

Milwaukee County—University of Wisconsin (UW) Cooperative Extension American Indian Community Partnership (AICP) Initiative

1. Project Description (outline the following criteria that relate to your project):

a) Program Criteria:

The goals of the project were to strengthen relation and promote collaboration between the UW-Extension Milwaukee County (UWEX MC) staff and the Native American community of Milwaukee County. It was projected that UWEX educators and 15-20 Native American residents or representatives from Native American agencies in Milwaukee County would become familiar with each other's initiatives and seek opportunities to collaborate on resources, ideas and services. It was also expected that Native Americans in Milwaukee would be connected to UWEX-NATF programs occurring around the state. These goals were reached on the surface, but to go deeper there needs to be continuous outreach efforts.

Katy LaRoque, a Native American Milwaukee resident, was hired in April to assist in the implementation of this initiative. She attended the Wisconsin Indian Education Association (WIEA) conference in April and was able to find contacts from the Milwaukee area. Katy and Eloisa reached out to Native American community leaders from many different organizations by email and facilitated four meetings throughout the summer of 2016 to seek input on how UWEX could work more closely with the Native American community of Milwaukee County. We formed an advisory group named Uniting Minds, which consists of thirteen community leaders and nine UWEX staff. The four meetings were held in June, July, August and an October. During these meetings community members have voiced a priority concern for health issues going unaddressed in the Native American community of Milwaukee. The Milwaukee First Nations Health Coalition (MKEFNHC) invited our advisory group to their meeting in September following these discussions on health. We hosted a fourth meeting after the MKEFNHC meeting to find out how the group would like to move forward. We are still in an assessment process on how to continue relationship building. We hope to have Katy LaRoque continue in her role to support this effort.

i) Describe how this relates to the Cooperative Extension Purpose, Vision and Values

On Thursday, September 22nd nine UWEX staff and two community members traveled with Deb Ushakow from the Southeastern Oneida Tribal Services (SEOTS) to Tsyunhehkwa "joon-hehn-kwa" (that which sustains us), to tour the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin's organic farm. Judy Knudsen from UWEX-Brown County met us there. Her office has an established partnership with Tsyunhehkwa. On the farm the group saw how Oneida white corn is processed from the field to the market. The tour guides, Eddie and Joneses, allowed the group to take seeds from different plants like Indian tobacco used for prayer and bear beans that were part of their three sisters garden. Four ancient heirloom squash were also given to the group, where the food and seeds were shared with staff from the Milwaukee County UWEX, the Native Wellness Garden, and SEOTS. A representative from the Racine-Kenosha WNEP Program attended as well.

After visiting Tsyunhehkwa, the group went to the Oneida Farmer's Market and bought vegetables, fruit and food from the local vendors. This exposed UWEX staff to fresh ideas on how they could work with

their partner's markets. Then the group traveled to the Oneida Museum where the tour guide gave valuable information on the Oneida history and culture of the past and today.

When asked what the members of the group learned the responses were; "the Oneida are originally from NY state area", "the history behind the 3 sister's creation and lands", "they have a commitment to a sustainable food system", "corn is sacred", "they are very organized which has helped keep the community strong", and "many things!".

This was an opportunity for UWEX staff to learn about Oneida history, culture and current sustainability initiatives while building connections and establishing relationships. Expanding their knowledge of the Oneida community is important since roughly 2,000 of 16,000 Oneida people live in the Milwaukee area.

Another professional development opportunity that came out of the outreach work this summer was an invitation to a training held by Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center. Since Ignace staff were formally introduced to UWEX Milwaukee County staff, Stacey Mattson invited UWEX MC staff to a free and evidence-based suicide prevention training that they conducted for community members. It was a short-notice invitation, but three UWEX MC staff were able to attend, and left the training with a QPR Gatekeeper Certificate. This contributes to lifelong learning and expanding UWEX MC's reach for teaching and ability to serve the public.

ii) [Fosters teamwork and collaboration with other agencies, campuses, or colleagues](#)

Katy and Eloisa identified groups UWEX has worked with in the past as well as other Native American organizations Katy was familiar with. Representatives of 9 different Native American organizations (Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center (GLIHC), Southeastern Oneida Tribal Services (SEOTS), Indian Council of the Elderly (ICE), WI Indian Elders Committee (WIEC), WI Pink Shawl Initiative, American Indian Council on Alcoholism (AICA), Indian Community School (ICS), Electa Quinney Institute (EQI) at UW-Milwaukee, and the Native American Taskforce (NATF) of UWEX) affiliated with United Minds. Seven Milwaukee County educators (faculty and academic staff) from all 4 core program areas of UWEX attended one or more of the meetings. By developing these relationships, we are expanding access to new organizations and exposing UWEX to potential employees. The meetings created an environment for relations to develop.

After the first meeting Katy was able to set up a separate meeting with Amy Tromp, the principal of ICS, and Deb Mcrae from Wehr Nature Center (WNC). This connected teachers from ICS to participate in free water quality training being offered through WNC. ICS is also a neighbor of WNC, and now that ICS and WNC are acquainted with each other there is a possibility for working together on future events, projects or programs.

Also fostering collaboration among the Native American community in Milwaukee, the advisory group brought up that the Milwaukee Area Indian Resource Network (MAIRN) was not updated since January of 2015. Marsha Tietz of UWEX is helping to update this community resource document. We added the UWEX NATF (Native American Task Force) to the document which will help connect Native Americans in the Milwaukee area to UWEX resources provided by UWEX County offices in Wisconsin. The NATF also agreed to post this resource on their website to help share the document digitally.

It was brought to our attention at the United Minds meeting that the Electa Quinney Institute (EQI) of UW-Milwaukee was not on the MAIRN list. EQI holds summer camps for Native American students all around Wisconsin, and this year they did not reach their maximum capacity. Katy connected EQI with the NATF, who works closely with youth in their communities around the state. NATF will help recruit new students for the pre-college opportunity.

Katy and Eloisa attended two NATF meetings, one in Crandon, WI and the other in Lac Du Flambeau, WI. At both meetings we reported to the NATF group about our efforts through this grant. We received valuable feedback and suggestions from the group and began building relationships with the members of the group. They value the work that being done and hope to continue building relations with the Native American community in Milwaukee.

iii) Incorporates the use of other funders and/or in-kind support

There were 12 people at the first meeting (5 Community Leaders), 16 people at the second meeting (8 Community Leaders) and 10 people at the third meeting (4 Community Leaders). The meetings lasted for 2 hours each.

We used the SEOTS and Indian Community School locations for the meetings free of charge. Also, when planning the trip to Tsunhehkwa, SEOTS volunteered their van to transport the group to the farm, and Deb Ushakow made the arrangements for the trip on her own time.

iv) Includes a new program direction that may be replicated

There is room for much more work on building and maintaining partnerships with UWEX MC, the NATF of UW Colleges and the Native American population of Milwaukee through many different venues. One example is that the method of delivery for the MAIRN list (community resource document) to the Native American population needs to be improved for it to be useful. This initiative is replicable. It requires someone to staff or help staff project that is Native American to build bridges between UWEX and Native American communities.

v) Focuses on reaching new audiences

Many people in the Native American community did not know about UWEX or what UWEX does, so this summer many community leaders learned about UWEX and NATF of UWEX and shared that knowledge with the 9 organizations they are a part of.

vi) Exposes potential employees to UWEX

By expanding UWEX MC's access to new organizations we are exposing UWEX staff to potentially new employees.

b) Project Objectives/Expected Outcomes (include plan for sharing results with colleagues and show how project may generate cost savings to a community)

The project goal of connecting 15-20 Native American community leaders/educators in Milwaukee County with UWEX initiatives has been reached and exceeded. Thirteen community leaders from 9 different Native American organization heard from UWEX PC's about the work that they do. It is expected that those community leaders took that information back to their co-workers and shared that information with others. In turn, seven UWEX PC's came and listened to Native American community

leaders about their initiatives and thought about how that work might intersect with their own. Collaboration of resources, ideas and services happened in many forms this summer. Attempts to connect the NATF of UWEX programs to Native Americans in Milwaukee have been made through my work but it is something that needs to be continued and expanded on.

c) Estimated number of participants/clients impacted inside and outside East-Metro Region

100

d) Project Timeline (include your planned activities)

April:

- Katy attended the WIEA conference to gather ideas, resources and feedback
 - Obtained 10 contacts and received valuable program information

May:

- Outreach plan created
- Reached out to 10 community leaders/members and told them about my project and the first meeting
- Began gathering UWEX program and resources information to create handout for first meeting
 - Developed document of UWEX programs and resources (create a document of UWEX's resources to share with at least 15 American Indian organizations and community leaders in Milwaukee, while receiving information on resources in the American Indian community to share with UWEX's educators for follow up partnership opportunities)

June:

- Named the group Uniting Minds
- Katy and Eloisa attended NATF meeting in Crandon, WI
 - Gathered NATF program and resources information
 - Created a NATF resource document for community leaders/members based on work of Matt Calvert and my own listening at meetings
- Held the first Uniting Minds meeting at Southeastern Oneida Tribal Services

July:

- Planned and facilitated the second Uniting Minds meeting at Indian Community School
- Planned for WI State Fair information booth
- Organized a meeting with Deb McRae and Amy Tromp to discuss professional development opportunities for teachers at Indian Community School

August:

- Prepared/printed information documents about Native American tribes in WI and USA for WI State Fair booth

- Third United Minds meeting held at Indian Community School. Brian Gauthier, UWEX's NATF chair, spoke to group via phone; He explained the NATF and the interest in identifying opportunities to work together.
- Exploratory meeting held between UW Milwaukee Electa Quinney Institute staff and Eloisa and Katy.

September

- Community members and 7 UWEX staff went on the trip to Tsyunhehkwa, Oneida Museum and Oneida Farmer's Market
- Discussion with Lisa Anderson from Gerald Ignace Health Center to collaborate on work
- Katy attended Milwaukee First Nation's Health Coalition (MKEFNHC) meeting at Ignace

e) Evaluation Plan

At the end of the third meeting Katy handed out a five question survey to find out how people felt about the effectiveness of the meetings. Out of nine people, eight completed the surveys. Five out of eight said that they learned about an organization they didn't know about before.

When asked, "Have you done any of the following as a result of these meetings? (circle all that apply)"; six out of eight circled "shared or received resources"; one person circled "shared/received services"; two people circled "partnered on a project"; and one person circled "nothing".

Also, there was a five-question before and after survey for the people that attended the Tsyunhehkwa trip. This data is forthcoming.

Assessment by both UWEX Milwaukee County staff and members of United Minds felt that ongoing communications and mutual support is needed. **The question is how does this continue?**