Exercising Our Sovereignty: Using Research to Strengthen Policymaking

For the past six years, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Policy Research Center has conducted the Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum during the NCAI Mid-Year Conference. The annual NCAI Policy Research Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum is a day of programming that centers on American Indian and Alaska Native tribal communities and provides a space for researchers, tribal leaders and citizens, and organizations to speak with one another about research being conducted with tribal communities and Native people.

This year's NCAI Policy Research Center Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum will focus specifically on how tribes exercise their sovereignty around research. The Forum will highlight the _value_ of research in American Indian and Alaska Native communities and feature how tribes and Native people are _using_ research to advance sovereignty.

The sovereignty of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal nations puts tribes at an advantage. Tribal sovereignty provides tribes the legal and inherent right as governments to decide what research should be conducted within their communities. The ability to make decisions regarding research partners can ensure significant input into the direction of research process and outcomes and enable tribes to protect their citizens from harm. This is sometimes easier said than done. It requires infrastructure (e.g., laws, protocols, people, knowledge, and resources) and implementation by institutions, organizations, and enforcement structures.

The NCAI Policy Research Center is accepting proposals for the 7th Annual Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum. **The Forum will be held on Tuesday, June 19, 2012 in Lincoln, Nebraska.** Concurrent breakout sessions will be held from 1:30 pm-4:00 pm and feature a panel of presenters invited by the NCAI Policy Research Center.

For this year's Forum, the NCAI Policy Research Center is seeking presentation proposals in the following priority areas:

- Examples from tribes who have sought out research and researchers on areas of critical importance to their community
- Examples from researchers and organizations who have successfully engaged with tribal communities around a research project and/or process
- Examples from tribes who have developed a research agenda for their nation, and/or have developed research protocols, review boards, research codes, etc.
- Examples of how tribes have regulated research to protect the interest of tribal communities and Native people
- Examples of the uses/benefits/limitations of US Census data or other federal data sets representing American Indians and Alaska Natives
- Examples of data sharing and usage (e.g., agreements, partnerships, workshops, technology) between tribes and external groups
- Examples of successful partnerships between tribal communities, universities, and other organizations
- Examples of research projects that have had significant impacts for American Indians and Alaska Natives

Both completed and ongoing research with preliminary findings will be considered.

How to Apply

To apply, please submit a presentation proposal that includes the following information:

- Presentation Title
- Presenter name, affiliation(s), and contact information
- Names of other contributors and partners
- A **one-page** description of the proposed topic area, which also includes lessons and insights to be shared
- Identification of the priority area listed above that the presentation fits within
- A short biography of the presenters (no more than 100 words for each presenter)

Proposals should be submitted via email to Christina Daulton, Program Manager, at cdaulton@ncai.org by Friday, February 17, 2012.

"Data with a Punch" Poster Session: Call for Proposals from Native Students

The NCAI Policy Research Center seeks poster presentation proposals from Native undergraduate and graduate students to showcase during a reception in conjunction with the Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum. Proposals should focus on research or projects regarding tribal communities and American Indians and Alaska Natives. This "Data with a Punch" poster session provides an opportunity for Native students to talk about their research to attendees in a more casual atmosphere over punch and light refreshments.

Please submit a one-page presentation proposal that provides:

- Poster presentation title
- Presenter name, college affiliation, and contact information
- Names of other contributors and partners
- A **one-page** description of the proposed topic area
- A short biography of the presenters (no more than 100 words for each presenter)

Proposals should be submitted via email to Christina Daulton, Program Manager, at cdaulton@ncai.org by Friday, February 17, 2012.

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*The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) is the oldest, largest, and most representative Native organization in the country. It is a membership organization that serves the interests of the 566 federally-recognized tribes, state-recognized tribes, and American Indian and Alaska Native citizens. In 2003, the NCAI leadership launched a tribally-driven, national policy center to foster data-driven policy making specifically for American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments. The **NCAI Policy Research Center** seeks to provide tribal leaders with the best available data, tools, and resources to make strategically proactive policy decisions in a framework of Native wisdom.*