

FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTH EQUITY

— for American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) —
5 Essential Components

1. Tribal Sovereignty

Respect for Tribal Nations as sovereigns and expanded Tribal self-governance are foundational to AI/AN health equity.

2.

Resilience through Culture

Leaning into traditional values and worldviews opens new paths forward.

- Extended family structures
- Traditional healing
- Traditional food systems
- Community, connection, and belonging
- Native perspectives on health & wellbeing

3. Strong Tribal Institutions

With collaboration, emphasis on traditional values, and prioritization of health and wellbeing, Tribal institutions can be powerful forces for AI/AN health equity.

- Tribal governments
- Regional and National Indian organizations
- Schools & colleges
- Healthcare systems
- Justice systems

4. Tribal Empowerment in State & Federal Governance

Undoing centuries of harm to AI/AN requires dedication to rebuilding relationships and trust and purposeful inclusion of Tribes in decision-making.

- Meaningful Tribal consultation
- Inclusion in agency task forces & committees
- Active Tribal Advisory Committees
- Expanded pathways for AI/AN to become elected officials and government employees

5.

Federal Trust Responsibility

To fulfill the trust responsibility for protecting AI/AN health, the US government must:

- Fully fund the Indian health system
- Ensure Tribes have sufficient resources and capacity to meet needs and participate actively in governance
- Reverse AI/AN erasure through cultural competence training of government employees, Tribally informed public school curricula, and improved data practices

