

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

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FACT SHEET: Today the White House Launches the “Generation Indigenous Native Youth Challenge”

In June 2014, President Barack Obama made his first presidential visit to Indian Country – to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. There, he and the First Lady sat down with a small group of Native youth and heard about the issues and obstacles they face. The social, economic, and educational challenges they raised are too common across Indian Country. The President called the stories of these young people “heartbreaking” and has committed to addressing persistent opportunity gaps they and other youth face: “We want to give those young people and other young Native Americans like them the support they deserve.”

In the months following the President’s visit to Indian Country, the Administration met with stakeholders and explored concrete next steps to make progress on the issues the Native youth raised. In December, the White House released its 2014 Native Youth Report that explored the challenges facing Native youth and made recommendations for a path forward. The report states that “the specific struggles that Native youth face often go unmentioned in our nation’s discussions about America’s children, and that has to change.”

At the 2014 White House Tribal Nations Conference, President Obama announced the launch of Generation Indigenous (Gen-I), an initiative focused on improving the lives of Native youth by removing the barriers that stand between Native youth and their opportunity to succeed. Through new investments and increased engagement, this initiative takes a comprehensive, culturally appropriate approach to increase opportunities, improve outcomes for Native youth and ensure that all young people can reach their full potential. This comprehensive effort includes the creation of a National Native Youth Network in partnership with the Aspen Institute’s Center for Native American Youth and the U.S. Department of the Interior, the announcement of new Native Youth Community Projects administered by the Department of Education, the restructuring of the Bureau of Indian Education to serve as part of a support network to schools, the launch of the Cabinet Native Youth Listening Tour, and the organization of the first ever White House Tribal Youth Gathering.

Gen-I Native Youth Challenge

As part of the process of establishing the National Native Youth Network, we invite Native youth and all young people across the country to take part in the Gen-I Challenge. This call to action is the first step in engaging a broad network of people interested in addressing the issues facing Native youth and creating a platform through which Native youth can access information about opportunities and resources, and have their voices and positive contributions highlighted and elevated.

Here’s how it works: Youth 14-24, non-profits, and educational institutions are invited to join the National Native Youth Network by accepting the Gen-I Challenge.

Who: Individuals, youth councils, and youth groups can participate as *Challenge Acceptors*. Non-profit organizations, Colleges, Universities, and TCUs can become acceptors by helping their youth and students complete the Gen-I Challenge!

Youth and others will accept the challenge by following this [link](#) and committing to take or encourage the following steps.

Step 1: ACT. Within 30 days of taking the challenge, youth should work with other youth in their community or at their school to do something positive of their choosing (for example: completing a volunteer project with a local organization or charity, hosting a meeting with other youth to brainstorm how to address an issue of concern in their community, or becoming a mentor to a younger person). The youth can use toolkits from the National Native Youth Network to help them in this work. Their local tribal youth council, urban tribal youth group, or Native youth organization may also be resources.

Step 2: CAPTURE. Youth should document their community efforts through a short summary (3-4 sentences) and with photos and video!

Step 3: SHARE. Youth should share their stories online using #GenI and send the National Native Youth Network their story through www.cnay.org/Challenge.html. The National Native Youth Network or the White House may even feature their story.

Step 4: PARTICIPATE. By participating in the National Native Youth Network, youth may be invited to apply to send a representative to the first ever White House Tribal Youth Gathering in Washington, D.C., in the summer of 2015.

Organizations, colleges, universities, and TCUs can take the Gen-I Challenge too by committing to help their youth and students complete the Gen-I Challenge! They just follow this [link](#) to get signed up.

The following organizations have already committed to take the Gen-I Challenge and get their youth on board!

Gen-I Native Youth Challenge Early Acceptors

American Indian College Fund
American Indian Higher Education Consortium
Boys and Girls Clubs of America
Center for Native American Youth at the Aspen Institute
National Indian Education Association
National Congress of American Indians
National Indian Child Welfare Association
National Indian Health Board
United National Indian Tribal Youth

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