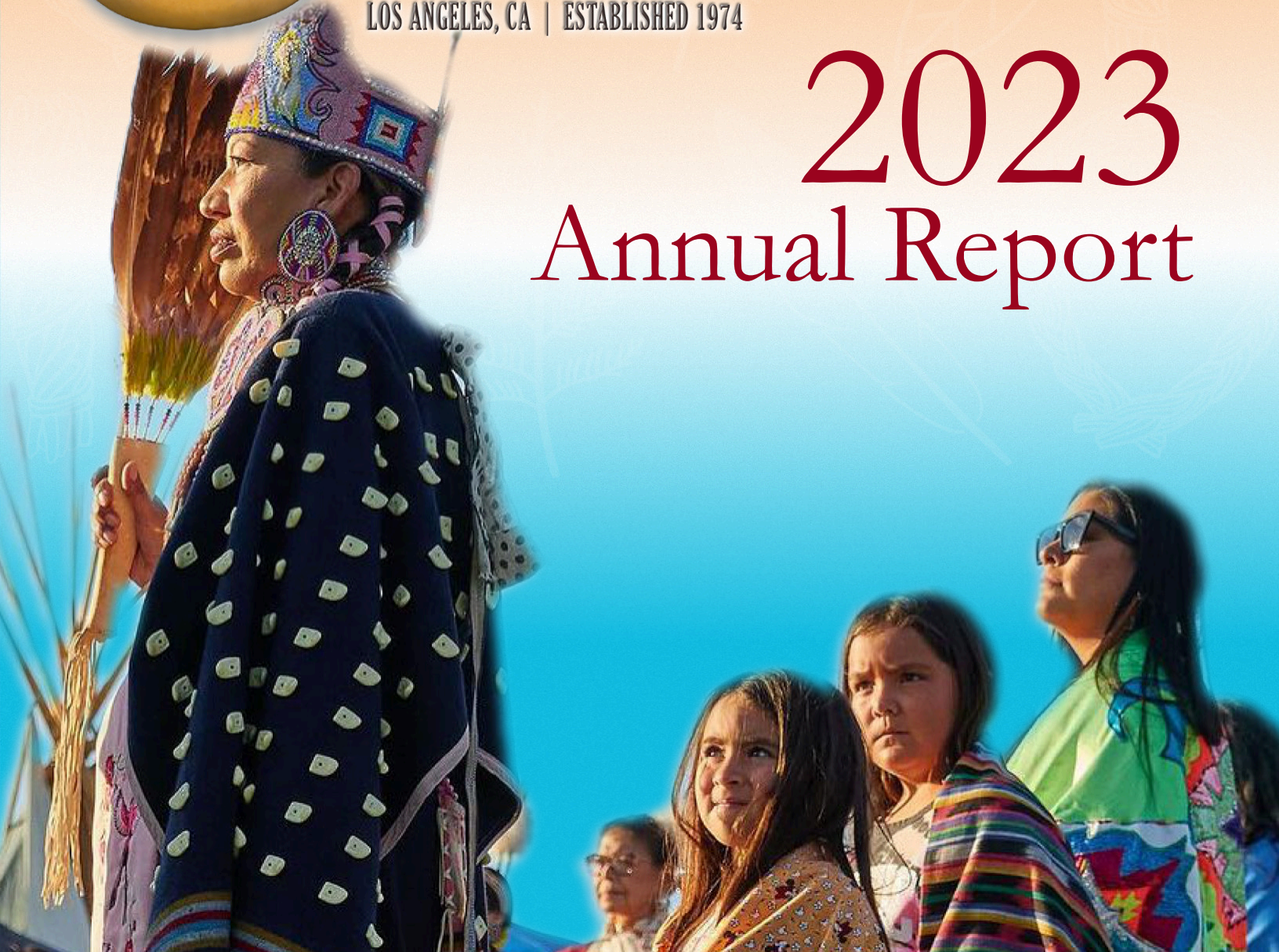




**UNITED  
AMERICAN  
INDIAN  
INVOLVEMENT, INC.**  
LOS ANGELES, CA | ESTABLISHED 1974

# 2023 Annual Report



# UAII 2023 Board of Directors



**Hope Craig**  
Board Chairwoman



**Keith Vielle**  
Board Vice Chairman



**Jamie Ishcomer-Aazami**  
Board Member



**Laura Escobar**  
Board Secretary

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# A Message from the Board Chairwoman

I am thrilled to share exciting news about the future of United American Indian Involvement (UAI). As Chairwoman of the Board of Directors, I am honored to announce a transformative shift in our organizational structure. Our commitment to serving American Indian and Alaska Native communities remains unwavering, and we are embarking on a journey that will empower us to better meet our people's needs.

UAI has adopted a shared leadership model. This model aims to deconstruct the traditional centralized power structure and distribute decision-making authority across our team. By embracing shared leadership, we honor the principles of self-determination and recognize that every voice matters. Together, we will shape the future of UAI with collective wisdom and collaboration.

Continuing our momentum in 2023, UAI will launch several new initiatives in 2024:

UAI's Family Programs will expand to include Indian Child Welfare Advocates. These dedicated professionals will work tirelessly to support Native families, protect children, and strengthen our community bonds.

Recognizing that language and culture are the foundation of UAI, we will launch a new Language and Culture program. Our goal is to preserve and celebrate the rich heritage of American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Through language revitalization, cultural events, and educational initiatives, we will strengthen our identity and resilience.

We will restructure our operations to deliver integrated care services. Whether it's health, education, or social services, UAI will provide holistic support to address the multifaceted needs of our community members.

Our newly designed website is now live. Visit [www.uai.org](http://www.uai.org) to explore resources, learn about our programs, and stay informed about upcoming events. We invite you to engage with us online and provide feedback.

As we celebrate our past, we also look to the future. UAI will harness innovation to address emerging challenges and seize opportunities. Together, we will build a stronger, healthier, and more vibrant community.

**Hope Craig**  
Board Chairwoman



# Our History

**United American Indian Involvement, Inc. (UAI)** was founded in 1974 by two dedicated American Indian women, Babba Cooper (Lakota) and Marian Zucco (Paiute). Building UAI up from the streets of Skid Row in downtown Los Angeles, our founders served people living in poverty and struggling to survive with little to no resources.

UAI was founded in the aftermath of the U.S. federal Termination policy of the 1950s and 1960s. Termination policies eliminated federal support for tribes and Nations, disbanded and initiated programs to assimilate American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs). In the early 1950s, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) introduced the Voluntary Urban Relocation Program. This program relocated American Indian/Alaska Natives from reservations by providing them one-way tickets to designated metropolitan cities, such as Los Angeles. Thousands of American Indian/Alaska Natives arrived to these urban cities without adequate housing, jobs, or financial assistance to survive. Displaced from community and falling into poverty, many American Indians and Alaska Natives living in urban cities encountered social, economic, and health challenges.

By the 1970s, poverty and discrimination continued to be ongoing issues within the urban AI/ANs community in Los Angeles. In 1974, our founders established UAI to address these problems. Our building on 118 Winston St. was located in Skid Row and next to Indian Alley, a narrow alley in downtown Los Angeles where many unhoused AI/ANs created and found community. However, substance abuse, police intimidation and violence were consistent challenges within the Skid Row community.

Working with little funding on one floor of a three-level building, UAI offered AI/ANs non-judgmental substance abuse services and a safe place to recover. We would soon become the landing place for newly arrived AI/ANs to find community in Los Angeles.

In the 1980s, UAI expanded to three floors, increased our staff, and began operating an emergency drop-in shelter. UAI provided free meals, showers, and phone calls for urban American Indian/Alaska Natives to call their family and tribal nations to inform them of their whereabouts.

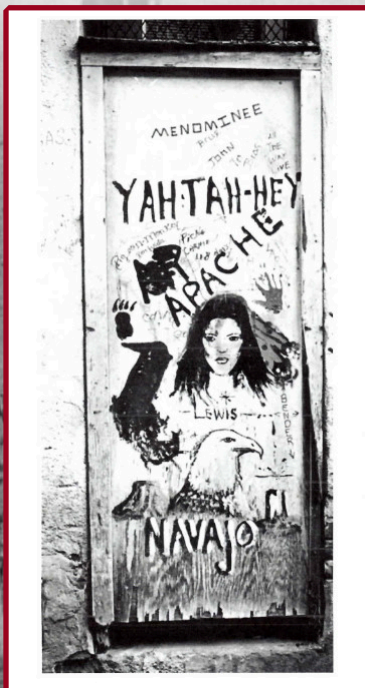


Co-founder, Babba Cooper, Lakota (Left)



UAI original location at 118 Winston St, Los Angeles (1974)

Co-founder Marian Zucco, Paiute (center)



A door within 'Indian Alley' a small public alley way within Skid Row (Right)

# Our History (continued)

Our staff regularly cleaned, cooked, and provided clothing donations to American Indian/Alaska Native men and women seeking our services or residing in our emergency shelter. UAII provided letters of identification to unhoused American Indian/Alaska Natives so they could access their General Relief funds. We advocated for our clients to ensure they were provided necessary services from the LA County Department of Public Social Services.

With the support of our programs, Robert Sundance (Standing Rock Sioux) had received treatment at UAII for alcoholism during his early recovery. He was able to achieve and maintain his sobriety. Robert Sundance would later become an advocate for American Indians in L.A. working to decriminalize the rehabilitation and treatment of alcoholism.

Since our founding, UAII has continued to expand our ability to serve urban American Indian/Alaska Natives in Los Angeles. We have grown to address challenges within our Native community because we are of the community. Our staff includes former clients who excelled in our programs, leaders who once attend our summer youth programs, and team members with family history of urban relocation to Los Angeles themselves.

Now located at 1453 West Temple Street, UAII is the largest non-profit provider of human and health services for American Indian/Alaska Natives in Southern California.

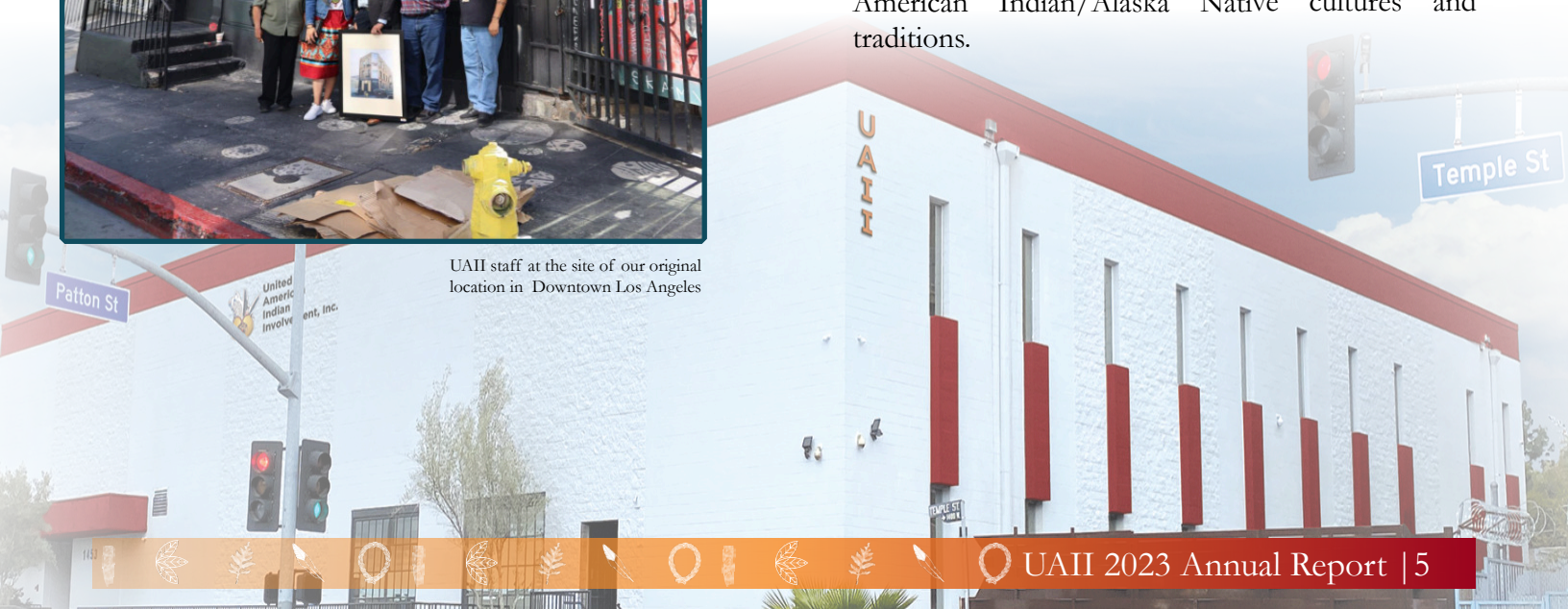
Our programs support community wellness and celebrate our cultural and traditional ways of living at all ages. Children have grown up in our youth programs, and young adults have developed skills through our workforce trainings. Our medical, dental, and behavioral health services care for all ages and continue to provide substance abuse services. Our social services provide comprehensive support to elders, survivors of violence, individuals and families in need of housing, food, and employment. We've extended our advocacy work to support out-of-state tribes through our Tribal and Government Relations department.

**Our Mission** is to promote and support the physical, behavioral, and spiritual well-being of American Indian/Alaska Natives in the urban Los Angeles area by providing comprehensive, integrated services that focus on all age groups and incorporate American Indian/Alaska Native cultures and traditions.



Indian Alley landmark in Los Angeles

UAII staff at the site of our original location in Downtown Los Angeles



# Medical & Community Health



The UAII Community clinic is the only American Indian health clinic for American Indian/Alaska Natives in the greater Los Angeles area. Our team of clinicians, nurses, case managers, health educators and community health workers provide responsive, culturally sensitive services for all ages and range of health needs. Our holistic care services include: medical and preventative care, women's health care, pediatric medicine, case management and counseling, family planning, sexual health services, vaccinations, annual exams and screenings, as well as health education.

Our community health clinic administers primary care services, specialized care, and referrals for American Indian/Alaska Native children, youth, adults, and elders to support their health goals. In 2023, our teams of healthcare professionals attended to over 780 visits for general health needs, substance abuse screenings, and flu/COVID-19 vaccines.

Our skilled pediatric team performs well child care visits, immunizations, and physicals for school, including preparing Native youth for their adventures at our Robert Sundance Summer Camp.

Our Community Health Workers (CHWs) promote healthy living by delivering health education programs, wellness workshops, and community health events.

As we service the largest urban Indian community, in 2023 our ambitious team connected to over 2,415 community members across 81 different outreach events.

While the federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) for COVID-19 formally ended in May 2023, our team of community health workers remained vigilant. We increased our outreach and wellness events to address rising COVID-19 cases in LA County. Throughout 2023, our team distributed vaccines, masks, rapid tests, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits, and health information about Long Covid. Whether at family wellness events, Powwows in neighboring cities, or during special events, our team provided critical support to combat both the flu and COVID-19 to more than 50 families.

With grant support from the National Council on Aging, our Community Health Workers administered COVID-19 and flu vaccines to elders and community members with disabilities. Notably, during the annual California Native American Day celebration in September, we distributed 130 PPE bags and provided COVID-19 vaccines to more than 20 community members.

UAII Community Health Workers regularly host and attend community events to expand our reach throughout Los Angeles County. Empowering individual wellness practices, we hosted a Women's Wellness event with our behavior health and wellness team to create medicine bags, weave sage bundles, and share important information about women's health.

In collaboration with UCLA and LA County, we hosted their Two-Spirit Wellness Event on July 29<sup>th</sup>. Responding to community needs, we provided free HIV testing and distributed Monkey Pox vaccines to 25 community members. Additionally we promoted information on safe sex practices, distributed condoms, face masks, and hand sanitizers.

Our Community Health Workers are proud to help build safe and healthy Native communities.



# Behavioral Health & Wellness

UAII Behavioral Health and Wellness staff consist of licensed mental health professionals and advocates experienced in offering culturally sensitive care to our American Indian/Alaska Native communities.

We provide adult mental health counseling, case management, crisis intervention, prevention and treatment services for substance abuse, suicide prevention services, and support services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

UAII uniquely provides mental health care services that integrates Holistic Native and Evidence-based methods. We recognize how historical and intergenerational trauma intersect with socio-economic disparities that contribute to the health challenges within our communities. Our team is committed to respecting the various traditions and cultural ways of healing practiced within our diverse community of urban American Indian/Alaska Natives in Los Angeles.

UAII honors the power of our community and traditional healing practices. This year, we coordinated monthly and weekly wellness activities, family outings, cultural workshops, and community building events. Our programs include weekly 'Fatherhood is Sacred', 'Motherhood is Sacred' groups, domestic violence support groups, and monthly family days at the Autry Museum of the American West.

Additionally, we hosted culturally informed activities such as 'Beading is Medicine' workshops, sewing workshops, and art workshops. During our monthly talking circles, our community members engaged in intergenerational peer-support. Our workshops, events, and programs encourage individual and community wellness, and build resilience for families, and individuals of all ages.

Overall, this year UAII held over 60 workshops with more 75 families and hundreds of adults and children.

Within our substance use treatment services, our case management team worked with participants for more than 200 encounters. Our team of professionals counseled over 50 participants throughout our weekly therapy, in-patient and out-patient treatment services.



# Housing & Elder Services



With grant support from the Community Service American Indian Block Grant, our housing and elder services were able to distribute food baskets and both rent and utility financial assistance to our low-income community members. Our goal is to improve their quality of life and health outcomes. In 2023, UAII staff regularly coordinated food distribution, supplying more than 350 meals for adults and elders. Beyond monthly assistance, our team creatively worked to provide 10 low-income families with furniture and appliances to ensure they had safe and comfortable housing.

Working in partnership with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, our team directly referrals eligible households to local family solutions centers, shelters, and homeless service providers. In November, UAII began hosting California Indian Legal Services for on-site and virtual housing rights workshops to ensure safe housing for our people. As we expand, we look forward to partnering with LA Care to increase our outreach.

Our social services team leads senior-focused programs to sustain community bonds. Our events include weekly senior group meetings, art and wellness workshops, and social outings with youth and families. Activities like our monthly Walking Club promoted regular exercise, and medical and dental care presentations encouraged healthy prevention habits. We sustained youth and elder connections at our holiday socials, family wellness days, and youth programs. For our annual 2023 UAII Powwow, we were able to provide transportation for more than 50 elders to attend and celebrate various American Indian/Alaska Native foods, songs, dance, art, and more.





# 2023 UAII Powwow

The annual UAII Powwow was held at the Autry Museum of the American West on November 4<sup>th</sup>. With over 4,000 people in attendance, it was one of our largest Powwows in recent years.

As an alcohol and drug-free event open to all, our Powwows celebrate the diversity of cultural traditions and promote cultural exchange. This 2023 UAII Powwow was immensely successful and shared the diversity of hundreds of different Native American traditions via traditional dance performances, music, food and local Native vendors displaying their art.

Our Powwows also serve as a community space for our partner organizations to further connect with urban American Indian/Alaska Native community members in Los Angeles.

During our 2023 UAII Powwow, hundreds of American Indian/Alaska Native attendees received Native specific information and resources to support access to healthcare, employment, and education.



# Youth Services



UAI youth services are led by our American Indian Clubhouse (AIC). The AIC has supported the development and well-being of American Indian youth for over two decades. Led by our community, AIC activities respect cultural and tribal values and steer programs based on input from our participating youth, parents, and advisory boards.

In 2023, AIC partnered with community service providers to offer free after-school and weekend activities, team sports, leadership opportunities, summer camp, and outdoor programs for more than 230 young people ages 5 - 25 years old.

Our Youth Council program empowers youth to develop leadership skills and lead community service activities. Our leaders educate American Indian youth on local and national issues and set yearly objectives

for programming. The Youth Council invests in shared leadership and honors our cultural roots by using Talking Sticks to ensure that all voices are heard during meetings. Supporting younger teens, the Youth Council coordinated a college tour of UCLA and partnered with the UCLA American Indian Recruitment program to provide tutoring sessions to more than 30 students.



In partnership with California State Parks, our 'Bear Tracks Program' provides enriching outdoor activities to expose urban American Indian youth to experience the physical and mental health benefits of nature.

Our sports program offers Native youth outlets to find community. In 2023, more than 275 youths participated in our basketball, cheer, flag football, and archery activities. The monthly Warrior Archery Club, a well-attended family activity, brought together youths and adults to learn archery and improve their aim.



# Workforce Development

The UAII Workforce development program strives to make an impact by guiding and encouraging eligible American Indian/Alaska Natives to establish a self-sustaining way of life. With grant funding from the Department of Labor, our team consists of workforce specialists, outreach and intake specialists serving more than 300 clients.



In addition to trainings, our supportive services include providing financial assistance to clients to buy work attire for interviews and assisting college students with purchasing textbooks.

In 2023, we launched our new monthly Community Market. Focusing on local vendors, our community markets uplifted local American Indian/Alaska Native vendors in Los Angeles County.

The UAII Workforce team is proud to serve hundreds of clients annually throughout Los Angeles County.

We offer training, support, financial planning, and career services. Our Workforce team assists with identifying resources for participants and empowering them to take actions as steppingstones towards building successful careers.

For each participant, we provide individualized counseling to further develop their skills and establish a clear career path that leads to employment or self-sufficiency.



Our monthly workshops and trainings discussed topics such as financial literacy, investing, credit management, budgeting, savings tips, taxes and career planning.

We are dedicated to equip participants with skills to make successful financial choices.



# Tribal and Government Relations



As an Urban Indian Organization (UIO), we recognize the need to amplify the voices and concerns of American Indians and Alaska Natives in urban areas. With our new Tribal and Government Relations team, we will use our expertise as a UIO to support and manage effective relationships between tribal communities and government agencies.



Our team has already begun building relationships with other Tribal Nations, such as partnering with Cherokee Nation and Tsa-La-Gi Los Angeles Council to host Cherokee Language classes at UAII in 2024. Further, we will continue collaboration with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to shape policies that better serve our community.

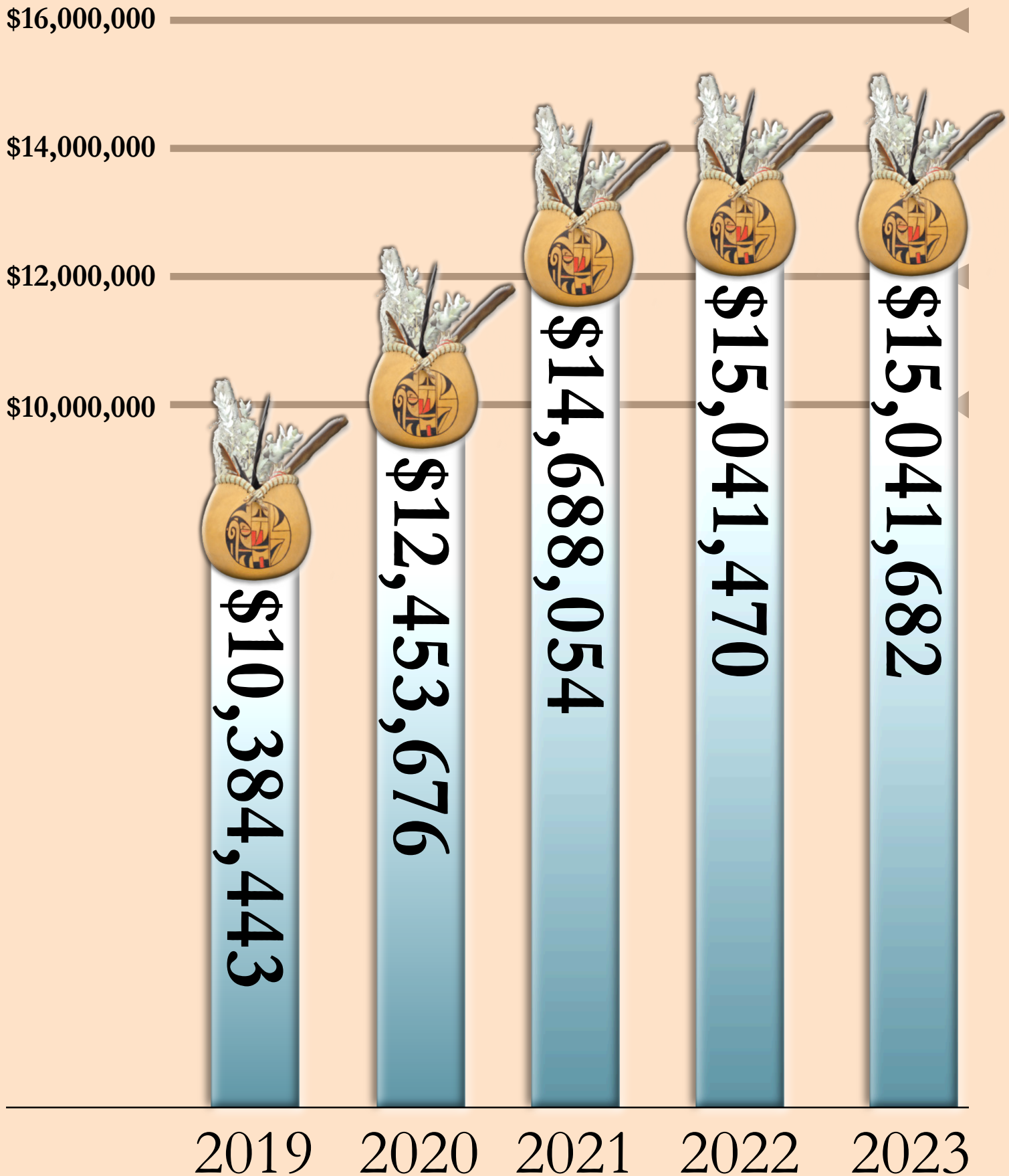
In October 2023, a delegation of UAII staff and leadership traveled to Lahaina, Hawaii in solidarity and support for the Maui survivors of the devastating August wildfires. UAII representatives met with the Council of Native Hawaiian Advancement, survivors of the wildfires, and Native Hawaiian-led community organizations to listen, learn, and

understand how UAII could support their recovery and healing. Bringing our ancestral healing practices and prayers, UAII staff wrapped the Council of Hawaiian Natives in traditional blankets, representing our presence and prayers to help Maui survivors heal.

UAII understands the large tasks Native Hawaiians face to rebuild their homes and recover. In solidarity, UAII pledged \$10,000 to support relief efforts in Lahaina and we encouraged tribes and tribal organizations to match our donation.



# Revenue per Fiscal Year



# FY 2023 Funding Sources

Amalgamated Foundation	JSI
Amity Foundation	Los Angeles County
California Community Foundation	Los Angeles County - Community Arts Impact
California Department of Public Health	Los Angeles County - Department of Mental Health
California Department of Social Services	Los Angeles County - Office of Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
California Endowment	Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
California Healthcare Foundation	National Council on Aging
California State Parks	National Council on Urban Indian Health
Care First Community Investment	OC Healthcare Agency
Center for Diseases Control (CDC)	State of California
Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services	Urban Indian Health Institute
Charles Schwab	US Department of Health and Human Services - Indian Health Services
Delta Dental Foundation	US Department of Labor
Health Net	

# Future Projects

## Family Services Program

We are proud to expand the UAII Family Services Program! This expansion will further support Native American families navigating the complex child family welfare legal system. Social workers are not required to be informed about the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), thus our communities have received inadequate and ineffective advocacy services to protect their families and children. Our expanded team of Family Advocates will work with families and educate social workers to better understand ICWA laws and family rights. Our goal is to keep our families safe and within Native American communities.



Omerlene Thompson,  
Director of Social Services

In 2024, UAII will have served urban American Indian and Alaska Native communities in Los Angeles for 50 years. The same year, our very own Omerlene Thompson will celebrate 41 years of working with UAII!

In 1983, Omerlene began working with the founders of UAII at our original location in Skid Row. Her determination to serve our communities was strong from the start as she regularly obtained donated clothes, shopped for food for families living in nearby hotels, and called local government agencies to get support for impoverished and unhoused community members.

UAII is immensely grateful to Omerlene. We are honored to support Omerlene's leadership as Director of Social Services and as our visionary leader of the UAII Family Services Program.

## Native Day Care & Language and Culture Program

In 2024, UAII will launch our Native Day Care and Language and Culture programs.

These two new programs will significantly enhance the family and cultural services we offer to American Indian/Alaska Native communities in Los Angeles County. These programs will promote and support the language, cultural, physical, behavioral, and spiritual well-being of Native American communities in the greater Los Angeles area.

The Native Day Care and Language and Culture programs will further integrate our culture and traditions in our daily activities and social support services for children and families. They will ensure that American Indian/Alaska Native children grow up with a strong sense of cultural identity. Through incorporating language and culture into educational curriculum, we aim to provide unique experiences that help youth understand their Native heritage.

Our programs will bring together family and elders to strengthen communal bonds and support networks. As platforms for community engagement, they support all age groups in building a foundation for our future generations to thrive.

These programs are crucial steps to promoting health, education, and social support services that honor and revitalize indigenous cultures and traditions.

## UAII Dental Clinic

While UAII has provided dental care screenings to community members and clients, many of our dental services included referring patients to partnering dentists with more capacity.

In summer of 2024, we plan to open our own UAII Dental Clinic!

The UAII Dental clinic will offer preventive services, such as X-rays, prophylaxis for kids and adults, sealants, scaling and root planning, SDF application, and night-guards. Our dental team will be able to treat dental problems with expanded services for root canals, extractions, crowns, and more.



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