



Kemāmaceqtaq: We're All Moving

2018-2023 Project Summary





Menominee Nation

The Menominee Nation originated over 10,000 years ago at the mouth of the Menominee River, 60 miles east of the present-day Menominee Reservation. Prior to European settlement, Menominee people occupied over 10 million acres of land across what is now Wisconsin and Michigan. Today, the Menominee Nation is situated within the Menominee Reservation, a 235,523 acre land base established by an 1854 treaty with the United States government. Sharing much of its borders with Menominee County, Menominee Reservation includes over 407 miles of roads, 187 rivers and streams, and 53 lakes. The total population is approximately 4,197, with over 75% of the population identifying as Native American. Members of the Menominee Nation live in five main communities: Keshena, Neopit, Middle Village, Zoar, and South Branch.

The Menominee Nation is rich with community assets that have persisted despite years of historical trauma and systematic, socio-political oppression. The ongoing effects of settler colonialism has limited access to healthy food (affecting 14% of Menominee County compared to 5% across the state) and only 11% have adequate access to exercise opportunities and places for physical activity. In 2020, 15% of adults in Menominee County were living with diabetes and 47% of adults had a BMI of 30 or greater. Yet, the Menominee Nation is resilient and a leader in applying a culturally-rooted, asset-based approach to health.

Starting in 2018 with funds from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) High Obesity Program, Menominee partners launched strategic efforts to improve access to healthier foods and promote everyday physical activity. With activities led by the Menominee County/Nation Division of Extension staff and the University of Wisconsin-Madison in partnership with community members, leaders, agencies, and organizations, this opportunity enhanced existing initiatives and developed new initiatives to support Menominee ways of being.





Community Hopes and Vision

Throughout the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project, youth, adults, and elders provided insights and leadership to shape strategies that would increase access to healthier foods and places for physical activity. Menominee community members shared hopes and goals through community needs assessments, talking circles, and surveys, including:

- Healthy nutrition standards in key community settings
- Language and culture revitalization to support health
- Menominee food sovereignty for healthy, affordable, and traditional foods
- A community space for personal and commercial safe food processing
- Intergenerational programming for youth, family, and elders
- Greater accessibility to everyday destinations for youth
- More and enhanced sidewalks and crosswalks
- Revitalized parks and recreation spaces
- Support for community agriculture through equipment loans and beginning farmers programs

From these community hopes, the team articulated a project vision:

- (1) Center Menominee culture, language, and traditions
- (2) Strengthen a culture of wellness and nutrition
- (3) Increase access to places for healthier foods
- (4) Increase access to safe, everyday physical activity

The team also decided on a name for the project: Kemāmaceqtaq, or “We’re All Moving.”

This name highlights Menominee people as “movers” and draws connections between movement and cultural teachings.





Approach and Strategies

The Kemāmaceqtaq project worked to nurture health in the Menominee Nation by increasing availability of healthy foods and expanding access to everyday physical activity.

The Kemāmaceqtaq project involves three strategies:

- (1) **Establish nutrition standards** in key community settings
- (2) Collaborate with partners to improve the food system and **increase access to healthier foods**
- (3) Collaborate with partners to establish **new or improved active transit systems**, like sidewalks, paths, and bicycle routes

Each strategy included multiple initiatives that integrate Menominee traditions, culture, language, and intergenerational engagement.





Healthy Nutrition Standards

Kemāmaḩeqtaḩ team members collaborated with community partners through a process of reviewing and revising nutrition standards to promote food practices that care for the environment and increase access to high quality, nutritious, and Menominee foods. The team used guidance from the Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities and knowledge of Indigenous and Menominee food practices to shape these standards. To support implementation, the Kemāmaḩeqtaḩ project provided key equipment, like water- and ice-filling stations, learning opportunities for food service staff, and community outreach events, like a wild rice giveaway for Head Start families.

Refining Healthy Nutrition Standards Process

- (1) **Identify values** for the institutional partner related to food, health, and sustainability and define goals
- (2) **Review current policies** with an Organizational Self-Assessment of Policies and Practices and compare to goals
- (3) **Suggest changes or new policies** based on the Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities and knowledge of Menominee food practices
- (4) **Revise policies and pass standards**, according to the approval processes of the institution
- (5) **Support everyday implementation** of the new or enhanced standards for example, by providing reusable water bottles, dish bags, and biodegradable or compostable serveware
- (6) **Audit passed standards** and provide additional support as needed

By Summer 2023, five key institutional partners had passed and implemented new or enhanced healthy nutrition standards:

- 4-H Youth Development Clubs in Neopit and Keshena
- Menominee County courthouse and public facilities building
- Menikānaehkem, a community organizing group
- Menominee Early Childhood Services – Head Start and Early Head Start
- College of Menominee Nation

These changes reach approximately 700 community members in Menominee Nation/County, including children, youth, adults, and elders.





Menominee Nation 4-H Clubs

Menominee 4-H Youth Development is committed to cultivating safe environments that promote health, cultural teachings, sustainability, and physical activity for participating families and the broader Menominee community.

In August 2020, both Menominee 4-H clubs in Keshena and Neopit adopted a proactive and culturally-appropriate nutrition policy to foster an environment where healing and wellness thrive. The policy increases nutritious food offerings during meetings and in 4-H concessions, enhances public education around nutritious Menominee foods, and encourages sustainability and waste reduction. Menominee 4-H concessions utilize a competitive pricing strategy to provide discounts for bringing reusable dishes or dishbags and offer only compostable or recyclable serveware. Menominee 4-H prioritizes youth involvement and club members are passing on knowledge and positive attitudes towards healthy food to each other. The policy developed and implemented by Menominee 4-H serves as a model for other organizations in the Menominee community.





Food Systems

The rich food traditions of the Menominee Nation have been disrupted by the imposition of unhealthy food systems and systemic barriers to traditional harvesting practices for fish, berries, wild rice, squash, and game. Many Menominee community members face difficulties in acquiring preferred foods due to a shortage of local growers and a lack of equipped spaces to process and preserve them. Community members are seeking spaces, resources, and learning opportunities to access, process, and preserve healthy, Menominee food.

Harvest of the Moon

The Kemāmaceqtaq team created the Harvest of the Moon curriculum to strengthen connections to food through the integration of the Menominee language, Menominee Moons, Menominee art, and Indigenous recipes. Harvest of the Moon materials are being used in a variety of community settings, including schools, afterschool programs, senior meal sites, 4-H meetings, and recreation centers. Others around the United States and the world have accessed the online curriculum to learn more about Menominee foodways and to draw ideas for their own communities.

Community Kitchen

The Kemāmaceqtaq team worked with local partners to establish a community space to support the revival of Menominee traditional food practices. Community members had longstanding interest in the processing and preserving of Menominee fruits, vegetables, wild rice, game and fish, and in accessing space and learning opportunities to regain these skills. When the community kitchen is completed, members of the Menominee Nation will have space, equipment, and access to workshops to practice skills in processing and preserving local and traditional foods.

Intertribal Processing and Preserving Network

The Intertribal Processing and Preserving Network was launched by the Kemāmaceqtaq team in 2019 and includes representatives from Menominee County/Nation Division of Extension and Native Nations throughout Wisconsin. More than 80 participants from 6 tribal nations in Wisconsin have come together online to discuss topics like safe food handling and preserving venison. One special session offered a virtual tour of the Oneida Cannery. The Intertribal Processing and Preserving Network supports Menominee community members and other tribal communities in the sharing of knowledge and resources that support traditional foodways, healthy eating, community well-being, and food sovereignty.





Kehtekæwak Farmers' Market

The Kehtekaewak ("They Eat Food") Farmers' Market increases access to healthy and locally grown foods while supporting local growers and food businesses. The Kemāmaceqtaq project supported the College of Menominee Nation in providing resources and other assistance for local growers. Through grower stipends, soil testing services, seeds, and other supplies to improve growing conditions, the number of growers providing local produce to the Kehtekaewak Farmers' Market has increased and created a reliable source for fresh fruits and vegetables. The Kemāmaceqtaq team also set up a monthly booth to highlight the Harvest of the Moon curriculum with giveaways of the featured seasonal food, lessons in the Menominee language about the moon and the food, recipe cards and free samples, and hands-on craft activities. Over 95% of booth visitors enjoyed the recipe samples and 78% said they planned to make the recipes in the future.

ServSafe Training

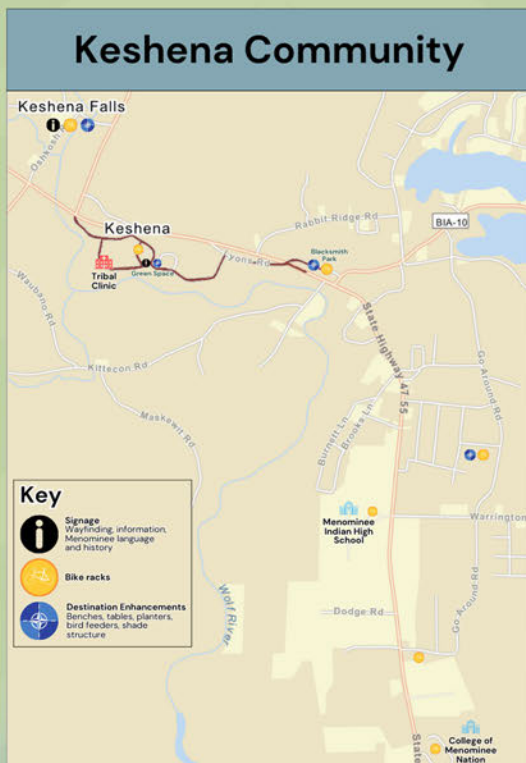
In August 2023, the Kemāmaceqtaq team organized a two-day ServSafe training in Keshena for free to community members. Twenty community members participated in the food safety training, 15 passed ServSafe certification, and 7 plan to complete their instructor certification, which will offer local capacity for ongoing food safety education. In a post-training survey, participants reported that they felt the training would help ensure the safety of foods served locally, encourage more local food-related businesses, support food-related jobs in the community, and increase access to healthy and safe food year round.

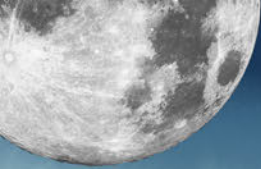


Active Routes and Destinations

Kemāanceqtaq team members worked with key partners – the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin (MITW) and the Menominee County government – to engage community members in assessing the built environment and envisioning future landscapes that support everyday activity. Considering sidewalks, public trails, parks, and recreation centers in Keshena and Neopit, plus the forest, river, and lakes, partners developed and implemented plans to enhance and increase access to everyday destinations.

With the Kemāanceqtaq project, three plans were passed and implemented along two walking and biking routes. These plans impacted nearly 7 linear miles and 16 everyday community sites for the benefit of approximately 2,262 community members. With these efforts, Menominee community members can better access everyday destinations through walking and biking, expressing a culture of “movers.”





Promoting Bike Safety

Sponsored by the Kemānceqtaq project, the American League of Bicyclists led a bike safety training for interested community partners in 2022. Participants achieved League of American Bicyclists League Cycling Instructor certification and they will be able to lead bike safety classes in the community in the future. Participants also gained knowledge and skills to better advocate for safe biking throughout the Menominee Reservation.

Enhanced Routes

- **4.5 miles** made safer for walking through sidewalk improvements in Keshena
- **4.5 miles** of bike lanes added alongside these sidewalks in Keshena
- **2 miles** of increased walking opportunity along the Menominee Courthouse Walking Path with new signage featuring Menominee language and cultural knowledge and an enhanced rest area
- **2 miles** of increased biking opportunity along the Menominee Courthouse Walking Path

Enhanced Destinations

- **New bike racks at 7 everyday destinations:** College of Menominee Nation, Menominee County Courthouse, Menominee Indian High School, Menominee Indian Middle School, Menominee Tribal School, Hillstop Convenience Store, Menominee Recreation Center
- **7 parks** – Chief Niwopet Park, Keshena Falls Park, Blacksmith Park, Wolf River Park, Neopit Park, Wild Rice Park, and Warrington Park – made more appealing and accessible with features like picnic tables, benches, planters, pollinator habitats, signage solar lights, bike racks, and Native art
- **2 additional destinations** – Fredenberg Green Space, Menominee Family and Community Engagement Center – enhanced through Native art, planters, picnic tables, benches, and bike racks



Community Impact

The Kemāmaceqtaq project is rooted in collaboration and community engagement. In April 2023, the Kemāmaceqtaq team organized three Evaluation Talking Circles to hear from key community partners about their observations of the impacts of these efforts. At the Kemāmaceqtaq celebration in September 2023, project team members and partners shared further reflections on the results of the work.

These community impacts included:

Youth engagement



Pictured: Youth leaders, agency partners, and community members discussing their Walking Assessment findings.

“There is a certain perspective that you can only get as a child growing up here. When I was a kid growing up on the reservation, I knew every trail. I knew where the fences were that were easiest to cross. I knew where the mean dogs were. You see the community through a different lens when you are [an adult] driving it. This walking assessment, and seeing how the kids talked about the community, it really brought me back. Working with young people was a rich experience.”

- Jeremy Weso, Highway Commissioner of the Menominee County Highway Department



Connecting Menominee language, teaching, land, and stories



Pictured: Slam City Park Mural by Renny Katchenago (photo credit to Val Katchenago)



Pictured: Harvest of the Moon promotions at Save A Lot Grocery store in Keshena for **Penipimakat-Kēsoq** (Falling Leaves Moon) developed by youth from Nicianak Club to promote Indigenous foods at local grocery stores.



Pictured: Community yard signs to promote a safer community and encourage residents to "take it easy" and "drive slowly" featuring Menominee language and graphic design, by tribal member, Daniel A Grignon.



Food sovereignty



Pictured: Jennifer Gauthier and Jeremy Wescott leading a Garden Workshop at CMN where participants learned which seeds are best for starting, when it is safe to plant in the ground, and how to start seeds with materials from home.

Community engagement



"This is fantastic. I've never seen planning and projects using the community's input before like this... I can see the transformation... you're more mindful of it, now you're thinking about community and their attitudes, and what are they going to do if we do this?"

Pictured: Snack Sampling event at the College of Menominee Nation. 16 different snacks were tested by students, staff, and faculty to assess healthier vending preferences.

Inter-organizational collaboration



Pictured: Partners from the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, the Menominee County government, and the Kemānceqtaq project team generated ideas for places and routes in the community to enhance for everyday activity.



Policy as a tool, not an imposition



Pictured: CMN Sustainable Development Institute receiving their reusable dish set and flatware

“The College of Menominee Nation is living by their Food, Beverage, and Healthier Campus Environment Policy. All Campus breakrooms now have reusable dishes and flatware! Together we are reducing one-time use product waste and promoting Menominee sustainability” Jennifer Gauthier

Enhancing community assets



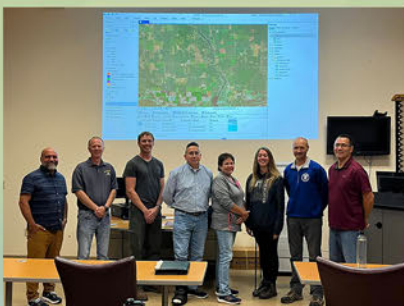
Pictured: Installation of a pollinator garden at Chief Niwopet Park, connecting the space to Chief Niwopet’s belief in planning for the future.

Changing mindsets around foods and activity

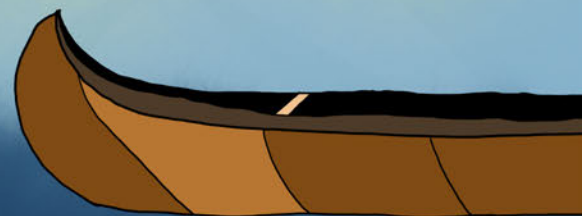


Pictured: Participants from CMN’s first Spring 2022 Garden Workshop share why they want to garden.

Sustaining momentum and effort



Pictured: Partners from Menominee County government and Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin at an introductory ARC GIS training where they shared ideas on how maps can help with community planning.





What's Next

The work of the past five years of the Kemāmaceqtaq project will continue forward to support the culture of wellness and nutrition in the Menominee Nation.

With continued funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention joined by new partners that will engage in similar efforts in Ashland County, the Kemāmaceqtaq will expand efforts to support everyday walking and biking, access to healthy and traditional foods, and support young children and their families.

Kemāmaceqtaq: We're all Moving, and we hope you join us in moving this great work forward in the next five years!



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON





Citations

"Brief History - About Us." The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, <https://www.menominee-nsn.gov/culturepages/briefhistory.aspx>. Accessed 4 Oct. 2023.

"County Level Data Sets: Population." USDA ERS - Data Products, <https://data.ers.usda.gov/reports.aspx?ID=17827>. Accessed 4 Oct. 2023.

"County: Menominee, Wisconsin." County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/wisconsin/menominee?year=2023. Accessed 4 Oct. 2023.

"Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin." Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 20 Sept. 2018, <https://dpi.wi.gov/amind/tribalnationswi/menominee>.

"Quickfacts: Menominee County, Wisconsin." United States Census Bureau, www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/menomineecountywisconsin/PST045221. Accessed 4 Oct. 2023.

"Who We Are." The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, www.menominee-nsn.gov/CulturePages/AboutUs.aspx. Accessed 4 Oct. 2023.

Through the Outreach Programs to Reduce the Prevalence of Obesity in High-risk Rural Areas Agreement (1809), funding is from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin–Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requirements.

