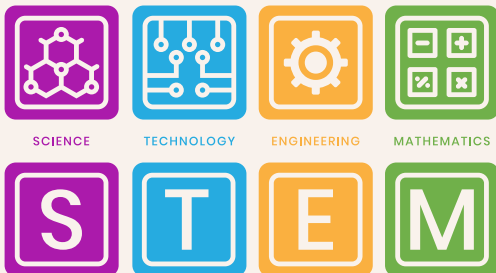**"** STEM is Our FUTURE, for Our CHILDREN and Our PLANET.

– Shawna Newman, President, The NDN Companies Inc.

RESOURCES

- SAME AI/AN STEM Outreach webpage

- SAME K-12 STEM Outreach and Camp COIs

- American Indian Science and Engineering Society

- Tribal Websites

- Local University Systems

- State Indian Affairs Commissions

- Post and Chapters

SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING MATHEMATICS

STEM

" My Mother is a very Traditional Native Woman and did a WONDERFUL job teaching me to PAY ATTENTION to OUR ENVIRONMENT, from the LIFE OF A TREE to how we RESPECT OUR MOTHER EARTH. It's Our CULTURE and BLOOD to be INVOLVED IN STEM, as it's everything that surrounds us.

– Shawna Newman, President, The NDN Companies Inc.

Project development and support provided by:

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For more resources and information, visit
WWW.SAME.ORG/AIAN-STEM

AMERICAN INDIAN/ ALASKA NATIVE (AI/AN)

»» STEM OUTREACH "TOOLBOX"««

The American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) population in the United States continues to lag the general population in education and economic prosperity. There is a great need among the AI/AN communities for support of AI/AN youth to be engaged in education, graduate from high school, and have a desire to pursue post-secondary education through trade schools or a formal college/university education.
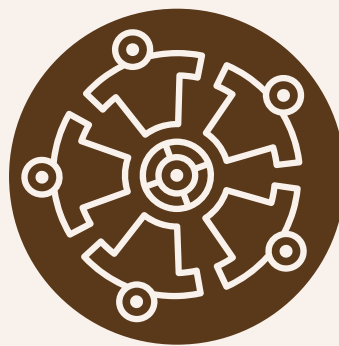
Those among the AI/AN population who choose to pursue these education opportunities provide themselves with opportunities to be successful economically and the ability to return and help improve conditions within their native communities. This "Toolbox" serves as a quick reference point for SAME Posts and Communities of Interest to begin planning/implementing STEM outreach efforts to AI/AN communities.

Society of
SAME
American Military Engineers

HOW TO APPROACH AI/AN COMMUNITIES

- Each community will have their own cultural identity and way of life. Do not treat each community the same, get to know the culture and lifestyle of your local community.

- Reach out to the local community leaders to gain buy-in and develop a plan most likely to impact the community.

- Get on the Tribal Council agenda.
  This initial meeting will set the stage for all future meetings.

  – Show respect, don't be too formal, be yourself.
  – Meetings will usually not be on time
    — And bring up the word clear so it's more of a connected sentence.
  – Don't expect a decision at the end of one meeting; there will be multiple meetings to allow for the decision-making process.
  – Don't come into the meeting with the solution—listen to the community and find out what the needs are and what they are already doing.

- Support existing programs and outreach efforts.

- Be committed and see your plan to the end!

UNDERSTAND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND LIMITATIONS

- There are over 500 federally recognized Tribes, each with its own history, culture, and language.

- Tribes are sovereign nations, and therefore the people can identify with multiple ethnicities. Native people can look like anything.

- There are several different types of communities such as Pueblos, Rio Ranchos, Reservations, Settlements, Villages, and Territories and many AI/AN live outside of native communities.

- Be sensitive to possible cultural differences. For example, in many Tribes it is a sign of respect to avoid eye contact.

- Be humble and respectful. Give everyone a chance to speak and do not cut anyone off.

PRACTICAL STEPS

- Remember that financial hurdles exist for most AI/AN communities. Develop outreach plans that minimize costs for participants. Providing money for STEM equipment is appreciated.

- Bring outreach to the community whenever possible.
  – Reduces the financial hurdle associated with travel.
  – Decreases anxiety associated with leaving the community.

- Sometimes it is best to have the youth come to a special event or location.
  – In this case, provide transportation, meals, and even housing for participants.

- Take advantage of established organizations; look to partner with them. This includes universities, societies such as AISES, and the school system.

- Expect access issues in different forms.
  – Don't let your project become more information gathering. Communities are guarded and there is a history of abuse from research practices.
  – Internet may be hard to come by in some rural communities.