

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE  
SERVICES  
NALOXONE DISTRIBUTION  
PROJECT TRIBAL GOVERNMENT  
OUTREACH**

**Annual Legislative Report March 2025**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

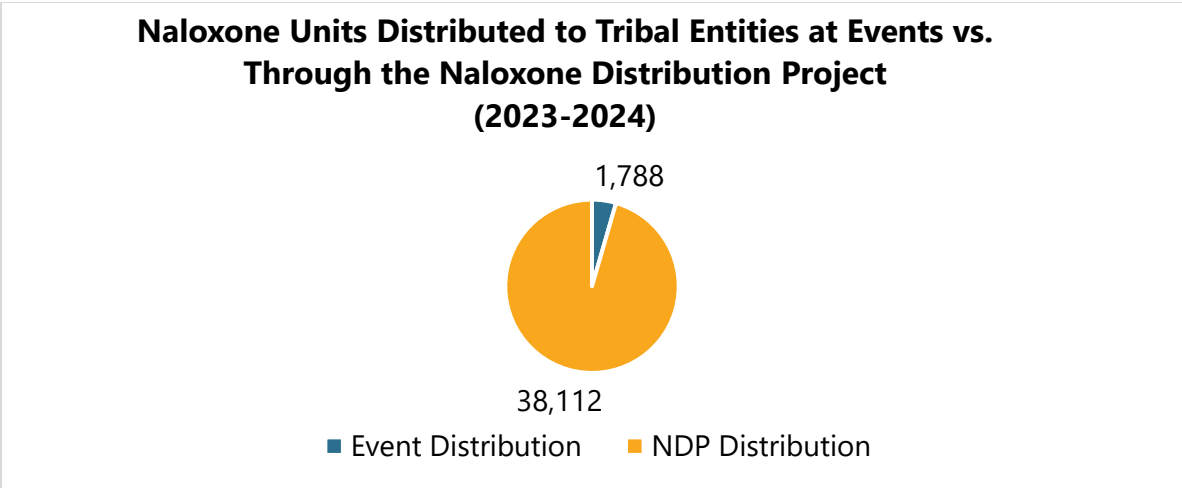
## Report Overview

The *Naloxone Distribution Project Tribal Government Outreach Annual Legislative Report* provides background on the effects of the opioid epidemic in California. Specifically, this report includes background on how opioid-related overdoses have disproportionately impacted tribal communities, the Health and Safety Code (HSC) requirements to enhance outreach to tribal governments on the availability of naloxone hydrochloride (naloxone), and an analysis of the impact of that outreach for the reporting period of November 1, 2023, through October 31, 2024. This report satisfies the reporting requirements in Assembly Bill 1233 (Waldron, Chapter 570, Statutes of 2023) which was enacted into law through an amendment to HSC Section 1179.805 in November 2023.

## Improved Outreach Approaches from Department of Health Care Services

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), in addition to its existing technical assistance approaches through the Naloxone Distribution Project (NDP), promoted the availability of naloxone and offered assistance with the application process both in-person at tribal events and through mass communication to tribal leaders. This outreach resulted in increased NDP participation from California’s tribal entities and distribution of naloxone. During the reporting period, **39,900** total units of naloxone were distributed to tribal entities. Figure 1 shows the number of naloxone units distributed at in-person events and through applications received and approved by the NDP during the reporting period.

**Figure 1: Naloxone Units Distributed to Tribal Entities by Method**



## **Increase in Naloxone Distribution Project Participation from Tribal Entities Despite Stigma Surrounding Naloxone**

Overall, DHCS observed increases in the number of applications for naloxone through the NDP from tribal entities, units of naloxone distributed to tribal entities, and unique tribal organizations applying to the NDP during the reporting period. However, despite this increase, tribal entities have only accounted for **243** out of a total of **14,757** NDP applications since 2018 (**1.65 percent**). In this reporting period, tribal entities accounted for **95** out of **4,038** total NDP applications (**2.35 percent**), up less than **one percent** from the year prior (**1.65 percent**).

Through conversations and feedback, tribal leaders and community members named several factors limiting participation. Specifically, a general disconnect between California and its sovereign communities, and community stigma surrounding naloxone, with some believing it will increase opioid drug abuse. Additionally, there is a historical distrust among tribal communities and state-run projects, including the NDP. Tribal community leaders and members recommend the state take a more proactive approach in assisting tribal communities with obtaining life-saving medication through streamlining the application process required.

## **Decrease in Reported Overdose Reversals from Tribal Entities**

DHCS observed a slight decrease in the number of reported overdose reversals from tribal entities. In 2022-2023, tribal entities reported **675** overdose reversals compared to **621** reported overdose reversals in 2023-2024. There may be additional opioid overdose reversals that occurred in the reporting period but were not reported to DHCS by the close of the data period (October 31, 2024) and may be accounted for in future reports.

# BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

## California's Tribal Communities

There are currently **109** federally recognized Indian tribes and several non-federally recognized tribes petitioning for federal recognition. These tribes are located throughout the state. In highly populated cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, and Sacramento, as well as rural areas without hospitals like the borders of Nevada, Oregon, and Arizona, mountains of northern and eastern California, high deserts of southern California, and along the coasts of rivers, lakes, and the Pacific Ocean.

California has the highest Native American population in the country. According to the most recent census data, California is home to more people of Native American/Alaska Native heritage than any other state in the country. California represents **12 percent** of the total Native American population, or approximately **720,000**<sup>1</sup>.

The State of California recognizes the right of Native American tribes to self-govern and exercise inherent sovereign powers over their members and territory<sup>2</sup>.

## Disproportionate Overdose Deaths in Tribal Communities

From November 2023 through October 2024, there were **5,765 opioid-related deaths** in California<sup>3</sup>. Despite a recent overall decline in opioid-related deaths, fentanyl and other opioids continue to ravage California and disproportionately affect our tribal communities.

Native American/Alaska Native communities continuously have had the **highest rate** of any opioid-related overdose deaths per 100,000 residents since 2015<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> California Courts, Judicial Branch of California (2025). *California Tribal Communities*.

<https://courts.ca.gov/programs-initiatives/tribalstate-programs/california-tribal-communities>

<sup>2</sup> Governor's Office of Tribal Affairs (2025). *State of California*. <https://tribalaffairs.ca.gov/state-government/>

<sup>3</sup> California Department of Public Health (2024). *Preliminary Monthly Fatal Drug-Related Overdose Counts*.

[https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/sapb/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Prelim\\_Monthly\\_Death\\_Data\\_2024\\_12.pdf](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/sapb/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Prelim_Monthly_Death_Data_2024_12.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> California Overdose Surveillance Dashboard (2025).

<https://skylab.cdph.ca.gov/ODdash/?tab=CA>

## Naloxone Distribution Project

The Naloxone Distribution Project (NDP) is administered by DHCS and aims to reduce opioid-related overdose deaths through the provision of free naloxone. Naloxone is a highly effective opioid antagonist that can reverse an opioid-related overdose by blocking the opioid receptor sites and reversing the toxic effects of the opioid overdose.

Currently, the NDP distributes naloxone in two formulations: 4 mg naloxone hydrochloride nasal spray and 0.4 mg/mL intramuscular naloxone hydrochloride injection. NDP distributes generic naloxone nasal spray labeled either as “CalRx” or “Amneal” and the brand name (Narcan). Recipients receive one of the three versions

depending on availability. Additionally, the NDP distributes free, all-in-one fentanyl test strip (FTS) kits to help prevent opioid-related overdoses by allowing recipients to test their substances for the presence of fentanyl prior to ingestion. Eligible entities, including tribal governments, can apply to the NDP to have naloxone and/or FTS shipped directly from the manufacturer to their address.

Since its creation in **2018**, the NDP has distributed more than **5,815,600** kits of naloxone and received more than **337,000** reports of opioid overdose reversals.

## Naloxone Distribution Project Tribal Outreach Program

In October 2023, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill (AB) 1233 (Waldron, Chapter 570, Statutes of 2023), which requires DHCS to conduct outreach to each of the tribal governments in California for the purpose of advising them of the availability of naloxone through the NDP. Additionally, DHCS is required to report to the Legislature and to the Assembly and Senate Health Committees the results of the outreach program annually on or before March 31 of each year, beginning on March 31, 2025. This language in the HSC will remain in effect until March 31, 2027, and, as of that date, is repealed.

This report includes all of the following, as required by Health and Safety Code (HSC) Section 1179.805:

- » The tribes that participated in the NDP as a result of the Department’s outreach.
- » The number of applicants that participated in the NDP as a result of the Department’s outreach.

- » The effectiveness of the outreach and the NDP in lowering both opioid overdoses and deaths within the Native American community.

DHCS began constructing its outreach efforts when AB 1233 was enacted and HSC Section 1179.805 was amended in November 2023. The DHCS reporting period for this report is from November 1, 2023, through October 31, 2024.

## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES**

### **OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT**

DHCS worked to increase partnerships by thoughtfully engaging in outreach activities designed to specifically target one of the most vulnerable populations in California. DHCS primary goal was to increase communication with tribal governments and create transparency about the resources available to them through the NDP. Outreach efforts included in-person participation and presentations at tribal conferences and summits, email communication to all of California’s tribal leaders, and collaborative efforts with the DHCS Office of Tribal Affairs (OTA), California Rural Indian Health Board, California Consortium of Urban Indian Health (CCUIH), and Kauffman and Associates.

#### **Office of Tribal Affairs Collaboration**

DHCS internally collaborated with its OTA to ensure tribal communities were fully represented in the list of tribal eligible entities. Although tribal entities have always been eligible to apply for free naloxone through the NDP, DHCS updated the eligible entity list to include:

- » Tribal Government Offices
- » Tribal Social Services Offices
- » Tribal Courts
- » Tribal Law Enforcement
- » Tribal Libraries
- » Tribal Schools
- » Tribal Education Institutions
- » Tribal Health Clinics
- » Tribal Substance Use Disorder Programs

OTA continued this collaboration by inviting staff representing the NDP to present at and participate in various in-person tribal events.

#### **Outreach Events and Naloxone Distribution**

DHCS showcased the NDP to the participating tribal audience and provided hands-on technical assistance to individuals and entities interested in obtaining free naloxone through the NDP. A minimum of two DHCS staff were regularly available to answer

questions on the NDP and made available contact sheets for tribal community members to sign up to receive assistance. DHCS staff followed up with the contacts by email offering to answer questions or set up orders of naloxone and FTS through the NDP. DHCS staff created QR codes linking to the NDP online application form and passed out a “Dear Tribal Leaders” letter on how to apply for free naloxone, which can be viewed in **Appendix A**. Additionally, DHCS distributed free nasal spray naloxone at the in-person events.

In total, DHCS participated in eight (**8**) in-person events promoting tribal health. During these events and in direct follow-ups, **1,788** units of naloxone were distributed to tribal governments, entities, and leaders.

### **Sacramento - Fentanyl Tribal Roundtable Summit**

On December 4, 2023, DHCS staff distributed **504** units of naloxone at the summit in Sacramento, California.

### **Sacramento – Tribal Nations Summit**

On February 26, 2024, DHCS staff distributed over **84** units of naloxone at the Governor’s Office of the Tribal Advisor Tribal Nations Summit at the California Natural Resources Agency in Sacramento, California.

### **Oroville - Community Outreach Event**

On March 28, 2024, DHCS staff aided Feather River Tribal Health by providing **336** units of naloxone for their community outreach efforts at Butte College.

### **Sacramento – Pathways to Healing Statewide Conference**

On June 13, 2024, DHCS staff distributed over **240** units of naloxone at the *Pathways to Healing: Embracing Culture in Crisis Response in California Indian County* conference.

### **Eureka – Healing Together Summit**

On August 20 and 21, 2024, DHCS staff distributed over **132** units of naloxone and **200** FTS at the two-day event, *2024 Healing Together* summit at College of the Redwoods, in collaboration with the California Department of Public Health.

### **Sacramento – Tribal and Indian Health Representatives Meeting**

On August 26, 2024, DHCS staff distributed over **24** units of naloxone and **100** FTS at the meeting and promoted the NDP.



## Placerville – CCUIH Annual Conference

On September 10, 2024, DHCS staff presented at the conference held by CCUIH at Red Hawk Casino in Placerville, California and distributed over **48** units of naloxone and **900** FTS. A discussion was also held to discuss barriers in applying to the NDP.

## Sacramento – Native American Day Outreach Event

On September 27, 2024, DHCS staff, in collaboration with the DHCS Office of Tribal Affairs, distributed over **276** units of naloxone and **966** FTS at this event near the California State Capitol building in Sacramento, California.

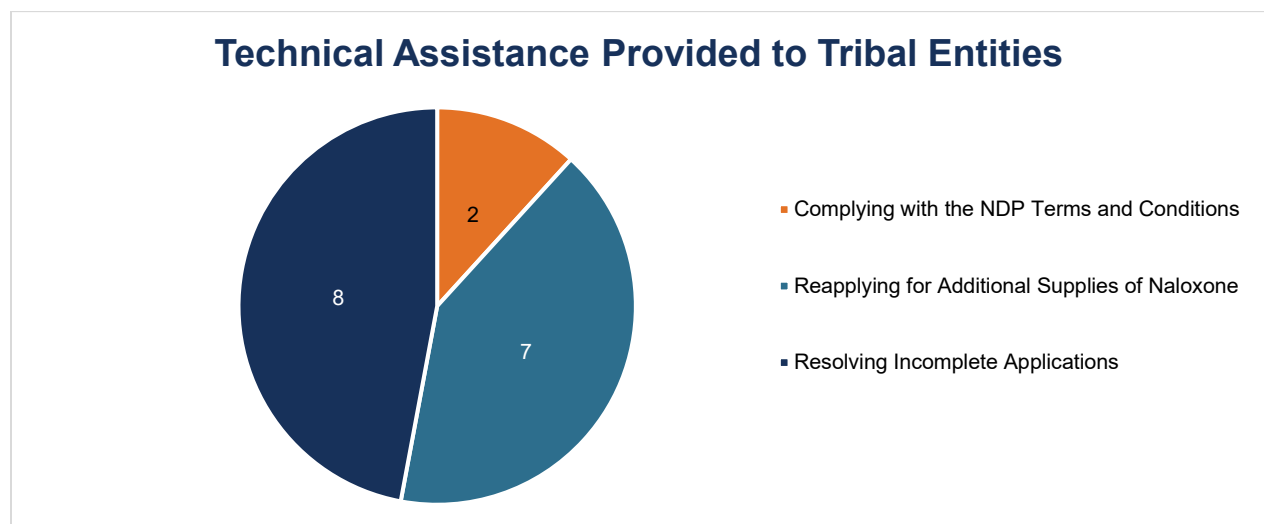
## Email Communication and Naloxone Distribution Project Promotion

In collaboration with the OTA, DHCS drafted and sent a mass email to all tribal leaders in California in March 2024. The email contained information on how to apply through the NDP to obtain free naloxone and FTS, options for personalized technical assistance, and the availability of automatic and recurring shipment requests. The language from this email can be found in **Appendix B**.

## Technical Assistance Provided to Tribal Entities

As a result of the outreach conducted by DHCS staff to tribal entities, technical assistance was requested for various subjects via email. In total, **17** tribal entities received technical assistance through the NDP as shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Technical Assistance Provided to Tribal Entities**

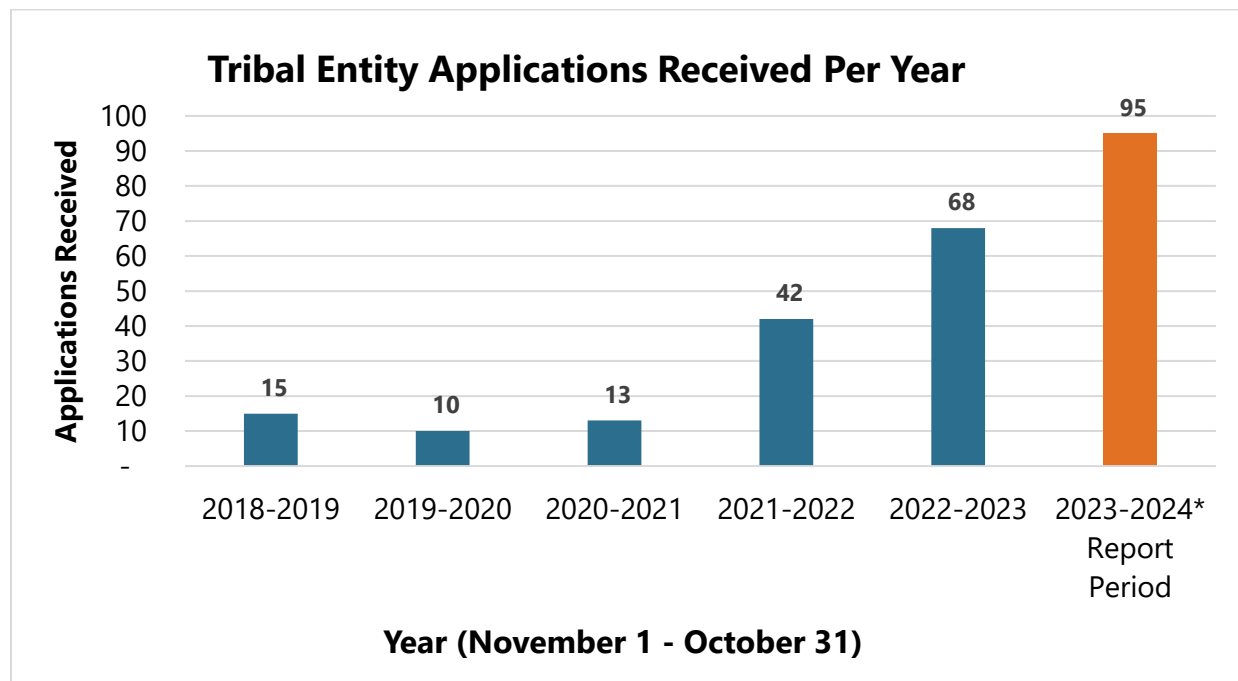


# TRIBAL OUTREACH PROGRAM IMPACT

## Increased Applications from Tribal Entities

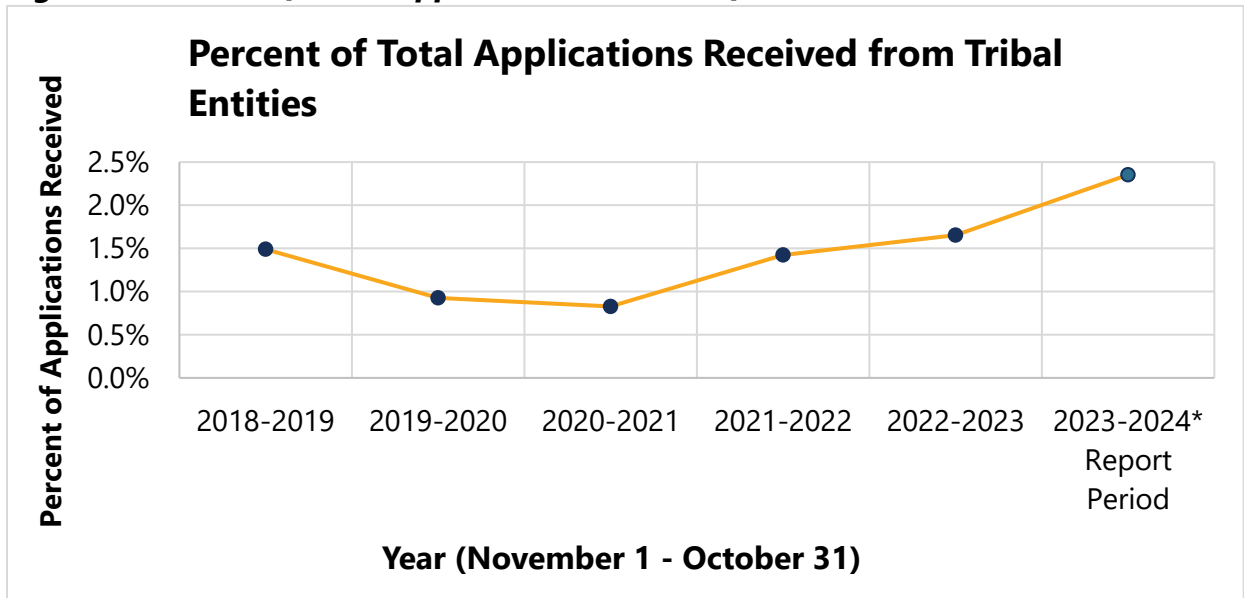
Overall, DHCS observed an increase in applications to the NDP from tribal leaders, governments, and entities because of the in-person events and email communication outreach. This includes an increase in distributed naloxone units and increases in NDP dollars invested in tribal entities. Figure 3 shows the number of applications received by tribal entities during this reporting period compared to previous years. There is positive evidence that focused tribal outreach efforts resulted in a 28 percent increase in applications for free naloxone. A list of all federally recognized tribes that participated in the NDP during the reporting period can be found in **Appendix C**.

**Figure 3: Tribal Entity Applications Received Per Year**



However, despite seeing an increase in tribal participation in the NDP, tribal entities continue to make up **less than 3 percent** of all NDP applications. The percentage of tribal entity applications received by the NDP increased to **2.35 percent** during the reporting period, up by less than **one percent** from 2022-2021. Figure 4 shows the percentage of total applications received through the NDP from tribal entities.

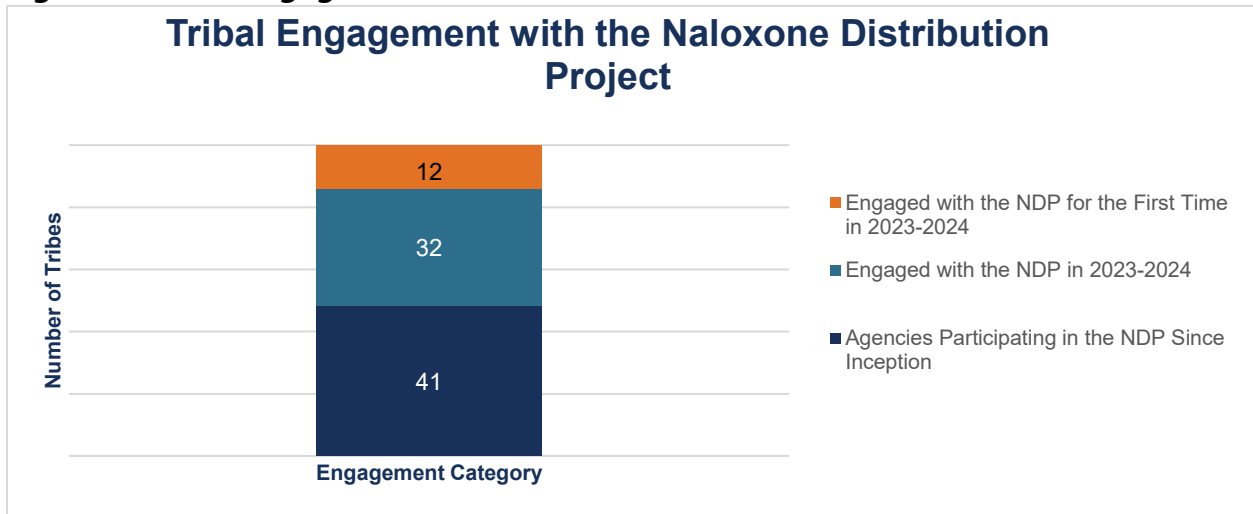
**Figure 4: Percent of Total Applications Received from Tribal Entities**



## Increased Tribal Engagement with the Naloxone Distribution Project

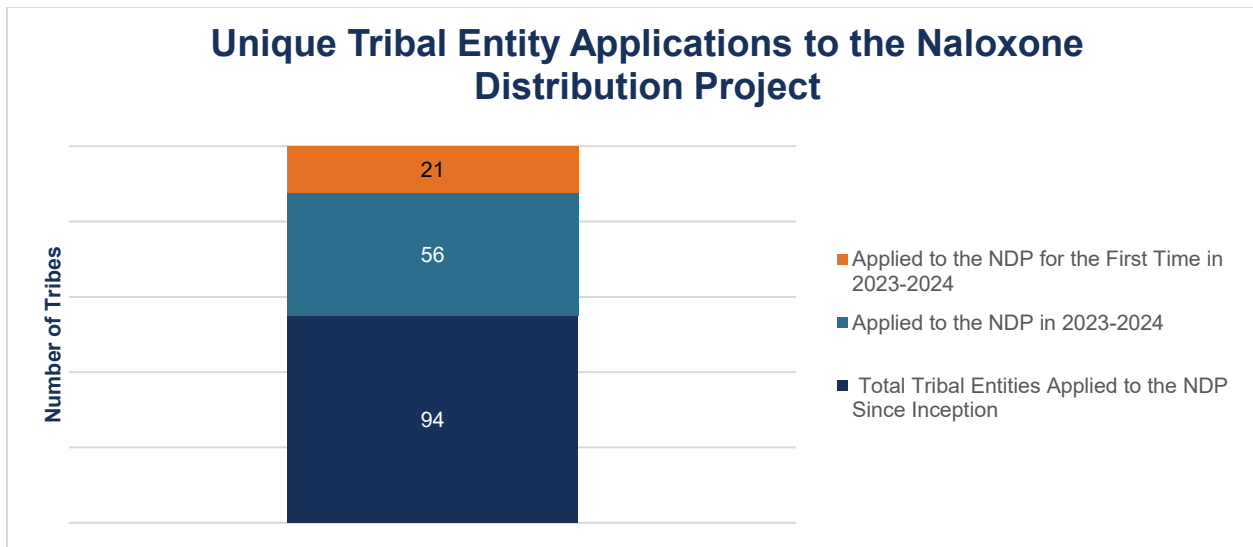
In total, **12** federally recognized tribes received naloxone through the NDP for the first time during the 2023-2024 reporting period. Approximately **30 percent** of all tribal entities that have ever engaged with the NDP did so for the first time in the 2023-2024 reporting period. Figure 5 shows the overall tribal engagement with the NDP compared to the 2023-2024 reporting period. Engagement is defined as either receiving naloxone through the NDP online application form or receiving naloxone through an in-person outreach event.

**Figure 5: Tribal Engagement with the NDP**



Furthermore, Figure 6 shows unique tribal entity NDP applications compared to previous years. These numbers represent organizations and other entities within tribal communities that applied to the NDP during the reporting period.

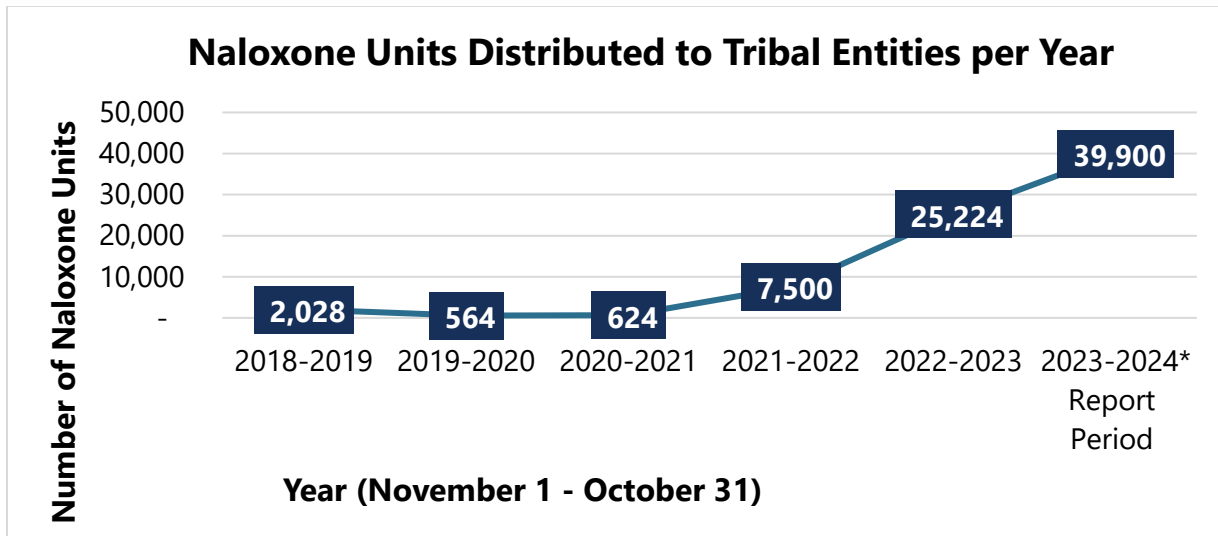
**Figure 6: Unique Tribal Entity Applications to the NDP**



## Increased Naloxone Distribution to Tribal Entities

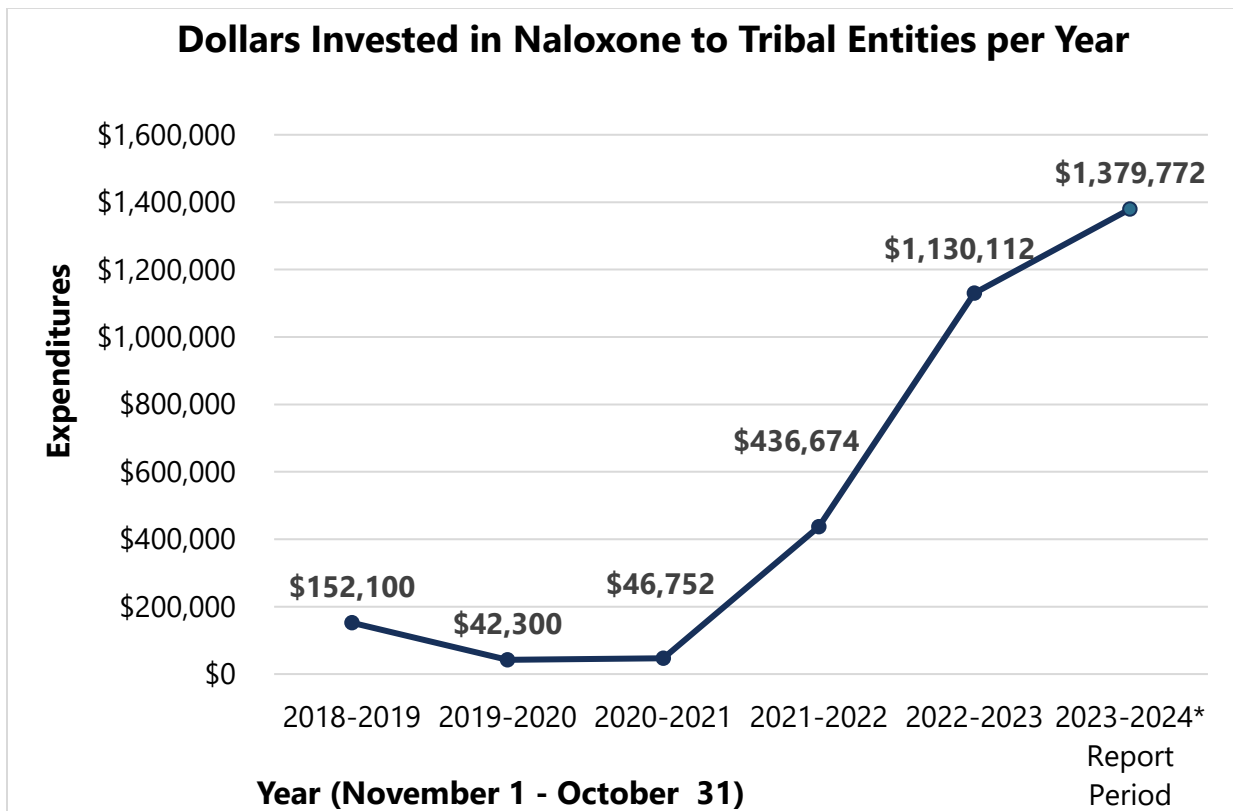
Due to the increase in NDP applications from tribal entities, the number of naloxone units distributed to tribal communities increased over **37 percent** from the prior year, shown in Figure 7.

**Figure 7: Naloxone Units Distributed to Tribal Entities Per Year**



DHCS was also able to invest more dollars into tribal communities through the distribution of naloxone. Figure 8 shows the comparison of dollars spent on naloxone distributed per year from the NDP to tribal communities.

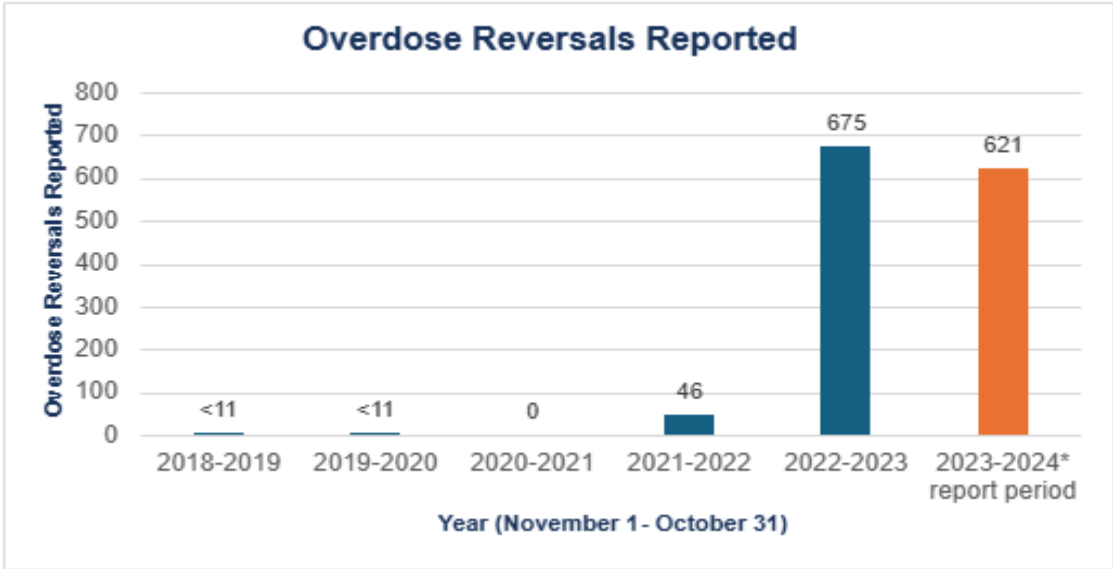
**Figure 8: Dollars Invested in Naloxone to Tribal Entities Per Year**



## Decreased Reported Overdose Reversals

Although the number of applications, distributed units of naloxone, and dollars invested in tribal communities through the NDP all increased, the number of reported overdose reversals decreased from **675** in 2022-2023 to **621** in 2023-2024 (**8.7 percent decrease**). There may be additional opioid overdose reversals that occurred in the reporting period but were not reported to DHCS by the end of the data period (October 31, 2024). Figure 9 shows the number of opioid overdose reversals reported by tribal entities since 2018.

**Figure 9: Overdose Reversals Reported by Tribal Entities Per Year**



## REPORT CONCLUSION

Overall, DHCS saw increased participation from tribal entities because of the required outreach which led to an increase in applications from tribal entities, distributed naloxone units to tribal communities, and dollars invested in combatting the opioid epidemic in tribal communities. However, based on feedback from tribal leaders and community members, the State of California is responsible for building trust with sovereign communities and taking action to reduce the stigma surrounding naloxone.

## **Future Outreach Approaches**

In addition to the outreach approaches taken by DHCS for this reporting period, DHCS intends to formally request feedback from tribal leaders and community members on how to better equip their communities with naloxone through the NDP. DHCS will continue working with OTA to strengthen direct engagement with Tribal Health Centers to increase efforts to reduce the stigma surrounding naloxone. DHCS also intends to create and distribute educational flyers and documents assuring tribal leaders that naloxone is safe, effective and necessary to combat the opioid-related overdose crisis that is happening in their communities right now. Members of the NDP team will continue to participate in the Tribal Nations Annual Summit, as well as other tribal events.

# APPENDIX A – DEAR TRIBAL LEADERS LETTER

Dear Tribal Leaders,

The Department of Health Care Services' (DHCS) welcomes this opportunity to provide free naloxone and technical assistance through the [Naloxone Distribution Project \(NDP\)](#) to all California Tribal governments and tribal partners including, but not limited to schools, health clinics, tribal justice systems, and libraries.

You can request for free naloxone kits through the [online request form](#) and DHCS will directly ship the naloxone to your tribal entity service location.

DHCS – NDP provides Tribal Governments and partners with:

- Direct and easy access to all your naloxone needs.
- Naloxone shipped directly to your service location.
- Multiple partners from the same Tribal government can each receive their own shipment of free naloxone.
- 12 - 240 Naloxone unit requests do not need any policy and procedures for storage and distribution
- A maximum request of 2,400 units of naloxone per application.
- Transparent communication to assist with all your naloxone queries.
- Easy and personalized, **one time set up** of your NDP account for current and all future shipping requests.

Please email Maya Gopalan at [Maya.Gopalan@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:Maya.Gopalan@dhcs.ca.gov) or the naloxone inbox [naloxone@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:naloxone@dhcs.ca.gov) for:

- **Personalized Technical Assistance (TA):** NDP staff are ready to assist by email, phone or video and answer questions and assist with the application process.
- **Automatic and Recurring Shipment Requests:** DHCS recognizes completing an online form may be time consuming and not meet the needs of your community. Alternatively, you can establish automatic and recurring shipments of free naloxone per your needs. NDP staff will assist you in an initial set up, work with your requirement of total number of naloxone kits per shipment and a shipment timeline (i.e., monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly shipments) that meets your needs.

DHCS encourages every Tribe to participate in DHCS-NDP and carry naloxone and save a life.

Program Update - Free fentanyl test strips



Beginning in **March 2024**, in addition to naloxone, tribal governments and partners can also request free fentanyl test strips through the [online request form](#). The process to request fentanyl test strips is similar to the naloxone request process and will also allow entities to apply for both at the same time.

Thank you,

DHCS – NDP team

## APPENDIX B – EMAIL TO TRIBAL ENTITIES

**Subject:** Receive Free Naloxone Through the Naloxone Distribution Project

**Audience:** Tribal Governments and Entities

Dear Tribal Leaders,

The Department of Health Care Services' (DHCS) Office of Tribal Affairs is reaching out because your entity is eligible to receive free naloxone through the [Naloxone Distribution Project \(NDP\)](#).

Tribal governments and tribal partners (including, but not limited to schools, clinics, and libraries) are eligible to receive free shipments of naloxone from the NDP. If you have questions about whether an entity is eligible, please reach out to the DHCS NDP inbox at [naloxone@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:naloxone@dhcs.ca.gov).

Entities interested in receiving a free shipment of naloxone can request naloxone kits through the [online request form](#). Completing the form allows the NDP to ship the naloxone directly to the entity requesting it.

### **Program update: Free fentanyl test strips**

Beginning in **March 2024**, in addition to naloxone entities can also request free fentanyl test strips through the [online request form](#). The process to request fentanyl test strips is similar to the naloxone request process and will also allow entities to apply for both at the same time.

### **Alternative methods to receive free naloxone**

We recognize that completing an online form may not meet the needs of your community. As an alternative, your entity can establish automatic and recurring shipments. If you are interested in establishing automatic and recurring shipments, please email the naloxone inbox ([naloxone@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:naloxone@dhcs.ca.gov)). NDP staff responding to this inbox will assist you with finalizing the total number of naloxone kits per shipment and a shipment timeline (i.e., monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly shipments) that works for your entity.

### **Easily accessible technical assistance**

Most naloxone requests are approved quickly and within one week. This is, in part, due to the personalized technical assistance (TA) provided by the NDP staff. Staff are available to answer questions and assist with the application process. Please email the

naloxone inbox ([naloxone@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:naloxone@dhcs.ca.gov)) with any questions or requests for additional TA. Staff can also set up phone or video calls to provide assistance.

We are committed to making this process as streamlined as possible so that naloxone is in the hands of communities that need it the most. If there are additional ways we can assist in the distribution of naloxone to tribes and tribal partners, please let us know.

Sincerely,

**X**

## APPENDIX C – TRIBE PARTICIPATION IN THE NALOXONE DISTRIBUTION PROJECT 2023-2024

Federally Recognized Tribe Name	Units of Naloxone Distributed in 2023-2024	Received Naloxone for the First time in 2023-2024
Barona Band of Mission Indians	180	No
Big Pine Paiute Tribe of the Owens Valley	2,400	Yes
Big Valley Band Rancheria	504	No
Blue Lake Rancheria	12	No
Cachil DeHe Band of Wintun Indians of the Colusa Indian Community	120	Yes
Chicken Ranch Rancheria	396	No
Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria	48	Yes
Greenville Rancheria	2,820	No
Hoop Valley Tribe	36	No
Karuk Tribe of California	504	No
Mechoopda Indian Tribe	120	Yes
Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians	12	No
Pit River Tribe	408	No
Quartz Valley Reservation	504	Yes
Quechan Indian Tribe	72	No
Redding Rancheria	648	Yes
Robinson Rancheria	648	Yes
Round Valley Reservation	120	No
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians	648	No
Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians	108	Yes
Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Mission Indians	96	No
Scotts Valley Reservation	348	Yes

<b>Federally Recognized Tribe Name</b>	<b>Units of Naloxone Distributed in 2023-2024</b>	<b>Received Naloxone for the First time in 2023-2024</b>
Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians	10	No
Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation	48	No
Table Mountain Rancheria	240	No
Tachi-Yokut Tribe	192	Yes
Tolowa Dee-ni Nation	96	No
Trinidad Rancheria	12	Yes
Tule River Indian Reservation	696	No
Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk	216	No
Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians	156	Yes
Yurok Tribe of California	1,248	No
Unspecified Tribes	26,234	N/A