

2025 Food Systems Internship Study: Understanding Kansas Tribal Foodways & Identifying Potential Tribal-County Partnerships Through Relationship Building

Study drafted by Star Her Many Horses, Douglas County Food Systems Intern for the Douglas County Food Policy Council | Indigenous Food Systems Working Group



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Food Systems Internship Study Development

Goal

Learn what Indigenous food systems look like statewide and evaluate in what ways tribes are contributing to their nations foodways. Collect information through this study and determine how similar initiatives can better serve Douglas County's Indigenous population's needs in connection to the Indigenous Food Systems Study and Action Plan (IFSSAP) and the Douglas County Food Policy Council's Indigenous Food Systems (IFS) working group.

Research Aims

- (1) Bridge the gap between county-tribal relationships
- (2) Understand the barriers of these relationships
- (3) Explore and understand statewide Indigenous food systems.



Project Objectives

- (1) To **identify Indigenous food systems** programs, food entrepreneurs, land stewards, and farmers.
- (2) Explore how these initiatives **support tribal members** and contribute to local foodways.
- (3) Identify parts of findings that can contribute to future projects in partnership and **collaboration** with IFSSAP goals and the development of an Indigenous foodways cultural center and grocer pilot in Douglas County, Kansas.
- (4) Gain an understanding of areas of **focus in Indigenous foodways**.
- (5) To gain experience in **tribal-county government collaborations**.



Study Approach

- First, **establish connection and develop consistent & respectful relationship with Tribal communities**. Initial community/department visits prior to project interviews.
- Successful contact with $\frac{3}{4}$ of the federally recognized Tribes in Kansas:
 1. Sac & Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas & Nebraska
 2. Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation (PBPN),
 3. Ioway Tribe of Kansas & Nebraska
- Interviews conducted with the PBPN & the Ioway Tribe of Kansas & Nebraska
- Interviews:
 1. Collection of Qualitative data
 2. Transcription & coding using thematic analysis



Kansas Office of the Governor of Native American Affairs





Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation



JOIN US FOR A BIO BLITZ!

A BioBlitz focuses on finding and identifying as many plants, insects, birds and other species as possible in a short timeframe

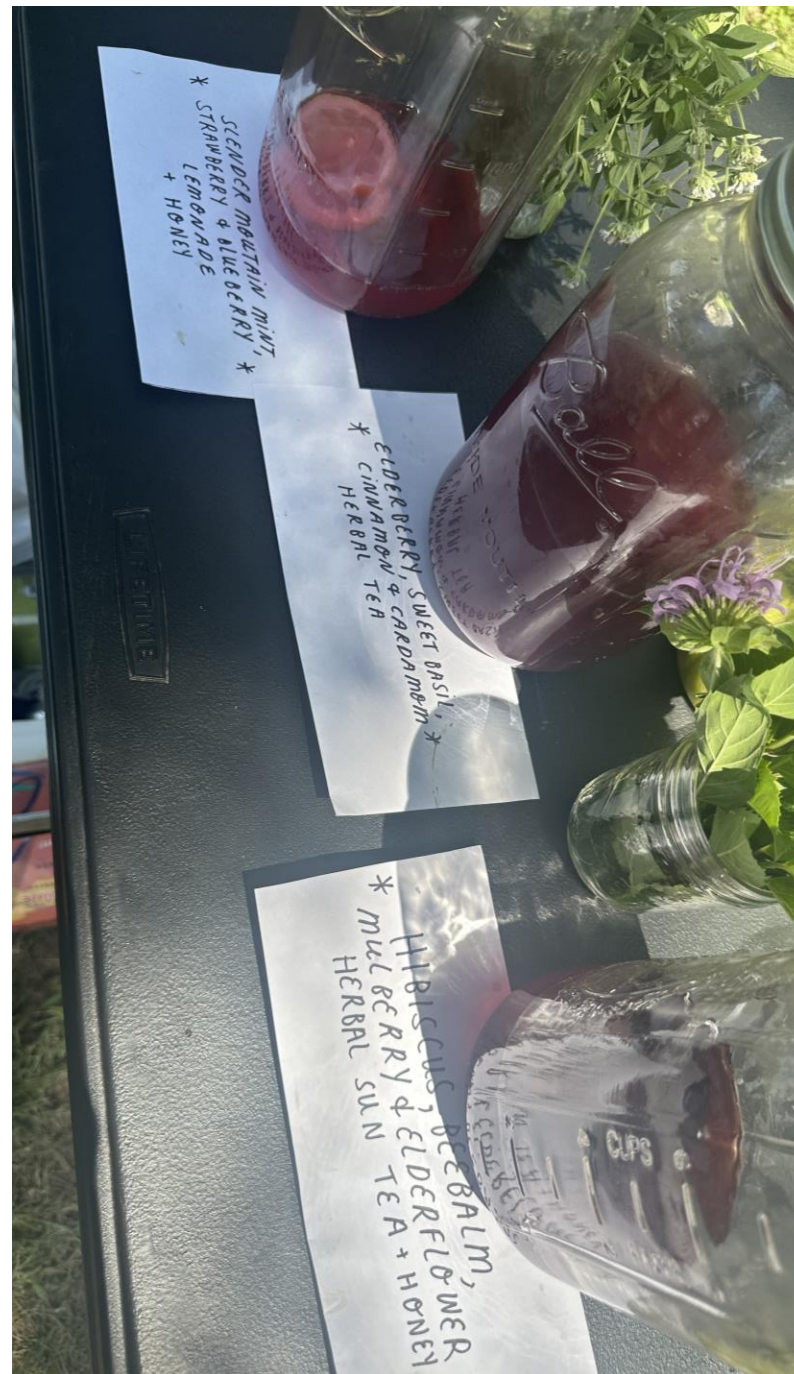
FRIDAY AUGUST 22
Powwow grounds
8pm-??
*Night bugs! Learn about insects under a blacklight!

SATURDAY AUGUST 23
White Cloud Health Center
Walking Trail Pavilion
9am-12pm
*Lunch provided after at the Rock Building

his is an opportunity for our loway community to be
ors together learning more about our lands and culture
lose-toed shoes, long pants, and gloves encouraged

For More Information, contact
bramey@lowas.org
Hosted by: loway Land and Water Department





loway Tribe of Kansas & Nebraska

Interview Questions

1. What kinds of food sovereignty programs or services are available in your community?
2. How do you let people in your community know about these programs or services?
3. What progress has your community made in building or improving its food system?
4. How does your work support or help the Indigenous people in your community?
5. Would you be open to working with Douglas County to support Indigenous people and their food systems here?
6. What challenges or difficulties do you face in supporting food needs in your Indigenous community?
7. How would you describe your community's Indigenous foodways or food system? What parts of it are most important?



Analysis of Tribal Food Systems & Current Operations

Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation

- Development of the Food Sovereignty Program: construction of Food Sovereignty building (mercantile, meat processing facility, community accessible kitchen, learning space)
- Community garden, individual garden plot assistance
- Community orchard
- Community workshops: harvesting, seed saving, processing, etc.
- Buffalo herd

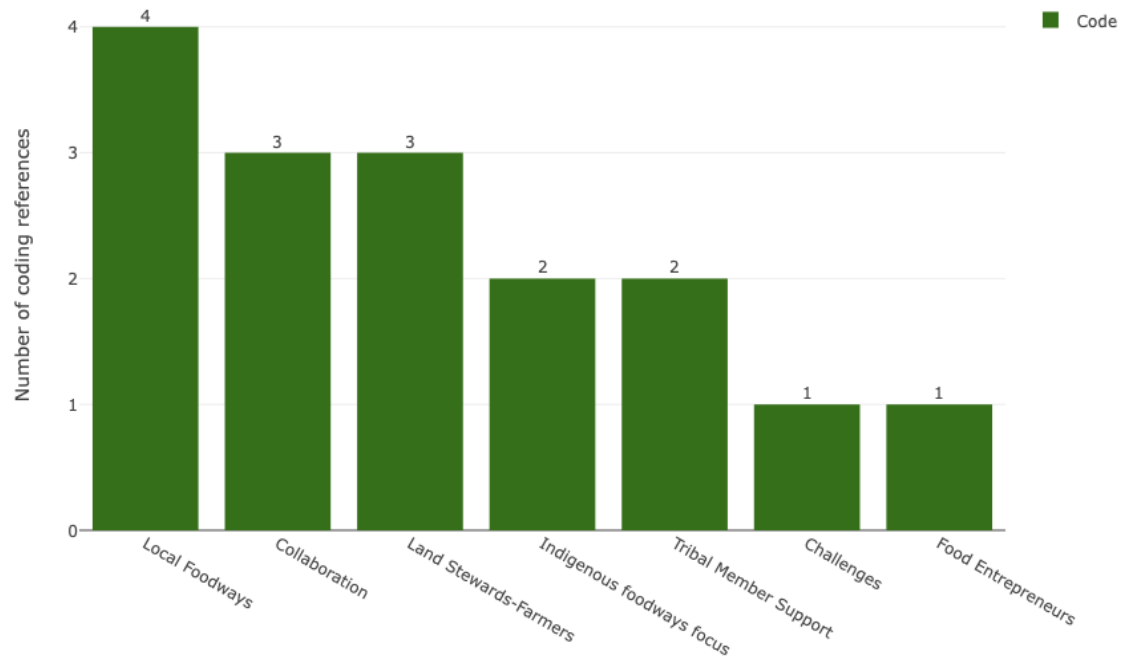
Ioway Tribe of Kansas & Nebraska

- Ioway Farms, Ioway Bee Farms (industrial agriculture, also adapting to regenerative agriculture practices).
- Greenhouse & produce production
- Traditional & medicinal plant gardens
- Local meat production including beef, poultry
- Ecosystem (prairie, woodland) restoration efforts that also contribute to the food system
- Commodity food program
- Food is Medicine Program, provides food boxes
- Community farmers markets

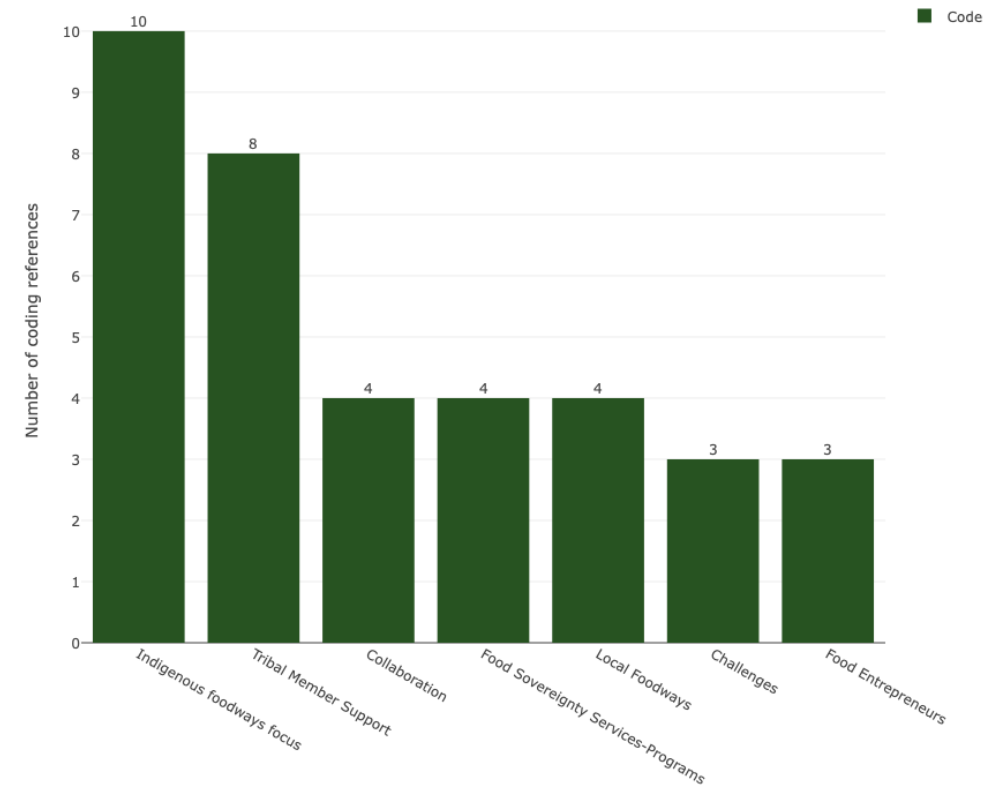


Thematic Analysis Results

B. Ramey (Ioway Tribe of Kansas & Nebraska) Interview 10/9



M. Williamson (Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation) Interview 8/1



Challenges & Potential Collaborations Identified

Challenges

- Securing funding to develop programs as desired (PBPN)
- Staffing for day-to-day operations and necessary labor (PBPN)
- Integration of education into all aspects of food sovereignty programing, to increase community investment (PBPN)
- Decreasing dependency on industrial agricultural practices, systemically & logistically (loway)

Collaborations

- Knowledge of potential funding opportunities & support
- Tribal member entrepreneurial development resources,
- Potential crossover w/ farmer's markets
- Inclusion in the IFSSAP goals (Indigenous grocer and education space)
- Support of Tribal members who reside in Douglas County i.e. Land access & resource education



Policy Recommendations for the Douglas County Food Policy Council



Policy Recommendation #1 Collaborative Food System Building

We are committed to collaborative food system building with Tribal Nations as an expression of sovereignty, community well-being, and cultural continuity. This includes working in partnership with the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas, the Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska, the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, and the Ioway Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, as well as tribes with historical ties to Kansas.



Policy #1 Collaborative Food System Building

Core Indigenous Focus Areas

1. **Food System Building:** Collaborating on sustainable and culturally grounded food systems that strengthen local and regional food networks.
2. **Food Access:** Advancing equitable access to healthy, traditional, and local foods through shared infrastructure, distribution strategies, and resource sharing.
3. **Food Businesses:** Supporting the growth of Tribally owned and Tribally aligned food enterprises that foster economic sovereignty, local workforce development, and intertribal trade.

These collaborative efforts will be guided by Tribal leadership and advisory input, ensuring that decision-making reflects community priorities, respects cultural protocols, and uplifts Indigenous food sovereignty.



Policy #2 Tribal Representation in Decision-Making Processes

To ensure that future initiatives reflect the voices and priorities of Tribal Nations, we commit to establishing meaningful Tribal representation in decision-making processes. This includes the development of a Tribal Member Advisory Board, composed of representatives from the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas, the Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska, the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, and the Ioway Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, as well as tribes with historical ties to Kansas.



Policy #2 Tribal Representation in Decision-Making Processes

The **Intertribal Relations Advisory Board** will serve as a consultative and guiding body, ensuring that tribal perspectives are centered in planning, program development, implementation, and evaluation. This structure affirms our commitment to nation-to-nation relationships, shared governance, and culturally grounded collaboration. This policy is guided by a commitment to reciprocal exchange.

Recognizing that Tribal participation must result in tangible benefits for Tribal Nations. These benefits may include access to funding, resources, co-created programs, capacity-building opportunities, support for Tribally driven initiatives, and the elevation of Tribal knowledge and leadership. In turn, these reciprocal relationships strengthen collective impact, advance shared goals, and honor the sovereignty and self-determination of Tribal Nations.



Recommendations & Concluding Remarks

- **Establish and prioritize a consistent foundation for collaboration with Kansas federally recognized tribes.**
 - Acknowledge and engage with tribes who have historical connections to the region including but not limited to Kaw Nation (Kanza), Osage Nation, and Shawnee Peoples, Delaware Peoples.
 - These include commitments to county-level food systems planning.
- **Seek formal connection & collaboration with the Federally Recognized Tribes of Kansas.** (Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas, the Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska, the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, and the Ioway Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska)
- **Formalize and continue supporting the Indigenous Food Systems working group (IFS) as a standing working group within the DCFPC to ensure the continuation of Indigenous-led priorities and foodways initiatives.**
- **The formation of an Intertribal Relations Advisory Board for Douglas County.**
 - To support our uniquely diverse Indigenous communities.



Q&A



Philamayaye (thank you), Star Her Many Horses

Douglas County Sustainability Office, Food Systems Intern

Shermanyhorses@dgcoks.gov

Starhmf303@gmail.com

