

American Indian Community Housing Organization Economic Development Plan

Indigenous Foods

Indigenous Art & Culture

Indigenous Housing

**Creating a new
Indigenous Economy
in Onigamiinsing
Duluth, Minnesota**



AN ORIGIN STORY



Artist: Karen Savage Blue

Washashk Dagoshin (Muskrat Arrives)

In the traditional origin story of the Anishinabeg, Sky Woman falls from a world above. The animals see her falling and fear for her because the world is only water. The turtle offers his back, if only someone can dive to the depths below to retrieve a handful of earth. All of the strongest attempt, but no one is successful. Finally, Washashk (muskrat) says he will try. They all laugh him because he is so small. He makes his dive anyway and all the animals wait in anticipation. He is gone for a long time and the animals think he has perished. But barely alive, he surfaces. In his tiny paw, he clenches a handful of earth. They quickly place the earth on turtle's back and it becomes the world we now know, with trees, plants and everything we need to sustain ourselves. It becomes home for Sky Woman and her children, the Anishinabeg.

AICHO needs to be like Washashk when he arrives with the earth in his hand, bringing new ground

LAND BASED ECONOMY

The Ojibwe/Anishinabe people ceded land that covered the northern half of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. With a land-based economy, the Ojibwe people lost more than land in the treaty process. Traditional economy provided a dynamic food system, homes, clothing, goods, transportation and medicine; everything necessary for communities to thrive.

Duluth is Indigenous territory that was ceded but holds strong spiritual and cultural significance to our people and this draws our people here. Many Native American individuals or families relocate to Duluth for education or employment opportunities and sometimes seeking sobriety support in a new environment. The federal policies of the relocation era also played a role that is overlooked in urban areas.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

While the ceded land from the treaty process built immense wealth for others, including the agricultural, timber, mining and shipping industries that propelled Minnesota to economic prosperity, the Indigenous community in Duluth is starting at ground zero with only 2-3 American Indian-owned businesses, the lowest rate of homeownership and high unemployment.

Nearly 65% of Native Americans in Duluth are living at or below the poverty level, compared to 22% of the overall population (2013 American Community Survey). In Duluth, while Native Americans comprise less than 3% of the city population, they represent more than 30% in the local homeless count. This impacts overall community health and the ability to afford fresh food or have access to traditional foods.

NEW GROUND

AICHO has become symbolic of a community and cultural resurgence. In one year's time, AICHO hosted over 500 community and cultural events. These events bring community members together and create opportunities for intergenerational and cross-cultural connections. AICHO events feature dynamic variety: art shows that highlight contemporary Indigenous themes; traditional feasts and ceremonies; music concerts; Indigenous films; and honoring ceremonies. The art & culture initiative has generated incredible energy to recognize our resourcefulness and ingenuity.

AICHO plans to help our community reclaim our traditional foods, make fresh food more accessible and develop businesses that will directly employ and increase Native people's income levels.



BUILDING OUR FUTURE

4th Street Market
102 E. 4th St.



PARTNERS:

White Earth
Investment
Initiative

Entrepreneur Fund

LeBeau
Development LLC

Local Initiatives
Support
Corporation (LISC)
Duluth

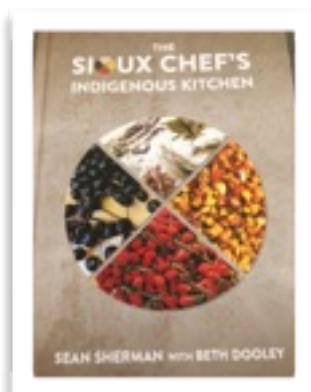
Northland
Foundation

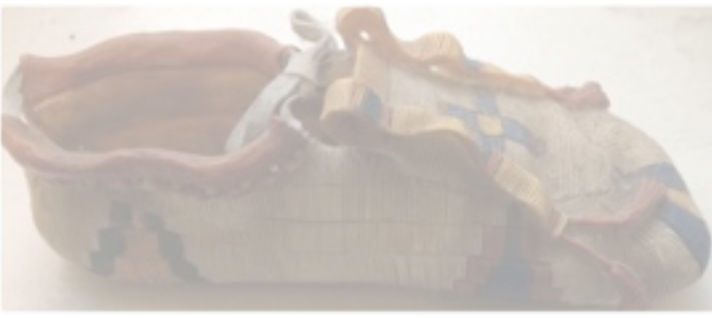
University of
Minnesota Center
for Economic
Development

Indigenous Food Market

AICHO will renovate the former 4th Street Market corner grocery store and transform the property into an Indigenous Food Market. The Indigenous Food Market will feature regional Indigenous foods, fresh produce and staples with a deli and coffee shop. A commercial kitchen will be used as incubator space (catering and food production).

Lower level space can accommodate a coffee roasting production to supply AICHO coffee shops. AICHO will implement a jobs training program to build the economic viability of low-income and Indigenous community. Regional Indigenous food producers will gain a retail outlet.





BEGINNING A NEW JOURNEY TOGETHER

The Niiwin Indigenous Foods Market marks the beginning of a new journey for our community. This exciting social enterprise folds multiple impacts together for amplified social change.

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

- Access to healthy, fresh food and culturally relevant food
- Access to new employment and entrepreneur opportunities
- Retail space for local foods system, food producers, and entrepreneurs
- Revenues generated support AICHO supportive services, including housing, shelter, and youth program

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Support from local, regional, state, national and Tribal Nation partners
- New collaborations, with innovative approaches launched locally
- Partnership with business community and local entrepreneurs

INDIGENOUS SOLUTIONS

- Showcase of Indigenous foods and practices, with focus on locally sourced foods and traditional history
- Focus on sustainability with thought leadership and ongoing education
- Cultural strategies in action, demonstrating the effectiveness of Indigenous methods to achieve equity
- Community leadership

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Will offer gathering space, building on community relationships and strengths
- Community events on-site on food education, entrepreneurship and culture
- Community-led design for key elements of retail space and inventory



OUR MISSION

The American Indian Community Housing Organization (AICHO) has a mission to honor the resiliency of Indigenous people by strengthening communities and centering Indigenous values in all



Miigwech (thank you) to our partners who support the purchase and development of the Niiwin Indigenous Foods Market.

American Lung Association

Bush Foundation

Entrepreneur Fund

Essentia Health

Headwaters Foundation for Justice

LeBeau Development LLC

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Duluth

Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP)

Northland Foundation

Northwest Area Foundation

Notah Begay III Foundation

St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services

University of Minnesota Center for Economic Development

White Earth Investment Initiative

