

Saint Paul Indians in Action

Strengthening Relationships and Commitments
with Community

May 6, 2025



Goals for Today

- Update on current partnerships and initiatives; Ramsey County with American Indian Community
 - Nicole Beane, American Indian Community Coordinator
- Deep dive: Saint Paul Indians in Action (SIA)
 - Sheri Riemers, Executive Director, Ain Dah Yung Center
 - Kristin Kinney, Executive Director, American Indian Family Center
 - John Poupart, American Indian Policy Center (retired), St. Paul Indians in Action
- Moving Forward with Intention

Land Acknowledgement

Every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy to making the history that led to this moment. Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn to leave their distant homes in hope of a better life, and some have lived on this land since time immemorial. **Truth and acknowledgement are critical to building the mutual respect and connection across all barriers of heritage and difference.**

We are standing on the ancestral lands of the Dakota People. We want to acknowledge the Ojibwe, the Ho Chunk and the other nations of people who also call this place home. **We pay respects to their elders past and present.** Please take a moment to consider the treaties made by the Tribal Nations that entitle non-Native people to love and work on traditional Native lands. Consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today. And please join us in **uncovering such truths at any and all public events.**

The acknowledgement given in the USDAC Honor Native Land guide- edited to reflect Minnesota Tribes. In Review with St. Paul Indians in Action (SIA) and endorsed by Shannon Geshick, Executive Director Minnesota Indian Affairs Council.

The Results of Policy & Systems

- Approximately 3,200 of the 11,000 American Indians in Ramsey County are living in poverty (29%)
- 4 out of 10 American Indian households in the East Metro receive SNAP
- 1.8% of American Indian population had an active MFIP case compared to 0.20% of white population in October 2024
- Just 1 out of 10 American Indian families in the East Metro are homeowners
- American Indian individuals are overrepresented in the Adult Detention Center at 3.3% of bookings while making 0.60% of the population in Ramsey County (2019)
- American Indian children reenter and age out of foster care at a higher rate than any other group (2024)
- The unemployment rate for American Indians in the Twin Cities Metro Area was 8.4% compared to 4.0% rate for total labor force in 2022



The Responsibility of Policy & Systems

Two Countywide Strategic Priorities

- Advancing a Holistic Approach to Strengthen Individuals & Families
- Intergeneration Prosperity for Racial & Economic Inclusion

Data Visibility

- Community Indicators
- Services and Performance Measures

Centering the American Indian Community

- Trust-building through partnership and actions
- Community as experts

The Relationships of Policy & Systems

Focus Area	Scan
Community Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand qualitative data collection: experience with services, connection with resources • Additional qualitative methods: interviews, surveys, focus groups • Provide background context for services: historical policies, legislation, historical trends, disparities • Additional disaggregation by cultural communities, Tribal affiliation, languages spoken and more
Informal Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Works: invite Tribal representatives to advisory and design committees • Housing Stability: regular meetings with American Indian Family Center and Ain Dah Yung for homeless services • Ongoing relationship-building with Indigenous leaders
Formal Relationships	<p>Boards, advisory councils, and committees organized specifically for American Indian community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Attorney: Regular meetings with Family Preservation Committee, Minneapolis American Indian Center, Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Advisory Board, Second Judicial District on monitoring, Social Services staff meetings with Tribes • County Manager, Policy and Planning: “Learning cohort” with St. Paul Indians in Action • Financial Assistance workers at community organizations (American Indian Family Center (AIFC), Department of Indian Work (DIW)) • Public Health, Housing Stability, Social Services, and Workforce Solutions contract specifically with American Indian community agencies • Ain Dah Yung Executive Director is on the Workforce Innovation Board (WIB) of Ramsey County and serves on the youth committee
Bridging County & Community	<p>American Indian Community Coordinator (AICC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Economic Mobility Hub for American Indians • Relationships with Native Community Organizations • Advocating for community and culture in county spaces

Making the Invisible Visible: Relationships, Resilience, and Native Presence in Ramsey County



Introductions

Sheri Riemers

Executive Director
Ain Dah Yung Center



Kristin Kinney

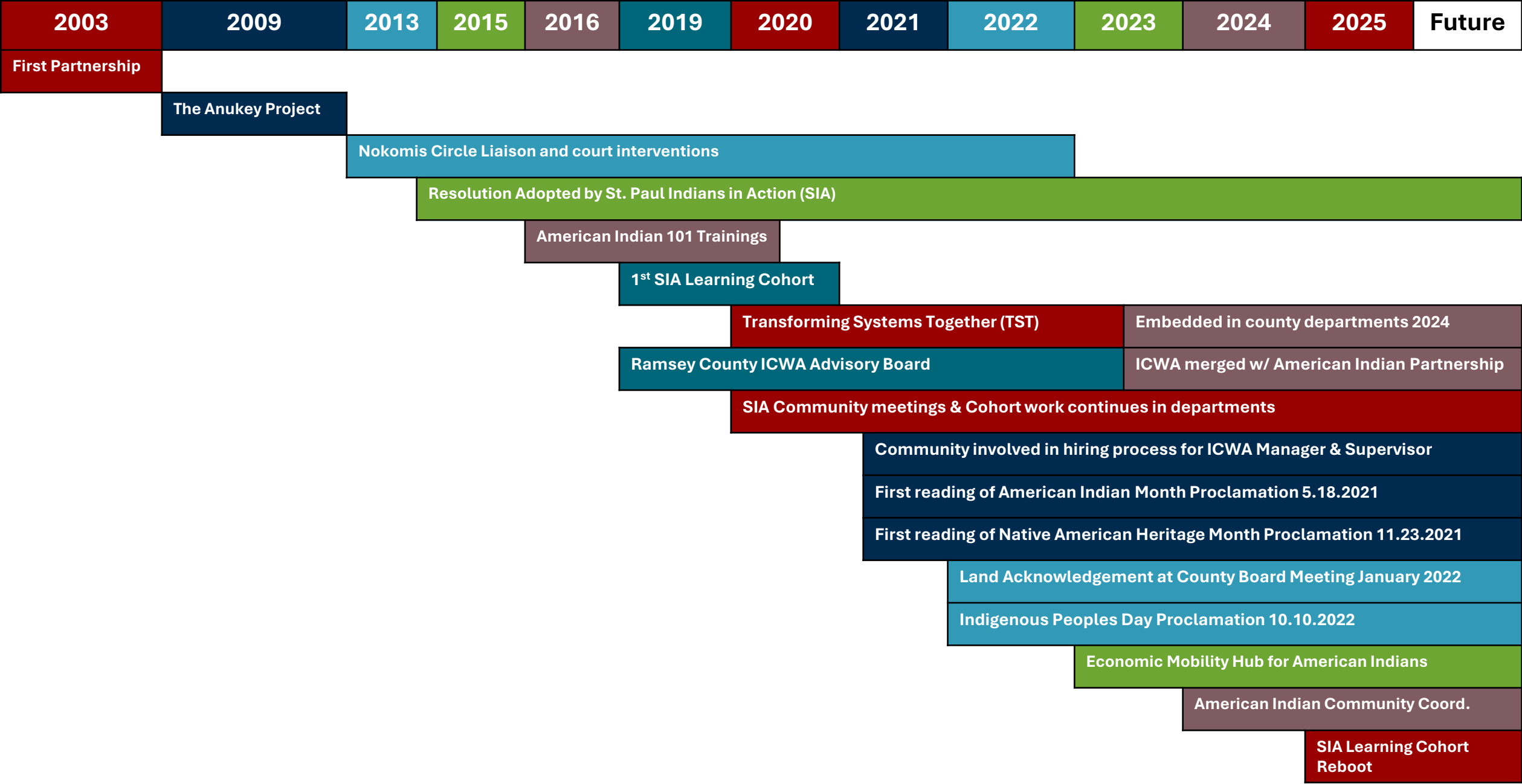
Executive Director
American Indian Family Center



John Poupart

American Indian Policy Center (retired)

Momentum of Community & Systems Work



Our Mission

- Saint Paul Indians in Action (SIA) is a network of American Indian organizations in St. Paul dedicated to advocating for our community.
- Our mission is to address the socioeconomic conditions in the St. Paul Indian community through systems advocacy, policy development and community participation.

Our Purpose

- **Provide a space** where circle discussions and consensus decision making is priority
- **Be the entity** where all St. Paul American Indian agencies, businesses, institutions, etc. can come together and depend upon one another with issues and concerns
- **Provide the Native and non-Native community** with a respectful venue for new ideas and energy and a means to inform

Our Purpose Cont.

- **Be the catalyst for advocacy and change** as needed to protect the best interest of our Native communities and associations
- **Ensure our community** is informed about the work of SLA
- **Be a recognized and respected leadership group** renowned for their ability to transcend the voices of our communities into action plans that benefit our families, children and services

Member Organizations

- Ain Dah Yung (Our Home) Center
- American Indian Family Center
- American Indian Family & Children's Services
- Department of Indian Work - Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul
- Elders' Lodge
- Juel Fairbanks Recovery Services
- Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition
- Montessori American Indian Childcare Center
- Saint Paul Indian Education Program
- St. Paul Youth & Learning Center – Ho-Chunk Nation
- Tiwahe Foundation
- Wakan Tipi Center – Lower Phalen Creek Project
- Women of Nations

SIA Learning Cohort

- Formalized collaborative of committed leadership from SIA and Ramsey County
- Designed to create a platform that will effectively demonstrate the vital importance of American Indian culture
- Ensure traditions that support American Indian community healing, health, and well-being are incorporated into all that we do together



Goals

- Shared learning and appreciation of the uniqueness of American Indian culture generally and specifically within Minnesota and Ramsey County
- Ramsey County procurement policies and practices that impact the solicitation, selection, service delivery and evaluation of contracts with American Indian community-based organizations
- Designing service delivery models that are accessible, welcoming and effective to Ramsey County residents that identify as members of the American Indian Community

Moving Forward with Intention

- Structure and learning goals of cohort
- Cohort focus areas, recommendations, things to share for consideration, including;
 - Children and Family Services
 - Economic & Workforce Development
 - Elder & Youth Services
- Asking for continued engagement and support from Ramsey County leadership
- Data and reporting

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