# TRIBAL EPIDEMIOLOGY CENTERS

## Year 3

# QUALITATIVE PROJECTS

### Performance Measures & COVID-19

## Public Health Infrastructure (TECPHI) Program

### Addressing Public Health in Indian Country

# Table of Contents

## Acknowledgements

# Introduction

Twelve Tribal Epidemiology Centers (TECs) provide enhanced public health support to American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Peoples, Tribes, Tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations (T/TO/UIOs) across the nation. The TECs share the mission of improving AIAN health by identifying health risks, strengthening public health capacity, and developing solutions for disease prevention and control. TECs strive to maintain superior skills and knowledge to provide data collection, dissemination, and surveillance services, as well as conduct epidemiologic studies. Each TEC is uniquely positioned in their respective regions to provide technical assistance to the T/TO/UIOs they serve. Support from Tribal and urban Indian leadership, partnership with T/TO/UIOs, adequate funding, and access to data all serve to advance the TEC mission.

## The TECPHI Program

In 2017, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC), National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, funded 12 Tribal Epidemiology Centers (TECs) and one Network Coordinating Center (NCC) for a 5-year cooperative agreement called the Tribal Epidemiology Centers Public Health Infrastructure (TECPHI) Program.

The TECPHI Program is a comprehensive funding opportunity designed to improve TEC capacity and infrastructure for disease surveillance, the effectiveness of health promotion and disease prevention, and increase the sustainability of public health activities. Funding has enabled TECs to deliver enriched, culturally-informed services to T/TO/UIOs.

## TECPHI Program Evaluation Plan Year 3 Qualitative Projects

The Year 3 TECPHI Program Evaluation Plan deliverables included two qualitative projects. These projects help create a more holistic picture of work being done to support the health and well-being of AIAN people around the country. Guidelines for these projects were left open to give TECs the freedom to choose their own qualitative methodologies and encourage creativity.

For the first project, TECs were asked to provide additional context for one of the TECPHI Program **Performance Measures** (PMs). The TECs could focus on progress, successes, lessons learned, or highlights related to the TECPHI PM quantitative data reported during Years 1-3. The TECPHI PMs include:

1. Number of TEC staff
2. Number of trainings provided or supported by TECs
3. Number of new or expanded partnerships with TECs
4. Number of new or expanded data sharing agreements (DSAs) with TECs
5. Number of publications produced by TECs
6. Number of users of TEC websites
7. Number of TA requests fulfilled by TECs
8. Number of grant opportunities applied for or supported by TECs

The second qualitative project was intended to highlight TEC **COVID-19** related experiences. The project was community-driven and conceptualized by the participants of the TECPHI Evaluation Community of Practice meeting in May 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a defining period of time and all TECs demonstrated their ability to meet the needs of their T/TO/UIOs and other partners, while continuing to provide routine support. The projects share COVID-related work (not only TECPHI funded activities) from January – September 2020. TECs have provided superior services by:

- Being nimble during a time of emergency
- Growing during stressful and unsure times
- Virtually building and maintaining relationships with partners and communities
- Realizing "invisible capacity" related to data stewardship, reduction in barriers, etc.
- Functioning as public health authorities regionally and as a whole

## Sharing TEC Experiences

This collection of projects shares the lived experiences of TECs and the NCC. The projects illustrate how TECs and the NCC are meeting the goals of the TECPHI Program that are not readily stated in the established evaluation data collection and reporting.

These projects were meant to be low-burden. While each TECs' participation was encouraged, completion of the two qualitative projects was not required. The following report reflects the TEC's individual insights of the TECPHI Program over the last three years, as well as the impacts of COVID-19 during this past year. The projects submitted range from stories, photo narratives, and infographics, to artistic representations of experiences. Through these projects, TECs have given voice and perspective to the settings, communities, and service they provide to their T/TO/UIOs.

**TRIBAL EPIDEMIOLOGY CENTERS**

# Alaska Native Epidemiology Center (ANEC)

## Performance Measure – Partnerships

### Project Overview

For the TECPHI Year 3 Qualitative Project, Alaska Native Epidemiology Center's (EpiCenter) TECPHI staff conducted key informant interviews (KIIs) with 10 Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) members to gather feedback to inform EpiCenter program and grant activities. These KIIs provided EpiCenter the opportunity to receive feedback on how to improve the services offered, particularly focusing on how to better partner with Alaska Tribal Health Organizations (THOs) and other non-Tribal organizations during the COVID-19 global pandemic. As the pandemic has impacted EpiCenter's approach to outreach and engagement, it was essential for EpiCenter to understand how to continue to support partners during this time.

### Project Background

Each year, EpiCenter hosts an in-person SAC meeting to advise EpiCenter on strategic planning, and program and grant activities. SAC members represent a variety of Alaskan public health-related organizations, including representatives from Alaska THOs and the State of Alaska. Every year, each EpiCenter program uses the SAC meeting to present its past year's progress and accomplishments and gather feedback on how to improve. SAC members provide valuable advice to EpiCenter programs on how to improve data dissemination and information sharing, surveillance and applied studies, disease prevention and health promotion, and technical assistance and training.

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, EpiCenter made the decision to forgo an in-person meeting in 2020, and instead decided to conduct phone interviews with SAC members to gather this feedback.

### Project Process

The interviews were all conducted by phone between September 14–25, 2020 with 10 SAC members who represented a range of healthcare organizations: four representatives from the State of Alaska, three from THOs, and three were representatives from other key stakeholder organizations.

Interviewees were asked questions surrounding five main themes: EpiCenter current and future roles, information and data dissemination, partnerships and communication, disease prevention and health promotion, and technical assistance and training. Interview findings were compiled into a summary report and distributed to EpiCenter programs to use for internal process improvement.

# COVID-19 Qualitative Project

## Project Overview

For the TECPHI Year 3 COVID-19 Qualitative Project, Alaska Native Epidemiology Center's (EpiCenter) TECPHI staff conducted key informant interviews (KIIs) with three EpiCenter staff who were reassigned during the COVID-19 global pandemic to help the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC). The goal of these KIIs was to document how EpiCenter staff assisted ANTHC's Situation Room and helped provide valuable data-related expertise to inform ANTHC's pandemic response.

## Project Background

On March 23, 2020 the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium's Incident Command Center initiated the COVID-19 Situation Room to respond to the pandemic. Three EpiCenter staff were reassigned to the Situation Room to provide their assistance and expertise by leading efforts on statistical analysis of COVID-19 data and helping create a data reporting infrastructure. The main focus of their work was to create relationships with other entities who had COVID-19 data, use electronic health records to gather data for syndromic surveillance, and create and implement a data infrastructure to share data with key stakeholders.

## Project Process

The three interviews were all conducted by Slack video call in mid-November 2020. Interviewees were asked questions to better understand their roles, responsibilities, and contributions to ANTHC's pandemic response efforts. Interview questions focused on four main themes: broad overview of ANTHC's Situation Room, the individual roles and contributions of each EpiCenter staff, positive Situation Room outcomes, and lessons learned throughout the response efforts.

TECPHI staff are currently consolidating the interview responses into an internal report to be disseminated to EpiCenter staff. This high-level report will document for future employees how the EpiCenter contributed during the pandemic.

# California Tribal Epidemiology Center (CTEC)

## Performance Measure – Grant Opportunities

The TECPHI project has allowed the California Tribal Epidemiology Center (CTEC) to expand the number of grant opportunities supported by this TEC. In program year two (2018-2019) CTEC supported 7 grants. In program year three (2019-2020), the number of grants has increased to 11 with an additional $6,763,860.00 in new funding awarded to CTEC. The six new grants supported by CTEC primarily focus on Covid-19 preparedness and response. These grants have had a major impact on AIAN communities across California. With this supplemental funding, CTEC was able to help develop materials that were distributed out to communities to help reduce the spread of Covid-19. These resources included a variety of formats including situation reports, public safety announcements, informational flyers, and YouTube videos all which are housed on the California Rural Indian Health Board, Inc. (CRIHB) website.



**Figure 1. CRIHB's Covid-19 Response Homepage**

A major component when developing these materials was to focus the importance of local communities and community engagement. For example, the flyers developed to be distributed feature many Tribal Leaders, youth, and elders from all different California AIAN communities. Due the vast geographical area of California, and the different types of AIAN communities throughout the state, CTEC found that Native-inclusive imagery to be a great tool to resonate with local communities. Figure 1 shows the CRIHB Covid-19 Response webpage featuring AIAN community members.

The new grant funding has also allowed CTEC to expand the variety of resources offered. CRIHB's YouTube channel contains over ten PSA videos to help reduce the spread of Covid-19. With new grant funding CTEC has been able to partners with various organizations to develop these resources. Figure 2. Shows a screenshot of one of the YouTube videos shared online. Videos like this provide opportunities for Tribal community members to participate and develop the messaging distributed to California AIAN communities. The expansion of grants supported by CTEC has greatly helped in the production of resources throughout AIAN communities. CTEC plans to continue developing resources and working with Tribal communities to help reduce the spread of Covid-19.

The TECPHI project supported the California Tribal Epidemiology Center's (CTEC) ability to receive significant grant funding since its implementation. CTEC leveraged the capacity for its staff to successfully apply for and receive these funds. In Project Year 2 (2018-2019), CTEC was awarded seven grants and in Project Year 3 (2019-2020) was awarded nine grants - four of which focused on COVID-19 preparedness and response. With a total of $7,627,850 in grant funds awarded in Project Year 3, CTEC was able to provide direct funding to Tribes and Tribal Health Programs, improving AIAN communities across California. In addition, CTEC developed and distributed materials to Tribal communities to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. These materials include a variety of resources like recurring situational data reports, Public Service Announcements (PSA), flyers, and posters which are also posted on CRIHB's website and social media accounts. Figure 1. shows the CRIHB COVID-19 response web page that features AIAN community members.

Due to the vast geographical area of California and diverse AIAN communities throughout the state, CTEC utilized regional Tribal designs and images to develop materials that resonate with specific Tribal communities. These materials promote local Tribal community members to increase community engagement. For example, the #StayHomeSaveLives and #ProtectOurElders COVID-19 campaign featured Tribal leaders, elders, and youth from different California Tribal communities. CTEC shared campaign posters on its social media accounts and provided prints to Tribal Health Programs and Tribal offices across California.

CTEC worked with five media consultants to create 20 original COVID-19 PSAs for Tribal communities. These PSAs help to raise awareness and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Tribal communities. In September 2020, the California Tribal Chairpersons Association hosted the virtual film event, "Native Films at the Drive-in", in celebration of California Native American Day. The event, hosted in Bishop, California was focused on healing nations, and CTEC participated by showcasing one of its most impactful videos around COVID-19.

Figure 2. shows a screenshot of the COVID-19 PSA "Who Do You Wear a Mask For?" on CRIHB's YouTube channel, where it was viewed more than 2,500 times. Projects like this provide opportunities for Tribal community members to participate and develop mindful COVID-19-related messages that resonate with California Tribal communities. Grant awards will help continue CTEC's efforts in developing resources and working with Tribal communities to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.



**Figure 2. Who Do You Wear a Mask For? YouTube Video**

- **CRIHB Website:** https://crihb.org/prevention-and-education/public-health/
- **CRIHB YouTube Videos:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-GJuNULtWY

# Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center (GLITEC)

## COVID-19 Qualitative Project

GLITEC staff met virtually at the end of November 2020 to debrief the COVID-19 experience. A Native artist, Jessica, listened in on the conversation and created an original image to reflect what she heard.
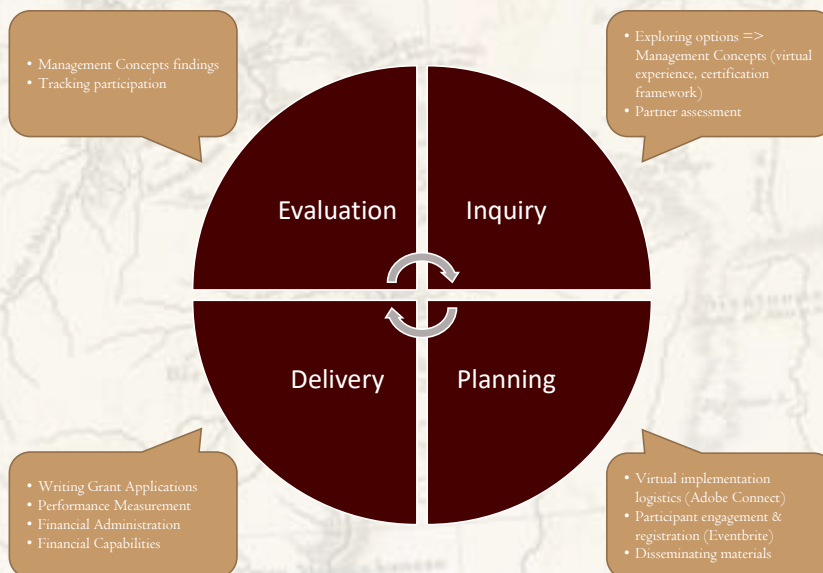
# Great Plains Tribal Epidemiology Center (GPTEC)

## Performance Measure – Grant Opportunities

### Year 3 Qualitative Project: GRANTS MANAGEMENT TRAINING

#### JOURNEY MAP

- Management Concepts findings
- Tracking participation

- Exploring options => Management Concepts (virtual experience, certification framework)
- Partner assessment

**Evaluation** | **Inquiry**

**Delivery** | **Planning**

- Writing Grant Applications
- Performance Measurement
- Financial Administration
- Financial Capabilities

- Virtual implementation logistics (Adobe Connect)
- Participant engagement & registration (Eventbrite)
- Disseminating materials

#### ENGAGEMENT

| Name of Class | GPTEC Staff | GPTLHB Staff | Tribal Staff | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Writing Successful Grant Applications | 1 | 3 | 2 | 6 |
| Performance Measurement for Federal Grants | 4 | 3 | 5 | 12 |
| Financial Administration of Federal Grants | 8 | 8 | 4 | 20 |
| Evaluating Financial Capabilities of Grant Recipients | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| Total (Unduplicated) | 9 | 11 | 11 | 31 |

#### PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

*"For me personally, this training was difficult to do virtually, especially the breakout exercises (although exercises were still beneficial). I would love to take this training again but in person."*

*"The classroom technology (Audio, Adobe Connect, Student Central, video) allowed me to participate fully in the class."*

Great Plains Tribal Epidemiology Center
2611 Elderberry Blvd, Rapid City, SD 57703 – gptec.gptchb.org – gptec@gptchb.org

Background Photo Reference: Cf. Phillips. Maps of America, p. 598 (1814 ed.); Wheat, C.I. Mapping the transmississippi West, 313, 358 (1814, 1824 eds.); Checklist of printed maps of the Middle West, 1-1369 (1796 ed.) – Accessed via the Google Earth David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.

# Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc.
# Tribal Epidemiology Center (ITCA TEC)
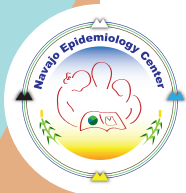
## Performance Measure – Partnerships

During the third fiscal year of the TECPHI Funding, the ITCA TEC has started site visits with other Tribal Epidemiology Centers to meet all other staff and to learn from other partner organizations, see what kind of projects they take on, and how similar projects are executed differently.

While originally planned on doing more, the ITCA TEC was able to do one site visit with the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board Tribal Epidemiology Center before attending the Northwest Tribal Health Conference February 21-22. During the site visit, we were able to talk about sub-awardee projects, standard operating procedures, and more specifically projects that the Northwest Portland Area focuses on and has subject expertise in.

The biggest outcome from the site visit with the other Tribal Epidemiology Center was the way the Community Health Profiles are created every five years; While the ITCA TEC previously has created a full regional CHP as well as full Tribal reports for each Tribe in the Phoenix and Tucson IHS areas, we will take a different direction this year and create summary sheets for all the Tribes with data chosen by the Tribe, rather than full reports.

Having previously received feedback from the TECPHI sub-awardee Tribes about the Community Health Profiles and disliking the data that is covered in the CHPs, changing the way of creating CHPs seemed like a logical thing to do.
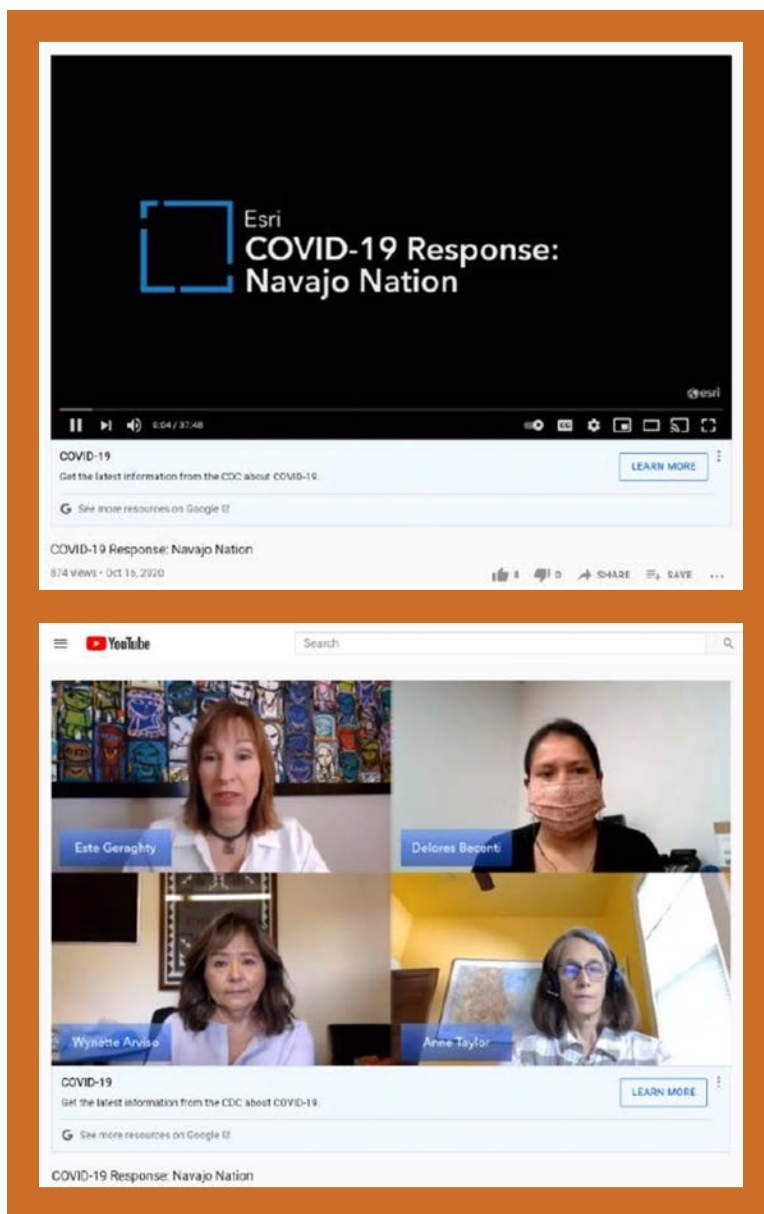
# Navajo Epidemiology Center (NEC)

## Performance Measure – Partnerships

The NEC has been at the forefront in the COVID-19 response as the Navajo Nation has been greatly impacted from the very beginning.  Most of the NEC staff have been assigned to a post in the Epidemiology Team under the Public Health Branch of the response.  The video conducted with ESRI (ArcGIS) demonstrates the impact and response that has been conducted at both the local level and at the Health Command Operations Center level.  It seems the whole year for TECPHI at NEC has been about the pandemic response and all of the evaluation projects highlights how NEC was able to respond effectively and appropriately.  This video with ESRI's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Este Geraghty, Navajo Epidemiology Center's Senior Programs and Projects Specialist, Delores Becenti and Navajo Nation GIS Analyst, Wynette Arviso captures the intensity of the response and impact COVID-19 has made on the Navajo Nation (https://youtu.be/L8xs4imOohs ).

# Network Coordinating Center (NCC)

**NCC**

## Performance Measure – Technical Assistance

Through a consensus decision-making process at the March 2019 Strategic Planning Meeting, the 12 Tribal Epidemiology Centers (TEC) Directors and other TEC staff agreed on a strategic objective to reformulate the existing TEC communications and marketing plan. The purpose of this objective was to improve and expand the visibility and reach of the value of TEC work to current and potential stakeholders, partners, funders, and other organizations.

Thus, the NCC hired the communications and marketing firm Cedar Group, an Alaska Native-owned business to help support the TECs. Through a process of research and discovery of existing TEC communications, materials, and a series of key informant interviews, the Cedar Group identified several areas where better communication on the scope of TEC work was needed. In these areas, materials were developed to increase knowledge and understandings about TECs for two specific audiences: stakeholders and funders. As a result of this collaboration, the NCC developed an approach to enhance TEC social media, which serves as a guide for identifying content themes, tone, and audiences on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

The implementation of this approach has been a success, noted by the increase in engagement across two of the three platforms. For instance, on Facebook we had an increase of 158 likes and 157 followers. Instagram saw an increase of 195 new likes and 6 more posts than the previous year. Additionally, the NCC was able to provide technical assistance (TA) to the Navajo Epidemiology Center (NEC) in the form of sharing expertise gained through our own social media development. The NCC and NEC met weekly for almost three months to discuss different ways to increase engagement, as well as brainstorm new content. This TA resulted in NEC successfully launching their social media platforms. For example, NEC has published 32 posts for Facebook and 27 posts for Instagram as of December 21, 2020. Both of these platforms had previously been inactive prior to our TA engagement and their re-launch of social media in September.

Based on input from NEC, lessons learned from our communications and marketing consultants, and to better assist with future social media TA requests, the NCC created a Social Media Toolkit for all TECs to use to help structure and support their social media efforts. The creation of this toolkit highlights the NCC's efforts toward fulfilling TECPHI's Performance Measure 5: Technical Assistance (TA), specifically social media TA. The Toolkit includes a PowerPoint with an overview for developing a social media platform, a template to initiate the brainstorming for content categories, as well as a template for building out a post. The toolkit has been shared with all TECs on TEC Connect and serves as a guide in launching social media platforms.

**NCC**

**Developing Social Media Platforms**

A Brainstorming Outline

Presentation By: Mariah Knox & Audrey Juliussen

**Guideline Provided by Cedar Group**

**To Consider**

Cultivating Content

Scheduling & Publishing Content

Creating A Plan

**Developing Focus**

- Content Categories
- #Hashtags

- Image Purpose
- Image Quality

- Color
- Font

NCC

# Thank You

Mariah Knox maknox@anthc.org 907-729-2962
Audrey Juliussen aajuliussen@anthc.org 907-729-4643

**TRIBAL EPIDEMIOLOGY CENTERS**
ADVANCING PUBLIC HEALTH IN INDIAN COUNTRY

## Developing Social Media Platforms
### Building a Post

**POST EXAMPLE: See the breakdown below**

**Tribal EpiCenters**
Published by Mariah Knox

Have the talk, create a back to school COVID-19 plan!

As schools begin to reopen in different capacities, it's important to have open and honest conversations with our little ones about COVID-19. The @UrbanIndianHealthInstitute has put together some great talking points for how to begin these difficult conversations with your children and inform them on what they can do to help stop the spread.

#GetBackToSchoolReady #BackToSchool #TalkWithYourKidsToday #UIHI #TEC #TribalHealth #TribalEpidemiologyCenters #Tribal #Data #Health

Have the talk, create a back to school COVID-19 plan! → **HOOK: Topic or headline**
This should be based on the text you create for your post.

As schools begin to reopen in different capacities, it's important to have open and honest conversations with our little ones about COVID-19. → **LEAD: 1ST Sentence of the paragraph**
This should be used to set the story, be brief, address general knowledge, and is NOT a pre-explanation.

The @UrbanIndianHealthInstitute has put together some great talking points for how to begin these difficult conversations with your children and inform them on what they can do to help stop the spread. → **BODY: Addresses the 5 W's**
Who, what, when, where, why. The 5W's don't all need to be included, but this is a good place to start. This section should:
- Flow well with your lead
- Have a tone (informational, educational, neutral, etc.)
- Set the stage for conversations to take place if applicable – will debates arise?
- Point to further resources if necessary
Remember to credit sources if you are able.

#GetBackToSchoolReady #BackToSchool #TalkWithYourKidsToday #UIHI #TEC #TribalHealth #TribalEpidemiologyCenters #Tribal #Data #Health

**HASHTAGS: How people find your content**
What topics will be relevant to the post? Hashtags (#) reach audiences who follow those hashtagged topics.
- Creating hashtags you will always use like #TEC, #NWTEC, and others can be helpful
- From there, you can add other hashtags that are more specific to the post you are making

@TribalEpiCenters | www.TribalEpiCenters.org | #TribalEpiCenters

## Developing Social Media Platforms
### A Brainstorming Outline

**Slide 3**

Cultivating Content
- These are two different platforms (Facebook & Twitter)
- What content do you want each to say/display?
  - News, data, community engagement, other

| Facebook | Twitter |
|---|---|
|  |  |

Scheduling & Publishing Content
- Collect content and plan posts. Keep some content in your back pocket for when new information is not flowing
- How often will you post/engage?
  - Daily, Monthly – good to plan and keep consistency

| Facebook | Twitter |
|---|---|
|  |  |

Creating a Plan
- Building this out in the beginning will save confusion in the future
- How might you build out a workable plan that is sustainable?

| Facebook | Twitter |
|---|---|
|  |  |

**Slide 4**

Content Categories
- What are your focuses?
  - Data, health, education

| Facebook | Twitter |
|---|---|
|  |  |

#Hashtags
- Should fit your content categories – build these into your social media plan
- What are your hashtags?

| Facebook | Twitter |
|---|---|
|  |  |

**Slide 5**

Image Purpose
- A picture is worth a thousand words – what does it immediately say to the viewer?
- Can it stand alone? Does it need more explanation?

| Facebook | Twitter |
|---|---|
|  |  |

Image Quality
- Where will your photos come from?
  - Professional photographers, employees, the community members you serve?

| Facebook | Twitter |
|---|---|
|  |  |

**Slide 6**

Color
- Think about TEC logo colors – will these figure into the color pallet you choose to use?
- Are the colors symbolic?

| Facebook | Twitter |
|---|---|
|  |  |

Font
- Does your TEC have a font style guide?
- How might you use fonts to illicit emotion and grab attention?

| Facebook | Twitter |
|---|---|
|  |  |

## COVID-19 Qualitative Project

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 12 Tribal Epidemiology Center (TEC) Directors have been meeting on a weekly basis since the beginning of March. The weekly meeting was initially a short-term solution for TEC Directors to strategize activities and initiatives around COVID-19. This weekly call further evolved into a Community of Practice (CoP) where topics discussed as a collective has become a valued time for the TEC Directors.

"Communities of Practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do better as they interact regularly" (Wenger, 2015). A CoP consists of three components: a domain, a community, and a group of practitioners. In this case, the convening domain for the TEC Directors has been the COVID-19 pandemic and associated crisis response. Prior to the events of this past year, the Directors met on a quarterly basis. The community evolves as the members share in discussion, coordination, problem solving, etc. Many CoP conversations include the need to access more and better quality data and resources. The "practitioners" are the TEC Directors who come together to learn from one another, compare experiences, share resources and knowledge, and engage with others partners as a collective to improve their organizational emergency response efforts to COVID-19 for their people, regions, and organizations.

The TEC Directors have met weekly since March 2020, and there are no current plans to end the meetings. Though COVID-19 has been the overarching theme in this CoP since its commencement, other important issues such as Tribal health, the designation and application of public health authority, data access and management, and other topics have been discussed. Federal and other partners have requested to attend the meetings seeking advice for working with TECs or been invited to present collaborative project ideas. In addition, several collective actions have been achieved as a result of this group's convening, including the organization of the TEC Directors Roundtable webinar for external partners, the CDC Preventive Medicine Grand Rounds session, and the creation of a collective thank you letter which was sent to congressional supporters.

The Tribal Epidemiology Center Public Health Infrastructure (TECPHI) Network Coordinating Center (NCC) has had the honor and pleasure of documenting the meeting since March 2020. Each week since the end of March 2020, at least one NCC staff has attended the CoP meetings, taken minutes, and documented action items. From the meeting minutes, the NCC has created a series of word clouds that highlight the topics and discussions that surfaced. Each of the word clouds is accompanied by a synopsis of how these words fit into an overarching areas of focus among the TECs.

Themes include discussions around partnerships and collaboration, communication, technical assistance, data access and use, and responsivity to regions and organizations served. Of note, data access and use has been discussed in almost every meeting. Working together, the TECs have been able to educate partners about their needs and gain access to important data sets needed for pandemic response. Greater impact is achieved when a group with common needs and interests work as a collective.

### Reference

Wenger, E. (2015). Communities of practice: A brief introduction.Retrieved November 2017 from: https://wenger-trayner.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/07-Brief-introduction-to-communities-of-practice.pdf.

NCC

# TEC-C Community of Practice:
## Addressing the response to COVID-19 in Indian country together

**TRIBAL EPIDEMIOLOGY CENTERS**

### Technical Assistance



Providing technical assistance (TA) to Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and Urban Indian Organizations (T/TO/UIOs) is one of the TEC's seven core functions. In the CoP meetings, Directors have discussed TA they provide to T/TO/UIOs and have been shared information regarding PPE distribution, development of communication materials, surveillance, contact tracing, a variety of data issues, and much more.

### Response to Service Regions and Organizations



CoP meetings have included many discussions about making sure information, response plans, and data are up to date and timely for TEC partners. Response efforts vary across states and regions, but all TECs are working the meet the unique needs of the T/TO/UIOs they serve.

### Partnerships and Collaboration



TECs would not be able to efficiently execute COVID-19 support efforts across Indian Country without Tribal, federal, state, and other partners. Collaboration allows all entities to learn from one another, make improvements, provide feedback, and adjust deliverables and agreements swiftly. The CoP meetings allow time and space for partners to engage with the Directors in a variety of collaborative opportunities.

## WORD CLOUDS

These word clouds were generated from the TEC Directors' COVID-19 CoP meeting minutes. Each one of the word clouds are a collection of frequently mentioned words or phrases that are organized under a common theme. A short interpretation of the word cloud themes is included.

### Data Access and Use

A consistent topic has been about the variety of data issues which includes access, gaps, sharing agreements, reporting methods, and more. Amidst the pandemic, it has become clear that racial misclassification and missing-ness of data is a challenge to accurately representing the effect of the pandemic on T/TO/UIOs. Without accurate data, Tribal leaders are not able to adequately able to respond to community needs. Recognizing this as an ongoing issue, the TECs have unified as one voice to educate partners on the scope of this problem with the goal of improving TEC response to future public health emergencies.



### Communication

The CoP has also become a place for TEC Directors to communicate with each other as well as with external audiences. Connections and discussions at the CoP have resulting in presentations like the TEC Director Roundtable webinar and participation in a CDC Preventive Medicine Grand Rounds. Information included in these events has been posted online which potentially increases reach to external audiences. Additional dissemination materials like the MMWR publications and a variety of other materials have also been discussed.



**NCC**

## 27
**Meetings**

## BY THE NUMBERS

The numbers are averages and total counts of participation in the CoP meetings. They illustrate high levels of engagement from the 12 TECs.

## 7
**Average # of TEC Directors Attending**

## 10
**Average # of TECs Represented**

## 8
**# of External Partner Presentations, Discussions, etc.**

## SMILE!

The photo below features TEC Directors and staff at a recent virtual CoP meeting. Though it does not capture everyone who has been a part of this CoP, many in this picture have attended the meetings consistently since March 2020. Despite being geographically separated by the COVID-19 crisis, TECs have worked together to achieve collective impact.
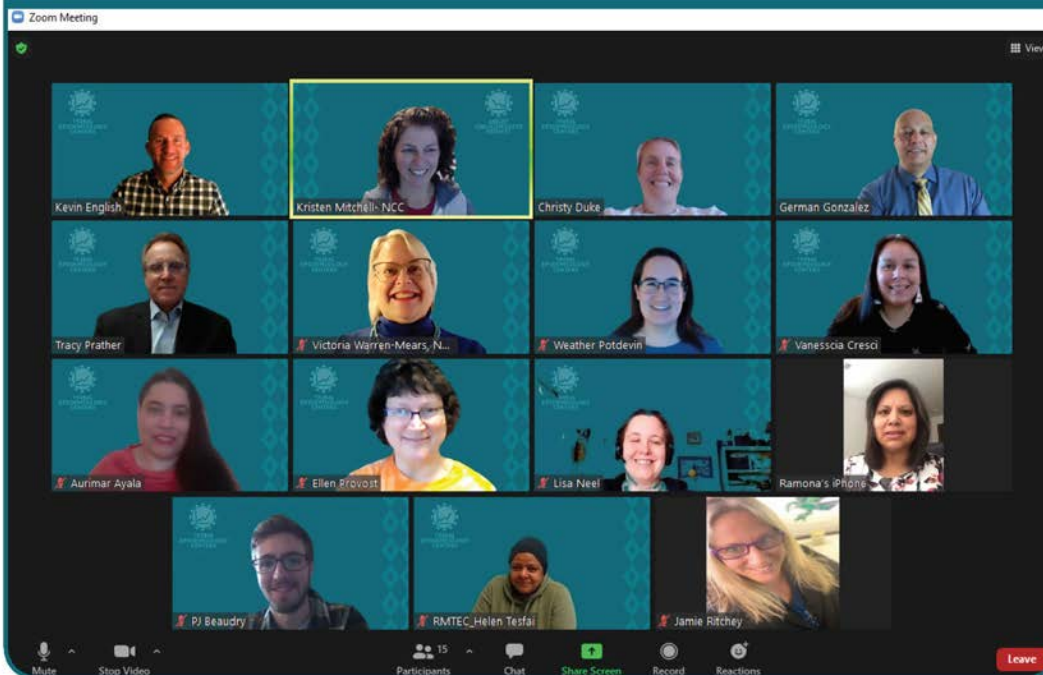
@TribalEpiCenters | www.TribalEpiCenters.org | #TribalEpiCenters

NCC

# Northwest Tribal Epidemiology Center (NWTEC)

## Performance Measure – Technical Assistance
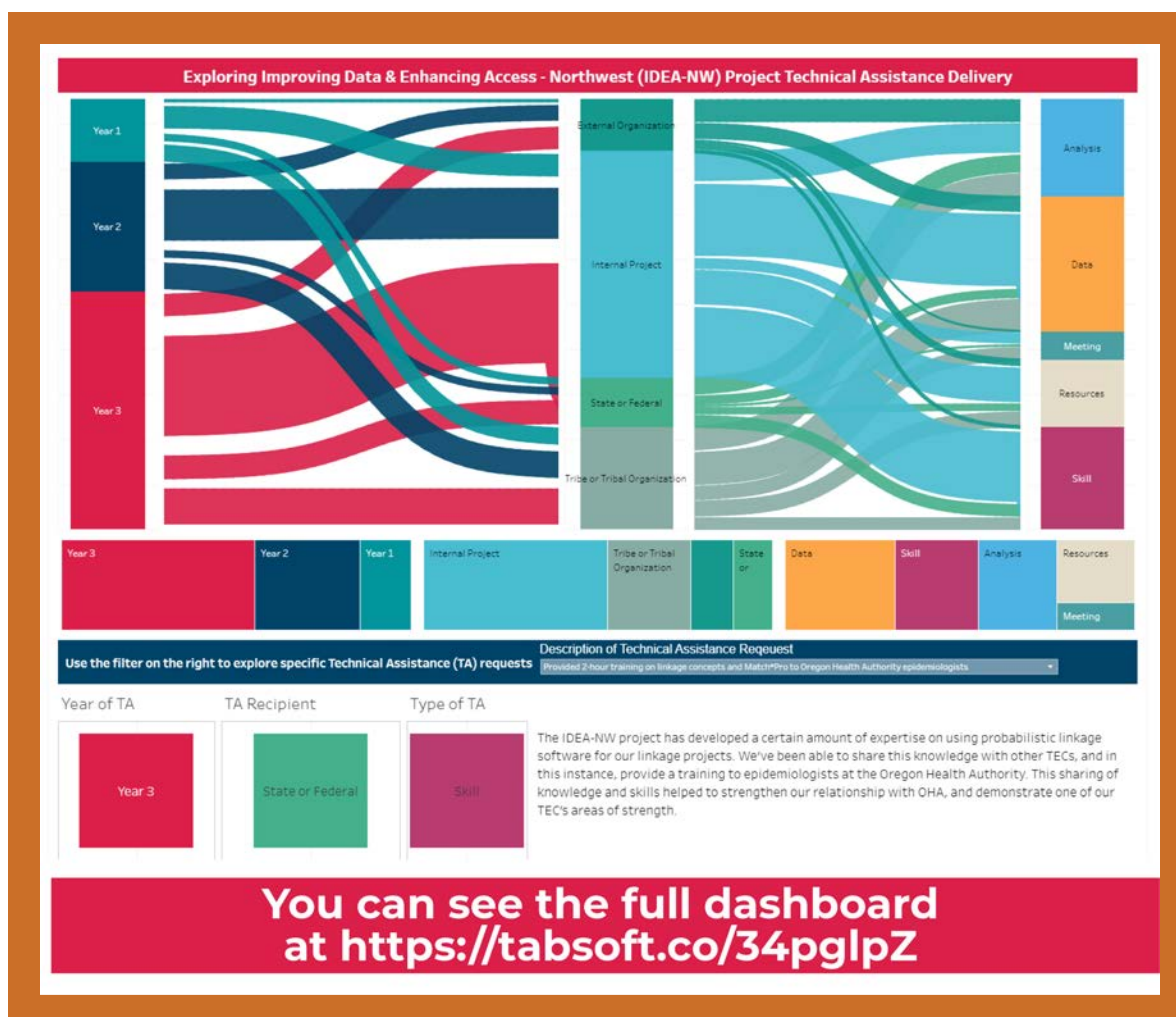
## COVID-19 Qualitative Project

# 2020 COVID Evaluation Report

## Overview of the Northwest Tribal Epidemiology Center (NWTEC)

The mission of the Northwest Tribal Epidemiology Center (NWTEC) is to collaborate with Northwest American Indian Tribes to provide health-related research, surveillance, training and technical assistance to improve the quality of life of American Indians and Alaskan Natives (AI/ANs).

The NWTEC is one of twelve national Centers charged with collecting tribal health status data, evaluating health monitoring and delivery systems, and assisting tribes in identifying local priorities for healthcare delivery and health education. Since 1997, the NWTEC has administered a number of successful health research and surveillance projects serving the Northwest Tribes.

The NWTEC serves the 43 federally recognized tribes in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

## Activities at-a-glance

There have been 20 COVID-19 Tribal update calls since April and September

The emergency department dashboard has been viewed 1,954 times

TeleECHO sessions attended by 4,579 public health and clinical professionals

## Providing COVID-19 resources to Northwest Tribes and interested parties

The NWTEC was quick to respond to the need for AI/AN-specific information during the COVID-19 pandemic. By utilizing the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board's (NPAIHB) website, the NWTEC was able to quickly and effectively disseminate crucial information to the Tribes and AI/AN people of Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

Since the beginning of March, there have been 6,027 page views of the COVID-19 page on the NPAIHB website. Since the page was made public, it has been the most frequently visited page on the NPAIHB website (not counting the home-page). The average user spends between 1:01 and 1:35 minutes on the page itself. Between March and September, the average exit percentage was 41.2%, which means that approximately 58.8% of people who interacted with the page navigated to another page on the website. This means that a sizable number of people visiting the COVID-19 page used it to navigate to other useful information on the NPAIHB website.

The NPAIHB has also offered weekly COVID-19 update calls to Northwest Tribes and other entities. The calls have covered a wide range of topics, including epidemiological updates on the impact of the pandemic on AI/AN people, federal and state policy and legislative updates, information on resources and technical assistance available from NPAIHB, and opportunities for updates from state and federal partners. . These calls, which are held every Tuesday, started before Oregon declared COVID-19 a public health emergency (April 21st 2020). There were 20 weekly calls before the end of September, with an average attendance of 70. . The calls continue to be a strong platform to disseminate timely COVID-19 related information to Northwest Tribes.

### Highlights

NPAIHB's COVID-19 page had 6,027 views between March and September

The average user spent 1:35 minutes on the COVID-19 page

Outside the homepage, the COVID-19 page has been the most visited NPAIHB.org webpage

There have been 20 COVID-19 Tribal update calls since April and September

# Oklahoma Area Tribal Epidemiology Center (OKTEC)

## Performance Measure – Technical Assistance

The SPTHB's TEC qualitative project expands on Performance Measure 5. A journey map was created to reflect the evaluation of technical assistance from several different perspectives and utilized a variety of different tools to collect data. Beginning with the 6x4 glossy TA help card created internally by our SPTHB staff and the Creative Services team, this card served to document the beginning of our story in regard to enhancing the overall TA experience. The card was created to hand out during meetings, site visits, and any other face-to-face interactions. With the intention of introducing our organization, it also includes a majority of what TA services we offer and topic areas.

The next step within the evaluation included sending out a 10-item survey to internal and external partners asking about their familiarity of our TA services and our electronic TA form available through our SPTHB website. A large portion of the 44 respondents had not heard about our TA services or seen our online TA form. Taking that as an opportunity the evaluation continued with a focus on revamping the TA process. This included taking feedback from internally at an all-staff meeting posited in a world café style. One prominent discovery was that the term TA seemed too technical and resembled IT. It needed clarification and a new definition was created. With the new definition of the SPTHB definition for TA created it was posted online within the electronic TA form.

During the world café another noteworthy discovery was that within staff there was some confusion as to who was appointed incoming requests and how they were recorded. Through a skills matrix created beforehand input from staff helped reshape the document and assign appropriate individuals to what topic area and service they would have the ability to fulfill the request. This document was used to help automate the overall TA process internally so that the requestor could have their TA request answered in a timely manner and by a staff member that had committed time to responding. With the added project management tool Monday.com, the team could have the TA request from our website automatically saved and assign the requestor all within one step. The entire process was able to add clarification, created a more wholesome experience for the requestor, and addressed the feedback received internally and externally. SPTHB's TA services, through a lengthy evaluation, have reached a new phase that truly embodies the internal capacity of its staff.

**SPTHB - OKTEC Summary of Technical Assistance Evaluation**
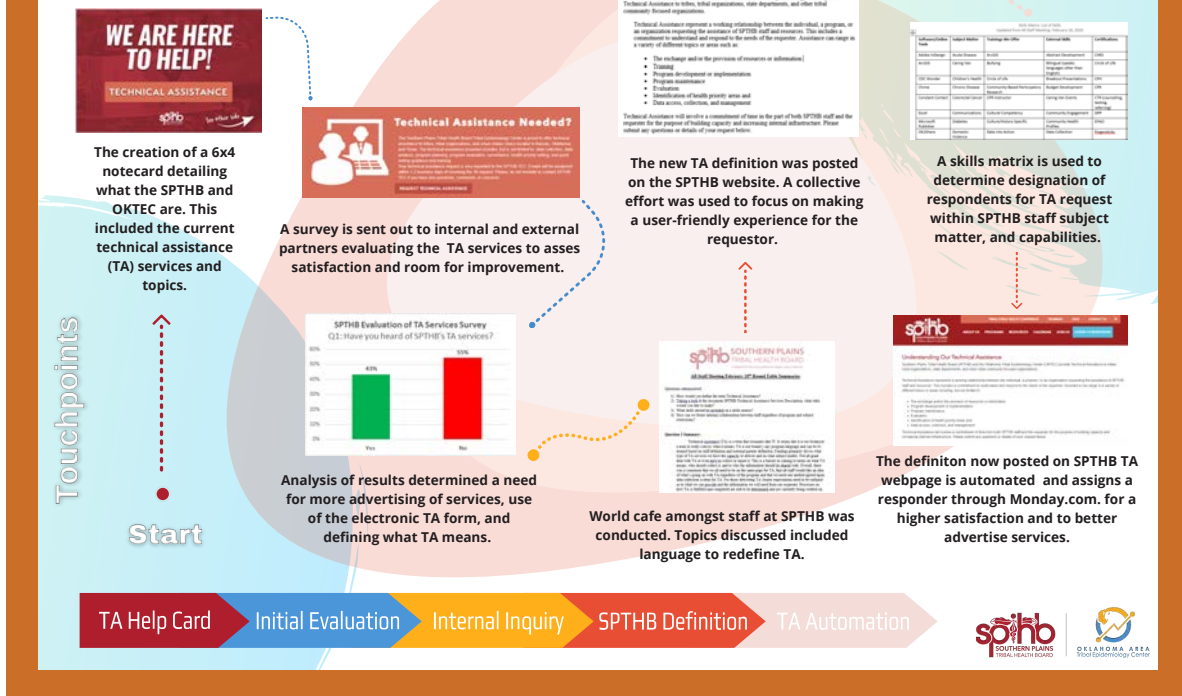
## COVID-19 Qualitative Project

OKTEC's SPTHB put together a team dedicated to creating messaging to our service area about COVID-19. This messaging was to address some of the concerns of the community and that of leadership. The team created several infographics that were shared via the SPTHB Facebook page and those infographics are to be made available on the SPTHB website for any organization to download and use on their website or social media. These infographics were shared simultaneously with radio ad messaging in the Kansas service area through the KNZA radio station. The radio ads and infographics shared the same messaging information, but the focus of this qualitative project are the infographics.

The following qualitative project involves a collection of COVID-19 related information displayed through infographics. Several topics were addressed including How to Vote Safely, Protecting Elders, Protecting Native Teachers, Returning Back to School Safely, Protecting Native Youth, Proper Mask Use, Stop the Spread of COVID-19, and Asymptomatic Meaning. The varying topics were aimed at Native American populations with respect to being culturally appropriate. Topics covered were aimed to ease and inform our service area of recommended precautions to take to protect themselves, their families, and their communities from COVID-19.

# Rocky Mountain Tribal Epidemiology Center (RMTEC)

## Performance Measure – Technical Assistance

The Rocky Mountain Tribal Epidemiology Center staff applied Indigenous Evaluation methodologies based on what was learned during TECPHI evaluation gatherings held in Years 1 and 2. We held Indigenous Evaluation Community of Practice meetings that brought RMTLC staff together to develop our own metaphorical images representing the values and mission of our organization and our TEC. The process of identifying our values and developing a metaphorical image helped TEC staff convey our work in a more culturally appropriate manner.

### Rocky Mountain Tribal Epidemiology Center
### TECPHI Years 1 -3 Qualitative Poster Project

*Committed to Reliable Data for the Health & Wellness of the Rocky Mountain Tribal Region*

The Rocky Mountain Tribal Epidemiology Center staff applied Indigenous Evaluation methodologies based on what was learned during TECPHI evaluation gatherings held in Years 1 and 2. We held Indigenous Evaluation Community of Practice meetings that brought RMTLC staff together to develop our own metaphorical images representing the values and mission of our organization and our TEC. The process of identifying our values and developing a metaphorical image helped TEC staff convey our work in a more culturally appropriate manner.

#### Our Process



Helen Tesfai, TEC Director and Giselle Babiarz, Epidemiologist working on the TEC metaphorical image during a Community of Practice meeting applying Indigenous evaluation methods.

#### Identifying Our TEC Values

| RESILIENCE | HONORING CULTURE AND COMMUNITY |
|---|---|
| •Trauma informed<br>•Strengths based<br>•Healing<br>•Spirituality<br>•Empathy<br>•Mindful reflection | •Culturally effective<br>•Locally relevant<br>•Humor<br>•Sovereignty<br>•Generosity<br>•Equality<br>•Inclusivity |
| **WE ARE ALL CONNECTED** | **INTENTIONAL SERVICE** |
| •Unity<br>•Leadership<br>•Advocacy<br>•Mentorship<br>•Reciprocity | •Honoring others' time<br>•Respect<br>•Accountability<br>•Learning<br>•Quality<br>•Generation of momentum<br>•Recognition |

#### TECPHI Winter Count



Five Additional RMTEC Staff

Data Management Team

Chronic Disease Surveillance

TEC Data Policy & Procedures Manual

Data Resolutions & Sharing Agreements

Data Source Expansion & Quality Improvement

Opioid Data Expansion

Tribal Housing Partnerships

Grant Writing & Tribal Sub-Awards

Training & Technical Assistance

Data Visualization & Reporting

Tribal Health Prioritization

Partnerships

Tribal Site Visits

Children's Wellness Intervention Support

Oral Health

*A Winter Count is a pictorial record of annual events painted on a hide. Winter Count is a form of storytelling used by many North American Tribes to mark important events that impacted the Tribe that year. The TECPHI program has been an important development for the TEC and our TECPIHI Winter Count shows the impact.*

## COVID-19 Qualitative Project

Many of RMTEC's activities in Year 3 shifted to focus on the COVID-19 pandemic. This report highlights RMTEC's overall COVID-19 response and provides insight to how the TEC served its Tribal partners during this time.

# RMTEC COVID-19 RESPONSE

JANUARY 1 – SEPTEMBER 29, 2020

## Protecting and Informing Tribal Communities

RMTEC staff helped distribute 50,000+ articles of personal protective equipment (PPE) to the Tribal communities in the Rocky Mountain region, including face masks and shields, lab coats, isolation gowns, disinfectant spray, hand sanitizer, gloves, and thermometers.

Weekly COVID-19 data reports were compiled using national, state, and Tribal data and distributed by email to keep communities informed. The RMTEC Data Management Team is currently working with Indian Health Service and the CDC to put together a COVID-19 data dashboard for Tribal partners in the region to quickly access the data needed to set and adjust health priorities.

RMTEC staff produced several publications on general COVID-19 information and COVID-19 prevention measures. These have been published to the RMTEC website and distributed to Area partners by email. RMTEC contributed to the publication and delivery costs for the Native Wellness magazine, filled with COVID-19 information and resources. According to the magazine editor, this special edition print reached approximately 85% of Native households in the region.

# Strengthening the Public Health Workforce



RMTEC hired 5 CDC Foundation staff (2 Epidemiologists, a Training Coordinator, a Statistician, and a Communication Specialist) to work specifically on RMTEC's COVID-19 response. These staff meet weekly with RMTEC staff via video conference for project updates.

To date, RMTEC has hosted 4 virtual Contact Tracing trainings and 2 COVID-19 testing trainings, open to all Tribal partners. RMTEC staff are working to build internal capacity and improve training content by attending COVID-19 related trainings to receive the most current information and continuously build skillsets.

## Adapting Technical Assistance

Due to pandemic travel restrictions and community shutdowns, RMTEC shifted all meetings and trainings to a virtual setting. For many, this change required learning new skillsets to become proficient in webinars and video conferencing.

RMTEC conducted rapid assessments to evaluate challenges, needs, and resources needed to respond to COVID-19 at the Tribal level in all communities the TEC serves. Monthly virtual site visits are held with each Tribal Health Department in the Rocky Mountain Region to better respond to Tribal needs.

## Connecting Through Stories

In a time defined by quarantines and shutdowns, storytelling helps maintain connection and promotes healing. The Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council filmed a 3-part video series to tell local stories of those affected by the COVID-19 virus and the pandemic's impact on Tribal communities. This series has been posted on the RMTLC website.

# United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.
# Tribal Epidemiology Center (USET TEC)

## Performance Measure – Grant Opportunities

### USET TECPHI Year 3 Qualitative Project
### Tribal Nation COVID-19 Photo Narrative

The Tribal Epidemiology Center Public Health Infrastructure (TECPHI) program has facilitated a tremendous amount of capacity and infrastructure building at both the Tribal Nation and the Tribal Epidemiology Center (TEC) level. Between October 2019–September 2020, the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) TEC implemented a total of 19 cooperative agreements and grants totaling $10,212,912. One of these was a CDC award through the COVID-19 Emergency Response for Regional Tribally Designated Organizations opportunity. USET obtained these monies to secure and distribute funds to area Tribal Nations as quickly as possible. In April, emergency sub–awards were offered to all area federally recognized Tribal Nations and 33 accepted the funds. Out of the total award, USET passed through $2,990,628 with distributions ranging from $39,000–$453,000. Each Tribal Nation has utilized these monies to support their unique COVID-19 response efforts.

Responding to the second TECPHI overarching performance measure, "Number of grant opportunities applied for our supported by TECs", USET TEC invited partner Tribal Nations to participate in a photo narrative qualitative data sharing activity.

As part of the progress report, USET TEC asked each partner to share one to two images that highlighted aspects of their Tribal Nation's experience during the pandemic.

Following are images and captions shared by six Tribal Nations.

## Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians



Culturally Tailored – Wear Wait Wash



Ask Public Health

USET TECPHI Year 3 Qualitative Project
Tribal Nation COVID-19 Photo Narrative

2

## Aroostook Band of Micmacs



Donation of food that was received from assistance from FEMA and the Maine Emergency Management to distribute to our community.



Donation of Water going out to the community for the meal program and the community drive throughs

USET TECPHI Year 3 Qualitative Project
Tribal Nation COVID-19 Photo Narrative

3

## Catawba Indian Nation



Flyer for our Fresh Food programs we have been able to implement during the pandemic



Line from the 1st Community Cafe –this is a local non-profit group we have partnered with to provide a weekly hot meal to those in need

USET TECPHI Year 3 Qualitative Project
Tribal Nation COVID-19 Photo Narrative

4

## Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe



Front line screening staff having a break spelling out SRMT



Nurses

USET TECPHI Year 3 Qualitative Project
Tribal Nation COVID-19 Photo Narrative

5

## Chickahominy Indian Tribe
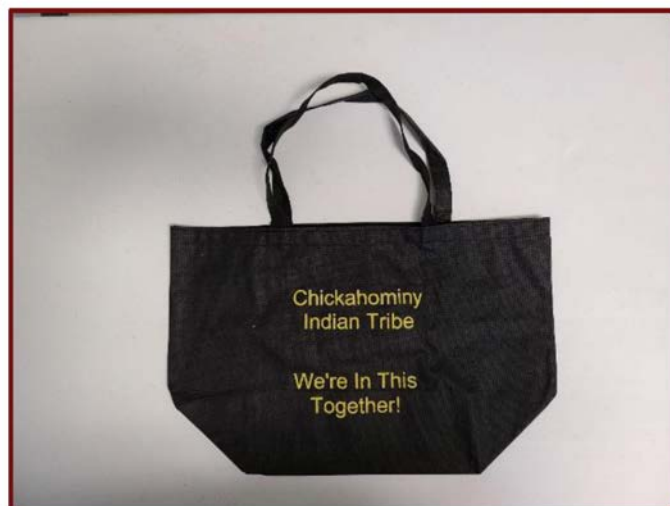


The Chickahominy Indian Tribe purchased tote bags for distributing PPE to its citizens

USET TECPHI Year 3 Qualitative Project
Tribal Nation COVID-19 Photo Narrative
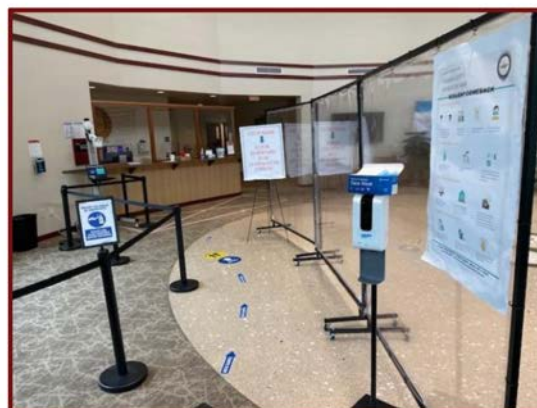
6

## Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe



Thermal Camera MWT lobby

Thermal Camera MWT Closeup

USET TECPHI Year 3 Qualitative Project
Tribal Nation COVID-19 Photo Narrative

7

## USET TEC COVID-19 Response
### March 2020 – September 2020

**What is the United South and Eastern Tribes Tribal Epidemiology Center?**

The United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. (USET) serves federally recognized Tribal Nations from the Northeast Woodlands to the Everglades and across the Gulf of Mexico. The USET Tribal Epidemiology Center (TEC) monitors and reports on the health status of Tribal Nations to reduce disease and improve wellness. The TEC strives to improve quality of life by evaluating Tribal health data, monitoring health trends, providing technical assistance related data collection, analyzing population health data, and supporting initiatives that promote health. USET's TEC is one of twelve TECs established by Congress through the Indian Health Care Improvement Act and funded by the Indian Health Service. As a designated Public Health Authority (P.L 94-437 through the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act [HIPAA]), the TEC supports Tribal Nations in improving the health of their communities.

**What has the USET TEC COVID-19 response effort looked like?**

Despite the overall impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Tribal Nations, TEC staff have been able to provide valuable pandemic support. In early March, USET implemented a COVID-19 Response Team. This included a 24-hour call line and email for Tribal Nations to reach out with any emergent needs. The response team reached out to health directors and other health contacts at all area clinics to inquire about needs. The TEC monitors and provides weekly purchased/referred care delivery area [PRCDA] specific surveillance updates to each Tribal Nation. The TEC has provided material support including securing and distributing soap, PPE (N95 masks, gloves, thermometers, clinical gowns, coveralls), hand sanitizer, back-to-school care bags, as well as a wide variety of communication materials. On April 6th USET received $3 million COVID-19 Emergency Response funds and distributed to 33 Tribal Nations by April 7th and provided grant writing support for Tribal Nations applying directly for emergency funding opportunities.

USET TEC COVID-19 Report
March 2020 – September 2020

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Resources & Information
Updated Regularly

**The Box** On March 9th, USET launched a resource page (linked in picture). This page is updated daily, sometimes hourly, with information about Tribal Nation emergency declarations, event cancellations, breaking news, re-opening resources, webinar updates on legislation and federal policy, funding opportunities, and other emergency resources available to Tribal Nations.



**Surveillance Support** The TEC has worked to provide as much data and surveillance support as possible. Weekly, Tribal Nations are sent Tribal Nation-specific reports that compare their PRCDA area to State and National rates over time. The TEC quickly put together and offered REDCap surveillance tools as well as Contact Tracing training for any Tribal Nation interested.

| 21 | 20 | 735 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Area Aggregate reports | attended contact tracing webinar | Tribal Nation specific reports distributed | Tribal Nations utilized TEC surveillance tool |

**Regional Calls** Since March 23rd, USET has hosted conference calls for regional Tribal Nations and federal partners. Initially, these calls were offered twice a week, then went to weekly, biweekly, and frequency of future calls will be based on need. The purpose of the calls is for Tribal Nations to have direct access to USET, Indian Health Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and other invited federal entities to ask questions, share concerns, and provide guidance. On each call, the TEC provides a surveillance update and other relevant COVID-19 updates and resources.

| 28 | 11–25 | 64–152 | 32 | 15 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regional calls | Tribal Nations per call | Participants per call | Tribal Nations attended at least 1 call | Federal partner presenters |

**Self-Care Bags for Tribal Nation Youth** As Tribal Nations prepared to commence the school year amid a global pandemic, funding from the TEC Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) project prepared back-to-school self-care backpacks. These backpacks contained regular back to school materials in addition to some items geared at providing mental health support such as journals, earbuds, aromatherapy putty, resources for initiating family conversations, and resources to assist those struggling with the overall wellness of mind and body.

**660** bags distributed

**12** Tribal Nation recipients


ANNOUNCING Back to School Self Care Bags


EARN CEUs
USET COVID-19 teleECHO Sessions
Every Friday at 11:00 AM CST/12:00 PM EST

**Project ECHO** The TEC quickly launched weekly COVID-19 ECHO sessions. Attendee engagement and feedback indicate the immense ongoing need and support these calls provide.

| 20 | 12–40 | 14 |
|---|---|---|
| teleECHOs | Participants per call | Subject Matter Expert presenters |

USET TEC COVID–19 Report
March 2020 – September 2020

**Yard and Door Signs**

Following an outbreak and emergency declaration in a USET Tribal Nation, USET created and distributed signs for community members to place in their yards and on their doors to support Tribal Leaders efforts to contain the spread.

**2,500**
signs distributed

**Tips of the Day**

During the weeks following the national emergency declaration, as a deluge of information and resources became available to Tribal Nations, USET instituted a "Tip of the Day" to rapidly distribute critical information. Tips included emphasizing the need for documentation of how federal funds are being used, warnings of potential scams, how to access emergency assistance and funding opportunities available, and updates on key legislation.

1. Document
2. Don't Fall Prey to Scammers
3. Case Definitions
4. Tribal Nations Access to FEMA Public Assistance for COVID-19 Emergency Response
5. Accessing the Strategic National Stockpile
6. CARES Act $8B Tribal Set-Aside: Prepare Now
7. Federally-Backed-Mortgage Relief Available During COVID-19 Emergency
8. Numerous Covid-19 Funding Opportunities Available
9. Expanded Telehealth Services for Tribal Medicare and Medicaid Enrollees
10. Follow Up: Document
11. Paycheck Protection Program: Apply Early!
12. Pausing the Section 106 Review Process during the COVID-19 Emergency – ACHP Guidance
13. Ensuring the Safety of Your Water before Reopening

**TEC Guidance**

The TEC provides guidance on a variety of topics to address the need for accurate information distribution.

1. Case Definition for COVID-19
2. Social Distancing
3. Abbott ID NOW COVID-19 Diagnostic Testing
4. Contact Tracing During an Outbreak or Pandemic
5. Appropriate Use of Disinfectants in Clinical and other Public Spaces
6. Testing and Implications for Public Health Decision Making
7. Recommendations for Antibody Testing
8. Case Definition for COVID-19 UPDATED
9. The Community Use of Masks and Face Coverings in Response to COVID-19
10. COVID Testing Guidance
    i. A Brief Guide to Testing for COVID-19
    ii. CLIA-Waived Tests for COVID-19
    iii. Antibody Tests for COVID-19
    iv. The Limitations of Testing and False Negatives
    v. A Negative COVID-19 Test is not always Accurate
    vi. COVID-19 Testing and Implications for Public Health Decision Making
11. Antibody Tests for COVID-19 UPDATED
12. Abbott ID NOW COVID-19 Diagnostic Testing UPDATED
13. School Reopening
14. Recommendations for Antibody Testing
15. Testing and Implications for Public Health Decision Making

USET TEC COVID-19 Report
March 2020 – September 2020

## USET Tribal Epidemiology Center COVID-19 Response
### March 2020 – September 2020

### What is the United South and Eastern Tribes Tribal Epidemiology Center?

The United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. (USET) serves federally recognized Tribal Nations from the Northeast Woodlands to the Everglades and across the Gulf of Mexico. The USET Tribal Epidemiology Center (TEC) monitors and reports on the health status of Tribal Nations to reduce disease and improve wellness. The TEC strives to improve quality of life by evaluating Tribal health data, monitoring health trends, providing technical assistance related data collection, analyzing population health data, and supporting initiatives that promote health. USET's TEC is one of twelve TECs established by Congress through the Indian Health Care Improvement Act and funded by the Indian Health Service. As a designated Public Health Authority (P.L 94-437 through the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act [HIPAA]), the TEC supports Tribal Nations in improving the health of their communities.

### What has the USET TEC COVID-19 response effort looked like?

Despite the overall impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Tribal Nations, TEC staff have been able to provide valuable pandemic support. In early March, USET implemented a COVID-19 Response Team. This included a 24-hour call line and email for Tribal Nations to reach out with any emergent needs. The response team reached out to health directors and other health contacts at all area clinics to inquire about needs. The TEC monitors and provides weekly purchased/referred care delivery area (PRCDA) specific surveillance updates to each Tribal Nation. The TEC has provided material support including securing and distributing soap, PPE (N95 masks, gloves, thermometers, clinical gowns, coveralls), hand sanitizer, back-to-school care bags, as well as a wide variety of communication materials. On April 6th USET received $3 million COVID-19 Emergency Response funds and distributed to 33 Tribal Nations by April 7th and provided grant writing support for Tribal Nations applying directly for emergency funding opportunities.
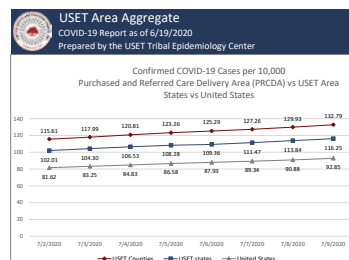
### COVID-19 Response and Relief Effort Website

On March 9th, USET launched a resource page, which was later developed into a robust informational website. The site is updated daily, sometimes hourly, with information about breaking news, events, legislation and federal policy, funding opportunities, re-opening resources, Tribal Nation emergency declarations, and other emergency resources available to Tribal Nations.

### Surveillance Support

The TEC has worked to provide as much data and surveillance support as possible. Weekly, Tribal Nations are sent Tribal Nation-specific reports that compare their PRCDA area to state and national rates over time. The TEC quickly put together and offered REDCap surveillance tools and Contact Tracing training for any Tribal Nation interested.

**21** Area Aggregate reports

**20** Attended contact tracing webinar

**735** Tribal Nation-specific reports distributed

**6** Tribal Nations utilized TEC surveillance tool

**USET Area Aggregate**
COVID-19 Report as of 6/19/2020
Prepared by the USET Tribal Epidemiology Center

Confirmed COVID-19 Cases per 10,000
Purchased and Referred Care Delivery Area (PRCDA) vs USET Area States vs United States

### Regional Calls

Since March 23rd, USET has hosted conference calls for regional Tribal Nations and federal partners. Initially, these calls were offered twice a week, then went to weekly, biweekly, and frequency of future calls will be based on need. The purpose of the calls is for Tribal Nations to have direct access to USET, Indian Health Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and other invited federal entities to ask questions, share concerns, and provide guidance. On each call, the TEC provides a surveillance update and other relevant COVID-19 updates and resources.

**28** Regional calls

**11-25** Tribal Nations per call

**64-152** Participants per call

**32** Tribal Nations attended at least 1 call

**15** Federal partner presenters

### Self-Care Bags for Tribal Nation Youth

As Tribal Nations prepared to commence the school year amid a global pandemic, funding from the TEC Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) project prepared back-to-school self-care backpacks. These backpacks contained regular back to school materials in addition to some items geared at providing mental health support such as journals, earbuds, aromatherapy putty, resources for initiating family conversations, and resources to assist those struggling with the overall wellness of mind and body.



**660** bags distributed

**12** Tribal Nation recipients

### Project ECHO

The TEC quickly launched weekly COVID-19 ECHO sessions. Attendee engagement and feedback indicate the immense ongoing need and support these calls provide.



**20** teleECHOs

**12-40** Participants per call

**14** Subject Matter Expert presenters

### Yard and Door Signs

Following an outbreak and emergency declaration in a USET Tribal Nation, USET created and distributed signs for community members to place in their yards and on their doors to support Tribal Leaders' efforts to contain the spread.

**2,500** signs distributed





**USET TEC COVID-19 Report**   March-September 2020                                                                    2

### Tips of the Day

During the weeks following the national emergency declaration, as a deluge of information and resources became available to Tribal Nations, USET instituted a "Tip of the Day" to rapidly distribute critical information. Tips included emphasizing the need for documentation of how federal funds are being used, warnings of potential scams, how to access emergency assistance and funding opportunities available, and updates on key legislation.
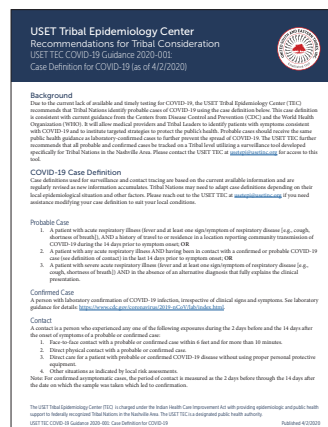
1. Document
2. Don't Fall Prey to Scammers
3. Case Definitions
4. Tribal Nations Access to FEMA Public Assistance for COVID-19 Emergency Response
5. Accessing the Strategic National Stockpile
6. CARES Act $8B Tribal Set-Aside: Prepare Now
7. Federally-Backed-Mortgage Relief Available During COVID-19 Emergency
8. Numerous Covid-19 Funding Opportunities Available
9. Expanded Telehealth Services for Tribal Medicare and Medicaid Enrollees
10. Follow Up: Document
11. Paycheck Protection Program: Apply Early!
12. Pausing the Section 106 Review Process during the COVID-19 Emergency – ACHP Guidance
13. Ensuring the Safety of Your Water before Reopening



### TEC Recommendations for Tribal Consideration

The TEC provides guidance on a variety of topics to address the need for accurate information distribution.

1. Case Definition for COVID-19
2. Social Distancing
3. Abbott ID NOW COVID-19 Diagnostic Testing
4. Contact Tracing During an Outbreak or Pandemic
5. Appropriate Use of Disinfectants in Clinical and other Public Spaces
6. Testing and Implications for Public Health Decision Making
7. Recommendations for Antibody Testing
8. Case Definition for COVID-19 UPDATED
9. The Community Use of Masks and Face Coverings in Response to COVID-19
10. COVID Testing Guidance
    i. A Brief Guide to Testing for COVID-19
    ii. CLIA-Waived Tests for COVID-19
    iii. Antibody Tests for COVID-19
    iv. The Limitations of Testing and False Negatives
    v. A Negative COVID-19 Test is not always Accurate
    vi. COVID-19 Testing and Implications for Public Health Decision Making
11. Antibody Tests for COVID-19 UPDATED
12. Abbott ID NOW COVID-19 Diagnostic Testing UPDATED
13. School Reopening
14. Recommendations for Antibody Testing
15. Testing and Implications for Public Health Decision Making



**USET TEC COVID-19 Report**   March-September 2020                                                    **3**

# Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI)

## Performance Measure – Technical Assistance

The Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI) has provided significant COVID-19 support to urban Indian organizations through technical assistance, COVID-related factsheets and toolkits, and by helping analyze data and write publications enumerating the impact of COVID-19 in Indian Country. While this is very important work, we wanted to highlight the experiences of staff working behind the scenes who provide this support. UIHI evaluators designed reflective activities with the goal of promoting the health and mental wellbeing of UIHI staff working through these challenging times. UIHI's TEPCHI grant is internally named BRANCH, which stands for *Building Resiliency and Nurturing Community Health.*

Staff Reflection Activities:

UIHI staff were invited to participate in an artistic activity reflecting on what it has been like working during the pandemic with a short, written statement about the art piece's meaning. The art piece could be a collage, meme, comic, drawing, painting, poem, beading, etc. All TECPHI-funded staff were required to participate, but this was optional for other staff. A virtual art gallery of the pieces with written statements was created with directions for staff to participate in two reflective activities, described in the art gallery slides below. All UIHI staff were required to participate in the art gallery reflection activities.

## The BRANCH Art Project Evaluation Activity

Art project prompt:

Create a visual art piece (e.g., picture, collage, beading, a poem, comic, meme, etc.) that portrays your experience of working during the COVID-19 pandemic with a short, written explanation of the piece's meaning in about 150 words or less.

Please participate in our word cloud activity while viewing the art pieces:

1. Click this link
2. Answer the form question after viewing each art piece slide*

*you can submit as many responses as you want for each art piece

3. After each submission, stay on the page by clicking "submit another response" for the next art piece

To cope with increasing levels of stress during the stay at home order, social distancing, and working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, I turn to gaming, entertainment, and exercise. Through gaming, I was able interact with friends and form social bonds in various gaming communities. Through movie and music, I was able to laugh, cry, relax, and wind down. Through playing the piano, I was able to escape reality and accept new challenges. Through exercise, I was able to stay motivated, refresh, and feeling good about myself.

Data Coordinator (TECPHI-funded)

### Working during COVID-19

Reflecting on what it has been like to work during COVID-19, my thoughts first went to the different challenges: the feeling of disconnection, screen fatigue, imposter syndrome, underlying anxiety, anger, and fear for the future. It takes special attention and intention to uncover the positive. I chose to represent this practice by applying light-colored pastels on dark paper to depict a chrysanthemum, and graphite to write down some of my reflections. Sometimes it is hard to see what is there until you shift your perspective—the words only appear under the right angle of light. Drawing on the Japanese concept of *gaman* (to bear the seemingly unbearable with patience and dignity) this image represents inspiration to persevere in a positive direction. Rather than limit *gaman* to passive acceptance, how do we actively create and look for beauty in the face of adversity?



Evaluator

This is a photo of a few of the first masks I made. When the pandemic started and all our daily habits changed every day, it felt good to use one of my few survival skills to help. I decided to make masks for anyone that asked, free of charge.

Executive Assistant
(TECPHI-funded)



Director (TECPHI-funded)

The impact of COVID-19 has been overwhelming. It often feels like everything is an emergency and there is not enough hours in the day or the week to do everything our community is asking of us. As an individual in leadership it is my responsibility to lead the team as we reprioritize, reevaluate, and ensure the staff has the resources needed to implement all the changes to our workplan and new projects. This increased level of stress has affected the entire team. I often find myself trying to figure out ways to lift that off of them, if just for an hour, to give them space to just breathe. However, in the beginning of this pandemic I wasn't giving that same space to myself. An elder in the community reminded me that I also need to take that time, this pandemic isn't a sprint, I need to be healthy for the whole journey. So I have gone back to our traditional ways to help cope with the stress. I make ribbon skirts to gift to community members, always remembering the traditional teachings of what it means to create with meaningful and prayerful intent for the good and wellbeing of the people. I take those teachings back to the work we do, reminding myself and the team that every project and product we are working on is done to give the greatest gift we have to the people. Our people deserve to walk in wellness, and I feel blessed to be a small part of contributing to this ongoing journey as we support our community and build public health capacity in urban Indian communities.

**I practice being present**

My anxious eye sees precarity but

When I am here I feel the soft sand under my feet
Even though the beach is Greg's* litter box
The sand still feels like luxury

*Greg is my cat

I can hear the waves gently whoosh
Pushing sand then slinking into itself, noisy for eternity
Knowing this song will always play is comforting

The smell of a gray whale's breath up close is like
Being enveloped in the vapors of Eu de Beach Diaper
I am so grateful to share the air with them

Summer sunsets taste like Country Time Pink Lemonade™
Wildly expensive sugar drinks and cranky dentists
This is the taste of my childhood

Seeing our seal neighbors reminds me of our long history
Millennia of nourishment and reciprocity with my ancestors
Now I scrub their poop off the dock

My anxious eye sees precarity but

I experience so much more when I close it
I am closer to being in the present moment
And I am here for myself

Evaluator

March 2020, no journal entries.

April 2020, no journal entries.

May 2020, no journal entries.

June 2020, no journal entries.

July 2020, no journal entries.

August 2020, 1 journal entry.

September 2020, no journal entry.

Since this whole thing started it is as if I was too afraid to acknowledge the fears and worries. If I do not write them down, they do not become tangible and they do not become real. Completely ignoring the fact that writing has always been my way to process. It weighed on me. The tough part was being honest with myself and realizing I have never been one to hide from a challenge. I allowed myself to cope and today I start writing again. Being in touch with my thoughts, with my emotions and listening to my body is what gets me through.

Epidemiologist (TECPHI-funded)

**My new friends**

My art piece uses some of the plants that I have gotten to know and use these past months while working through the COVID-19 pandemic. I feel fortunate to work on a project evaluating a community of traditional plant educators and I got to attend some of their virtual workshops that were originally suppose to be in person but ended up being remote due to social distancing measures. This art piece features dried nettles that the workshop inspired me to gather and process. It also includes other plant medicines that I harvested or were gifted to me. Spending time outdoors has always been my respite and learning about traditional plants and starting to build a relationship with them was cathartic during a time when building new in person relationships was dangerous in many ways.

Evaluator
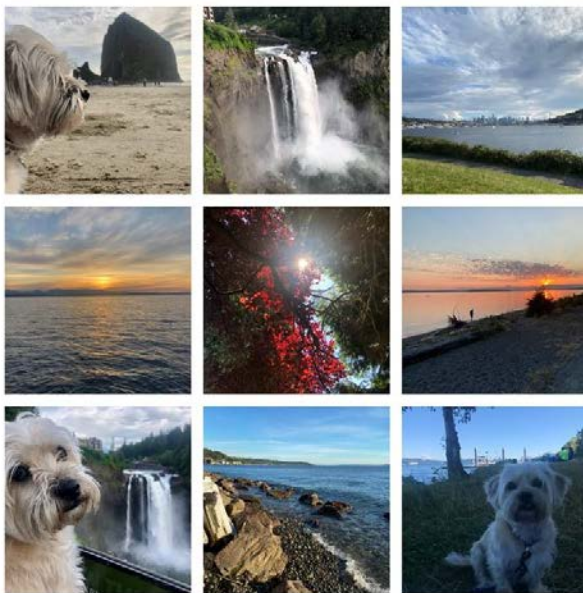


*After a busy day of work in the office, or between breaks while working at home, I have been taking the time to enjoy the outdoors and reconnect with the earth. It is a great way for me to reground myself each day, reflect on all the important work we are doing for Native people, and appreciate all of my beautiful surroundings. I have also been able to spend more time with my dog Theodore, who has been the greatest company in a time of social distancing.*

Project Assistant (TECPHI-funded)

With a nod to WFH "work from home", COVID safety, racial justice, and the increased amounts of take out that was consumed weekly, this collage represents the social and political landscape that was occurring in 2020 in the third year of TEPCHI.

Evaluator (TECPHI-funded)



## The BRANCH Art Project Evaluation Activity

Please participate in our quick poem activity after viewing all art pieces!

Click this link and follow the directions.

The goal of the group poem activity was to tell the story of how staff have felt while working through the pandemic. After seeing all art pieces staff reflected on how the whole collection made them feel and each staff member wrote one line of the poem, building off the work of the person before them. Staff considered flow and prose of the poem and then incorporated their own ideas. Staff also contributed to a word cloud about all the art projects. Both the group poem and word cloud are included below.
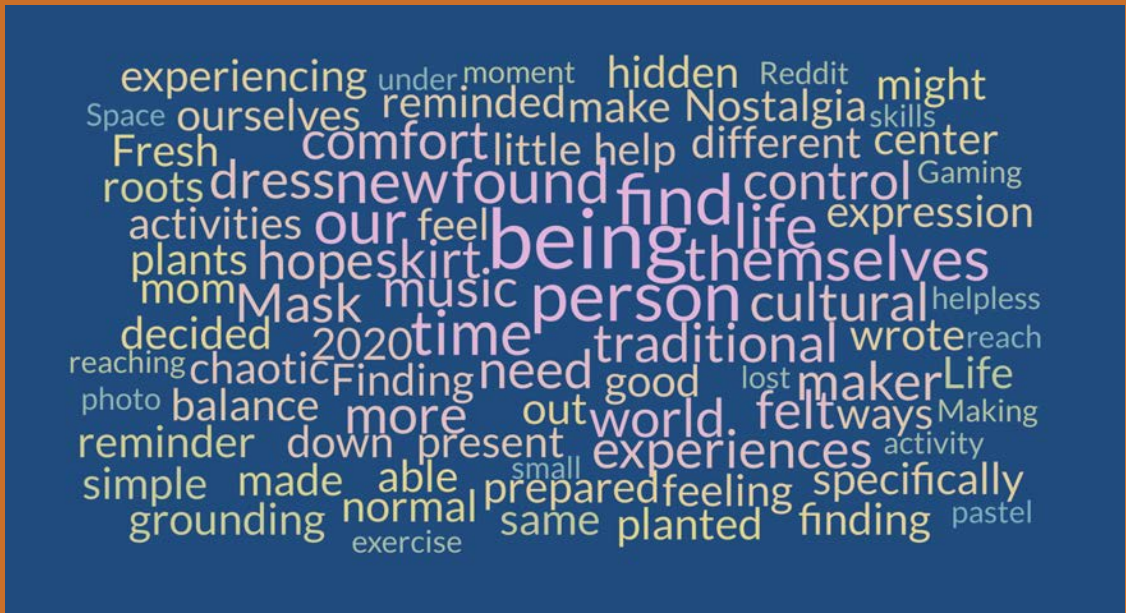
## Uncertain Splendor

Finding solace in our daily lives is a true work of art
Searching for a center, a balance, that won't stay still
We find it in community together but apart
Doing things with the best intentions as a gesture of goodwill
I miss my friends, my family, the ones who remind me of my heart outside my body
But our more-than-human relatives (and take out!) help fill
We know how to absorb the love that lives around us
The mountains make me pause to stare in wonder and awe
I am filled with longing
And the steady, reminding heat of other hearts inside my chest
We are more similar than we think
Silenced again and separated unable to make a mark or a sound worth hearing
Lost in our emotions, we create to breathe and reconnect
In love, with hope and a gentle spirit
Our purpose(s) guide us through adversity
I'm reminded that we each bring in different forms of diversity
We are all resilient, adaptable, and flexible. We are survivors.
We will continue on no matter what comes next
Learning to thrive in the uncertainty and celebrate our resilience
A collective time to assess and change despite unknowingness
Shattered we continue, we prepare, we thrive
Taking a deep breath in and letting it go.

# COVID-19 Qualitative Project

## Celebrating Indigenous Voices: The development of the Indigenous Evaluation Playlist

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic led to restrictions on in-person gatherings in Washington State in March 2020. The Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI) began preparing for the possibility that these restrictions could be in place through the summer, which is typically when our TECPHI-funded in-person trainings are offered. UIHI Evaluators began adapting the Indigenous Evaluation Workshop as a virtual training. One of the best things about the in-person training was the level of engagement through various interactive activities, so we sought to maintain as many of these interactive elements as possible in the virtual version.

### Performance Measure 7: Total number of trainings provided or supported by UIHI

*Initial adaptions made to the Workshop:*

- Shorten the Workshop from 1.5 days to 5 hours
- Create real-time, virtual activities such as live word clouds and polls using funny Indigenous-themed memes
- Indigenous Evaluation BINGO: concepts, key words, and the realities of virtual workshops were added to digital and printed custom BINGO cards

*UIHI did a test run of the Workshop with UIHI staff and interns. Here are some of the lessons we learned:*

- Calling on participants and having breakout rooms identify presenters to share out with the rest of the group after breakout sessions keeps workshops moving along
- To alleviate awkward silences during breaks we decided to fill them with songs by Indigenous artists, leading to the development of UIHI's Indigenous Evaluation Playlist

Both the Indigenous Evaluation Workshop and the Indigenous Evaluation Playlist seek to give voice to Indigenous Peoples. The goal of the Workshop is to teach participants about UIHI's Indigenous evaluation framework and the importance of centering community voices throughout the process. The goal of the Playlist is to promote listening to Indigenous voices in music. Just as we continue to improve and adapt our workshops, this playlist is also a living project that staff continuously add to.

### UIHI'S INDIGENOUS EVALUATION PLAYLIST

| SONG | ARTIST |
|---|---|
| ELECTRIC POW WOW DRUM | A Tribe Called Red |
| LAND BACK | A Tribe Called Red, Boogey the Beat, Northern Voice |
| THE CIRCLE GAME | Buffy Sainte-Marie |
| MEHCINUT | Jeremy Dutcher |
| BOUJEE NATIVES | Snotty Nose Rez Kids |
| LIBERATION | Calina Lawrence, Aloe Blacc |
| GOING FOR GOLD | An Illustrated Mess |
| BOOMBOX WARFARE (FEAT. JADEN SMITH | Xiuhtezcatl, Jaden |
| FACEBOOK DRAMA | Northern Cree |
| HUES OF BLUE | Kelly Caballero |
| GOOD WAY (FEAT. GUNNER JULES & ROLLIE RAPS) | Frank Waln, Gunner Jules, Rollie Raps |
| MEET ME AT THE POW WOW (FEAT. LEONARD SUMNER) | Lightningcloud, Leonard Sumner |
| NO NATIVE PERSON IS UGLY | Talon The Rez Kid Wonder, Lil B |
| MY ROOTS ARE SHOWING | Crystal Shawanda |
| RIZE | Ray Viktoria |
| WE MISS YOU | Neon Nativez, Talibah Begay |
| THE SOCIAL (FEAT. PHOENIX PAGLIACCI) | DJ Shub, Phoenix Pagliacci |
| IT'S SO PEACEFUL IN THE COUNTRY | Mildred Bailey |
| PLEASE BE KIND | Mildred Bailey |
| COME AND GET YOUR LOVE | Redbone |
| MOVE, I'M INDIGENOUS | Uyarakq |
| THE UNFORGOTTEN | Iskwē, Tanya Tagaq |
| SILA | A Tribe Called Red, Tanya Tagaq |
| RED | Raye Zaragoza |
| WHY | Supaman |
| FIGHT LIKE A GIRL | Raye Zaragoza |
| SOFT STUD | Black Belt Eagle Scout |
| INDIANS NEVER DIE | Black Belt Eagle Scout |
| THE SHAMAN AND THE THIEF | Moddi |
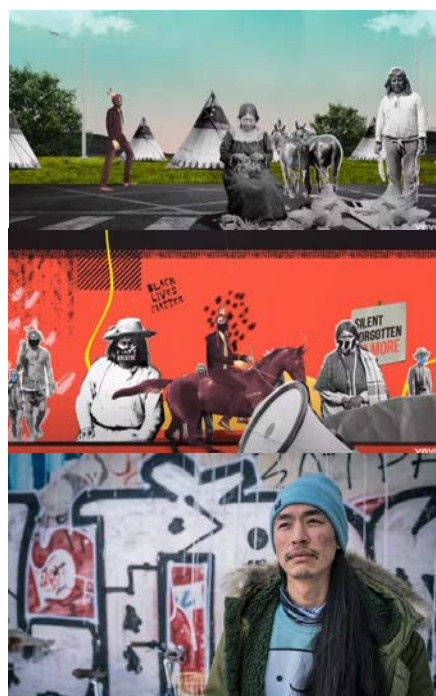


*Photos Top to Bottom: (1 & 2) Screenshots from the 2020 music video to "Come and get your love" by Redbone- an iconic song that made Redbone the first Native American band to achieve a Top 5 single on the Billboard Hot 100. (3) Greenlandic producer Aqqalu Berthelsen who produces music under his artist name, Uyarakq.*

**Appendix: Highlighting Indigenous Voices**

*Sila by a Tribe Called Red*



The song *Sila* by A Tribe Called Red featuring Tanya Tagaq includes throat singing (an Indigenous vocal performance style) and other Indigenous musical elements. A Tribe Called Red is an electronic music group blending sounds of hip hop, dubstep, reggae, and house music with First Nations musical elements like drumming and chanting. The band is from Ottawa, Ontario, Canada with members from the Six Nations of the Grand River (Mohawk) and Cayuga First Nation. Tanya is an Inuk throat singer from Iqaluktuuttiaq, Nunavut, Canada. Tanya says the song, "'Sila' is what you breathe" as the Inuk word for air, atmosphere, what's around you.

*Facebook Drama by Northern Cree*

Northern Cree is an Indigenous singing group from Alberta. Their music centers traditional drumming and singing while incorporating humor and modern issues as those featured in their "Facebook Drama." Just as we center our tradition while adapting our evaluations, workshops, and epidemiology work to fit the needs of our community, Facebook Drama accomplished a similar feat with their music. The song sounds like a traditional round dance in many ways and like many other round dances speaks about love and loss but with a modern social media twist with the lyrics "I read your status last night. You posted that someone else was holding you tight. You shared it for all our friends to see. I don't wanna go through this Facebook drama. So I pressed delete."

# Year 3

# QUALITATIVE PROJECTS

## Performance Measures & COVID-19

# TRIBAL EPIDEMIOLOGY CENTERS

## Public Health Infrastructure (TECPHI) Program



# QUALITATIVE PROJECTS

## Year 3