# Background

This poster presents a side by side comparison of three consecutive data collection periods (Cycles III, IV, and V) that show possible indicators of Native American elder abuse. Although indicators do not constitute actual abuse they can suggest the possible risk of elder abuse. National statistics indicate the elderly population is expected to increase to an estimated 72.1 million persons, with the current population of Native American elders increasing from 7% to 10% by the year 2030 (NICOA, 2012). This increase to the elderly population brings an increase in attention to elder abuse and the need for elder abuse prevention services. Projects such as the National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative (NIEJI) and the National Resource Center on Native American Aging (NRCNAA) are making valuable strides to increase awareness of Native American elder health and social issues. The purpose of the NRCNAA Identifying Our Needs: A Survey of Elders needs assessment survey is to assist Indigenous elders representing over 250 of the nation’s Native American tribes, Alaskan villages, and Hawaiian homesteads creating a record of the health and social needs. The individual results for each community are compiled and the needs of elders are documented to assist in tribal planning, and grant writing. The surveys also satisfy tribal requirements for Title VI nutrition and caregiving grants from the Administration on Aging which are awarded every three years.

## Methods

Surveys were administered by trained community members and conducted through face-to-face interviews with elders 55 and older. Specific survey items were then selected from the NRCNAA Elder Needs Assessment survey and pooled together to create the charted elder abuse indicators. (Items selected were based on findings from a study on elder mistreatment done by Jerina Ficknscher, Beals, and the SAIE Project Team, 2013). Information from three corresponding Elder Needs Assessment survey cycles were obtained and used to create comparison charts of possible elder abuse indicators.

- **Cycle III** consisted of information obtained from 14,751 Indigenous elders from 2007-2008.
- **Cycle IV** consisted of information obtained from 18,089 Indigenous elders from 2008-2011.
- **Cycle V** consisted of information obtained from 17,049 Indigenous elders from 2011-2014.

## Discussion

The comparison of Cycles III, IV, and V, shows an increase in use of many of the services such as elder abuse prevention programs, home modification and legal assistance programs. This increase of services may be due to the increase in awareness of these social services being offered to Native American elders since 2007.

- About 1 in 8 Native American elders would use the elder abuse prevention programs if offered in their community, and data collected between 2011 and 2014 indicate that 1.1% are currently using elder abuse prevention services. Such programs can cover anything from mental health and counseling to legal assistance and support services to help elders live more independently.
- Since the launch of the National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative (NIEJI) in 2011, elderly who use abuse prevention services have increased 220%. The number of elderly who would use elder abuse prevention services if available has remained relatively constant across the three cycles of data.
- Nutritional health challenges indicated that elders often eat alone and about 1 in 9 elders are physically unable to cook or properly feed themselves.
- Elders reported that they would like to receive, or already receiving the home delivered meals services, and/or eat with a group.
- Indicators suggested that elders do not receive help with finances from family or friends. However, increasingly elders are wanting more assistance in this area.
- The rate of elderly falls has remained constant across all three data cycles.