the Interior
John Echohawk, Executive Director, Native American Rights Fund (NARF)
LeRoy Gishi, Chief, Division of Transportation, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
Jana Prewitt, former Director of External and Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of the Secretary, Department of the Interior and AIANTA Consultant

2013-2014

Bill Hardman, Southeast Tourism Society
Gail Adams, former U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs
Julia Washburn, Associate Director for Interpretation and Education, National Park Service
Martha Redbone, Singer/Songwriter/Artist

Sammye Meadows, former AIANTA Public Lands Partnership Consultant
Tex G. Hall, Past Chairman, Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nation; Past President, National Congress of the American Indian
Sandra Necessary, former International Trade specialist, U.S. Department of Commerce
Expanding Our Global Reach

Recognizing that Indian Country is a unique part of the visitor experience in America, AIANTA is ensuring Natives share in the benefits of attracting international travelers, who stay longer and spend more than other travelers.

Ever since AIANTA attended its first international tradeshow (ITB, Berlin) in 2009, the organization has been connecting Tribal tourism destinations and experiences with overseas buyers and media.

Tradeshow Participation

As international interest in the United States continues to grow—it is forecasted that there will be more than 2.4 million overseas visits to Indian Country by 2021—AIANTA continues to increase its presence at international trade shows.

In FY2017-2018, AIANTA attended and hosted Tribes at some of the largest and most influential travel tradeshows around the world, thanks in part to our partnerships with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Department of Commerce Market Development Cooperator Program (MDCP).
ITB Berlin

For the tenth consecutive year, AIANTA hosted Tribal partners at ITB Berlin, which attracts more than 170,000 visitors, 113,000 tourism professionals and 11,000 companies from 180 countries.

For nearly three months before the show, AIANTA provided extensive training, including conference calls, webinars and tourism marketing to provide Tribal partners with the highest caliber of training and education available in the industry.

IPW Denver

AIANTA, along with other federal partners, represented Indian Country tourism in the BIA booth at the U.S. Travel Association’s Annual IPW in Denver, Colorado.

The U.S. travel industry’s premier international tourism marketplace, IPW welcomed more than 1,100 exhibitors, including destinations, hoteliers and airlines.

Visit USA-Italy Showcase

AIANTA participated in Showcase USA-Italy for the fourth time in 2018. Organized by U.S. Commercial Service Italy and Visit USA Association Italy, Showcase USA-Italy is the only marketing event dedicated to promoting Italian tourism to the United States. AIANTA delegates met with more than 30 tour operators, 80 travel agents and 25 journalists.

World Travel Market

AIANTA continued to expand its international outreach in Europe by attending the premiere tourism trade show, World Travel Market (WTM) in London.

With more than 5,000 exhibitors, World Travel Market attracts 51,000 travel professionals, key industry buyers, journalists, digital influencers, students and tourism ministers yearly.

International Familiarization Trips

Pacific Northwest Fam Trip

AIANTA—in partnership with numerous Tribal enterprises, Brand USA and U.S. Commercial Service Italy—hosted a familiarization (fam) tour focused on Indian Country throughout the Pacific Northwest in May 2018. In total, AIANTA staff accompanied a delegation of six Italian journalists and travel buyers.
Public Relations

AIANTA provides a strong voice for Tribes by sharing Indian Country’s unique tourism stories and experiences to a media audience in the U.S. and abroad. Our public relations efforts for FY2018 resulted in:

- Nearly 50 million media impressions
- Nearly 50 earned media stories

Key Placements

Sitka Historical Park Gets Benefit of Native Knowledge
U.S. News & World Report; July 14, 2018
Reach: 14 million

Route 66 Might Be Iconic, But the Real Story — One of American Indians — Has Been Lost Along the Way
Mic Network; March 9, 2018
Reach: 2 million

RV Sales Are Up, But So Are Rentals and Shares
Skift; May 24, 2018
Reach: 222,000

Web Site Puts the Pow in Pow Wow
Travel Industry Today; June 12, 2018
Reach: 4,000 (Canada)

AIANTA.org

AIANTA’s flagship website, AIANTA.org provided detailed information on the organization’s outreach efforts. For FY2017-2018, the site attracted:

- More than 33,000 pageviews for FY2017-2018
- Gender mix: 59 percent female/41 percent male
- Users Geography: U.S. (72%); Canada (3.5%); Brazil (3.3%); and France (2%)
- A younger audience: 25-34 years (26%); 35-44 (20%); 45-54 years (19%); 55-64 years (15%); other (20%)

Social Media

AIANTA’s social media efforts continue to speak to an ever-increasing audience. For FY 2018, AIANTA delivered:

- 4,511 Facebook likes
- 973 Twitter followers
- 70 Instagram followers
- A reach of nearly 70,000 users on Facebook
- A reach of nearly 55,000 users on Twitter
In 2015, AIANTA introduced NativeAmerica.travel, the first-ever, consumer-facing destination website dedicated to Indian Country tourism. The site connects Tribes directly to travelers with inspiring narratives and images inviting them to explore Indian Country. Each federally recognized Tribe can claim a page on the website and contribute an unlimited number of experiences, accommodations, attractions and destinations.

**Target Users**

- **Cultural Heritage Travelers**
  Travelers who visited a gallery/museum, historic location, national park or cultural/ethnic heritage site

- **International Visitors**
  Visitors looking for itineraries beyond a single destination

- **Baby Boomer Adventurers**
  Seeking authentic Native American experiences adjacent to National Parks and public lands

- **Adventure/Eco Travelers**
  Generally a younger audience seeking unique, photo-ready outdoor experiences

- **Families**
  Looking to experience the diversity of Native American Tribes and their respective cultures

**Tribal Partners**

- Bear River Band
- Cherokee Nation
- Chickasaw Nation
- Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
- Coeur D’Alene Tribe
- Comanche Nation
- Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
- Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
- Fort Belknap Indian Community
- Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
- The Hualapai Tribe
- Lower Brule Sioux Tribe
- Mandan Hitatsa & Arikara Nation
- Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
- Moapa Band of Paiute Indians
- Navajo Nation
- Nez Perce Tribe
- Oneida Nation of Wisconsin
- Organized Village of Kasaan
- Pueblo of Cochiti
- Pueblo of Jemez
- Pueblo of Pojoaque
- Pueblo of Santa Ana
- Reno Sparks Indian Colony
- Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community
- Seminole Tribe of Florida
- Seneca Nation of Indians
- Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
- Sitka Tribe of Alaska
- Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
- Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa
- United Houma Nation
- Village of Aniak
- Walker River Paiute Tribe
- Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
- Wrangell Cooperative Association
- The Yurok Tribe
Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience Act

Successful Legislative Work Leads to NATIVE Act Funding

With AIANTA’s persuasive leadership and the support of U.S. Tribes, Tribal organizations, and the tourism industry, Congress voted to provide $4.4 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017-2018 funding to begin carrying out the NATIVE Act. FY2018-2019 federal appropriations measures that await passage continue funding the NATIVE Act at $3.4 million.

The NATIVE Act calls for a Tribal tourism nonprofit with AIANTA’s mission to facilitate implementation, and AIANTA has adopted a NATIVE Act strategic plan and is negotiating a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to obtain FY2017-2018 funding to implement the Act.

The NATIVE Act mandates and encourages:

1. Enhancement and integration of Native American tourism into federal management planning
2. Increased coordination and collaboration between Tribes and Federal agencies’ tourism assets
3. Expanded heritage and cultural tourism opportunities in the U.S.
4. Federal agencies providing funding and technical assistance to Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations to spur important infrastructure development, increase tourism capacity, and elevate living standards in Native American communities.

AIANTA History

2012
The U.S. President’s National Travel and Tourism Strategy includes AIANTA

2014
In 2014, AIANTA helps shape the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experiences (NATIVE) Act sponsored by Senator Brian Schatz (HI)

2016
AIANTA’s Board President provides testimony on the NATIVE Act at a Hearing before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs

2018
Indian Country Tourism is recognized through federal appropriations for Fiscal Year 2018 and 2019 via NATIVE Act implementation

National Coalitions & Initiatives
Supporting Congressional Legislation and National Tribal Coalitions & Initiatives

AIANTA understands that the success of Indian Country tourism is influenced by the many Federal laws, regulations and policies that support or detract from Tribal self-governance and self-determination.

Consequently, in 2018, AIANTA reviewed and chose to support key initiatives, including the Explore America Act, the priorities of the Native Farm Bill Coalition and the NCAI Partnership for Tribal Governance.

The Explore America Act

The Explore America Act—sponsored by Senator Brian Schatz—authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to strengthen cultural heritage tourism through the Preserve America Program. It directs the National Park Service Director to partner with gateway communities, including Native American communities, to leverage local cultural and historic heritage tourism assets.

Agritourism

Agritourism is a growing sector of rural development, so AIANTA joined the Native Farm Bill Coalition and its 160+ members to protect and serve the interests of Tribes in all aspects of the Farm Bill of 2018, including funding formulas, 638 pilot programs and inclusion in policy and advisory bodies within the Department of Agriculture.

NCAI Partnership Initiatives

Strengthening Tribal self-governance, amending P.L. 102-477 to include all relevant federal agencies, and assisting Tribes to tailor their own Tribal workforce development plans are National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Partnership initiatives that AIANTA seeks to understand and support with the intent of helping Tribes see tourism’s employment potential and incorporate development strategies for tourism workforce readiness.
Financial Highlights

Financial

Tylor Roth & Company PLLP Certified Accounts have audited the financial statements of American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association, Inc. as of and for the year ended September 30, 2016, and have issued this report dated March 21, 2018, which contained an unqualified opinion on those financial statements.

“Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. The accompanying schedule of expenditures of federal awards is presented for purposes of additional analysis as required by U.S. Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations, and is not a required part of the financial statements.

We have audited American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association, Inc.’s compliance with the types of compliance requirements described in the OMB Compliance Supplement that could have a direct and material effect on each of American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association, Inc.’s major federal programs for the year ended September 30, 2017. American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association, Inc.’s major federal programs are identified in the summary of auditor’s results section of the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs.

Opinion on Each Major Federal Program
In our opinion, American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association, Inc. complied, in all material respects, with the types of compliance requirements referred to above that could have a direct and material effect on each of its major federal programs for the year ended September 30, 2017.”
BIA Funding

AIANTA has been supported by the Bureau of Indian Affairs through a cooperative agreement since 2011. However, over the years funding support has fluctuated and AIANTA has sought alternative funding.

Expenses

67 percent of AIANTA expenses are used for programs including education, international, public lands and the destination mapping program. AIANTA invested 8 percent for fundraising activities and 25 percent for management.

Revenue & Other Support

2017 AIANTA diversified revenue sources can be attributed to the growth in the program funds from the annual AITC conference, sponsorships, donations and increased membership. New programs contributing include the cultural certificate programs and webinars. Private grants awarded include the ArtPlace America, Marketing Development Cooperators Program, Food Farm Communications Fund and the First Nations Development Institute.
AIANTA Staff

Camille Ferguson, Executive Director
Hannah Peterson, Development Director
* Monica Poling, Public Relations & Media Manager
Sandra Anderson, IT & Website Development Coordinator
Sherrie L. Bowman, Education & Events Specialist
Gail E. Chehak, Outreach & Content Development Coordinator
* Ariel Richardson, Administrative Assistant

*New to AIANTA staff, not shown

FY 2017-2018 Consultants & Advisors

Jana Prewitt, Legislative Consultant
Lael Eckohawk, Legal Advisor
Scott Sypolt, Akerman LLP, Legal Advisor
Julie Heizer, MDCP Advisor, U.S. Department of Commerce
Brad Hess, MDCP Advisor, U.S. Department of Commerce
Paul G. Moorehead, Powers Pyles Sutter & Verville PC, Legal Advisor
Dan Moore, Pandion Consulting and Facilitation, Agritourism Consultant
AIANTA Board of Directors

OFFICERS
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Vice President Rachel Moreno
Secretary James Surveyor
Treasurer Lora Ann Chaisson

ALASKA REGION
Rachel Moreno (Tlingit)
Sitka Tribe of Alaska Tribal Council
Mario Fulmer (Tlingit)
Alaska Native Voices Educational Institute

EASTERN REGION
Lora Ann Chaisson (United Houma Nation)
United Houma Nation Tribal Council

MIDWEST REGION
Crystal Holtz (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin)
Radisson Hotel & Conference Center Green Bay
Bethann Cassie Molkentin (Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans)
Mille Lac Corporate Ventures

PACIFIC REGION
Jamie SiJohn (Spokane Tribe of Indians)
Tribal Strategist/BHW1 Advertising
Pohai Ryan (Native Hawaiian)

PLAINS REGION
Gayle Skunkcap (Blackfeet Nation)
Blackfeet Nation Campgrounds & Manpower One Stop
Leslie Shakespeare (Eastern Shoshone)
Eastern Shoshone Business Council

SOUTHWEST REGION
Sherry L. Rupert (Paiute/Washoe)
Chairperson, Nevada’s Indian Territory
Emerson Vallo (Pueblo of Acoma)
Tourism Consultant

AT LARGE
Travis Owens (Cherokee Nation)
Cherokee Nation Businesses
James Surveyor (Hopi/Cheyenne-Arapaho)
Manager, Moenkopi Lodge

Jackie Dorothy (Northern Arapaho)*
Wind River Hotel & Casino
Christopher Thompson (Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe)*
Director of the Office of Economic Development, Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe
Sonja Tanner (White Earth Chippewa)*
Opus Tours

* Served partial term
This report was funded through support from the Bureau of Indian Affairs