

GOOD LAWS, GOOD FOOD: PUTTING FOOD POLICY TO WORK IN THE NAVAJO NATION



Section I: Diné Food Ways Summary and Handout

Overview

Section I of this toolkit was developed by Sonlatsa Jim-Martin of the Community Outreach and Patient Empowerment (COPE) Project, through discussions with Navajo leaders and advocates. We include this Section at the beginning of this toolkit to name the importance of Diné Food Ways for the Navajo culture, and underscore the importance of the Diné people's physical and spiritual relationship to food. Food policies in the Navajo Nation should consider and reflect our spiritual connection with food and its importance in our culture.

Section II: The Structure of the Navajo Nation Government

Overview

Section II describes the sovereign Navajo Nation government that develops and enforces laws and policies affecting all people and natural resources within the Navajo Nation. This Section describes the importance of fundamental law in developing and interpreting the codified Navajo Nation Code. It also explores how the Navajo government is structured and what food laws and regulations may be enacted at the tribal and Chapter level.

Navajo Nation Government

- **Legislative Branch: Navajo Nation Council**
 - 24 delegates elected by precincts with approximately equal populations
 - Includes the Health, Education & Human Services Committee
 - Pass all laws in the Navajo Nation, including laws that award grants to Navajo organizations known as “638s” that assist the Navajo government in carrying out certain functions
- **Executive Branch: President, Vice President, Agencies**
 - President responsible for seeing that the laws of the Navajo Nation are faithfully executed and enforced (has veto power over bills passed by the Navajo Nation Council)
 - Example of executive agency: Department of Health, which oversees issues that relate to food and the environment
 - 12 Navajo Nation enterprises: examples include the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry (NAPI), the Navajo Housing Authority, and the Navajo Transit Authority.
- **Judicial Branch: Navajo Nation Supreme Court, 11 District Courts**
 - Resolve conflicts, interpret Navajo Nation Code
- **Local Government: Chapters**
 - Have significant control over local issues once become a Certified Chapter
 - For example, a Certified Chapter can:
 - Use its zoning authority to zone certain areas in the Chapter for agriculture or food vendors selling healthy foods.
 - Raise and spend local tax dollars and other funding to strengthen the local food system
 - Must develop a Community Based Land Use Plan (CBLUP)