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THE AMERICAN INDIAN LAW CENTER, INC. AWARDED MACARTHUR FOUNDATION FUNDS SUPPORTING AN EQUITABLE RECOVERY

The grant will support the American Indian Law Center, Inc.'s work to advance self-determination of Indigenous peoples.

ALBUQUERQUE, NM – August 9, 2021 — The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation has awarded the American Indian Law Center, Inc. a grant for its work to provide training and technical assistance to tribes, tribal organizations, and tribal courts; legal services and policy analysis to tribal governments; and preparatory legal education to individuals.

The grant is part of roughly \$80 million in awards MacArthur announced last week in support of the foundation's [Equitable Recovery](#) initiative, centered on advancing racial and ethnic justice. The initiative is funded by MacArthur's [social bonds](#), issued in response to the crises of the pandemic and racial inequity.

“The American Indian Law Center, Inc. is delighted to receive a grant from the MacArthur Foundation in recognition of our transformative work impacting Indian Country,” said its Director, Helen B. Padilla, Esq. “Our flagship program, the Pre-Law Summer Institute, has shaped the career prospects and paths of hundreds of American Indian and Alaska Native law school graduates, including U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland—the first indigenous person to serve on a President’s cabinet. Our organization’s impact extends to many tribal nations, governments, and tribal courts critical to the work of addressing the complex challenges of tribal self-determination and tribal sovereignty.”

“As we emerge from this moment of crisis, we have an opportunity to improve the critical systems that people and places need to thrive. Our systems and structures must be rebuilt,” said MacArthur President John Palfrey. “We are committed to ensuring that our response to the pandemic is focused on supporting the reimagining of systems that create a more just, equitable, and resilient world.”

About the American Indian Law Center, Inc.

Established in 1967, the AILC is the oldest existing Indian-managed and Indian-operated legal and public policy organization in the country serving to strengthen, promote, and honor self-sustaining American Indian and Alaska Native communities through education, training, and leadership.

The American Indian Law Center (AILC) was established in 1967. It became a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation in 1977. It is the oldest existing Indian-managed and Indian-operated legal and public policy organization in the United States. AILC’s work is devoted to three main areas:

- [Pre-Law Summer Institute;](#)
- [Legal Services and Policy Analysis for Tribal governments; and](#)
- [Southwest Intertribal Court of Appeals.](#)

The American Indian Law Center, Inc. is one of 15 organizations receiving grants totaling \$16 million that advance the “Self-determination of Indigenous Peoples” focus area of the MacArthur Foundation’s initiative, which supports Indigenous communities in their autonomous pursuit of a recovery guided by their priorities, cultures, and practices.

To advance racial and ethnic justice, MacArthur also is funding work in three other areas:

- **Racial Justice Field Support:** combats anti-Blackness by supporting Black-led and -focused philanthropic organizations. MacArthur also will take a leadership role in positioning reparations and racial healing as issues that philanthropy helps to meaningfully address (37 grants totaling \$36 million).
- **Public Health Equity and COVID-19 Mitigation and Recovery:** supports improving access to resources for immediate health challenges while advancing new policies, models, and structures for a more equitable and resilient public health sector in the future (35 grants totaling \$22 million).
- **Equitable Housing Demonstration Project:** supports restoring communities and reducing incarceration and housing instability by generating an array of housing solutions that can help to permanently end the use of jails and prisons as housing of last resort (\$5 million).

MacArthur identified the areas through a participatory process with a [diverse group of external advisors](#), who informed its strategic approach. This process aimed to center the voices of communities that are affected by the Foundation’s decisions and have a stake in the grantmaking outcomes.

This is the first time the American Indian Law Center, Inc. has received a grant from MacArthur. Almost two-thirds of the awards establish new grantee relationships, and most grantees are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color-led or -serving. The grants also reflect MacArthur’s global reach: 45 percent of the new funding supports work outside the U.S., including 12 percent in India, and 14 percent in Nigeria, where MacArthur has offices.

Equitable Recovery Initiative

In the fall of 2020, MacArthur established a \$125 million Equitable Recovery Initiative. The Foundation deployed \$40 million of bond proceeds through 24 grants. Initial grants [focused on](#) strengthening voter mobilization and election protection, addressing anti-Black racism, and supporting Native Americans impacted by COVID-19. Grants also supported Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous [arts organizations](#) in Chicago, [technology and justice](#), and a [fund for social entrepreneurs](#) advancing racial equity.

View [all Equitable Recovery grantees](#).

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