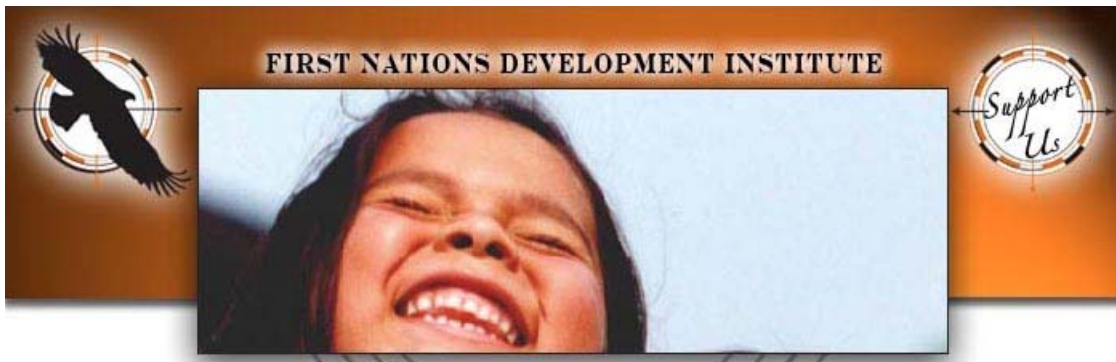


First Nations Development Institute Announces \$175,000 in Little Eagle Staff Fund Grant Awards



Released on: October 17, 2008, 5:10 am

Press Release Author: [First Nations Development Institute](#)

Industry: [Financial](#)

Press Release Summary: First Nations Development Institute (First Nations) has awarded grants to six Native community-based economic development organizations through its Little Eagle Staff Fund (LESF). The mission of the Little Eagle Staff Fund is to support Native community-based economic development organizations who offer unique financial services and products that promote economic development.

Press Release Body: First Nations Development Institute Announces \$175,000 in Little Eagle Staff Fund Grant Awards

First Nations Development Institute (First Nations) has awarded grants to six Native community-based economic development organizations through its **Little Eagle Staff Fund (LESF)**. The mission of the **Little Eagle Staff Fund** is to support Native community-based economic development organizations who offer

unique financial services and products that promote economic development.

"It was a very competitive year for proposals," stated **Sarah Dewees, First Nations' Director of Research and the program officer for the LESF grant program.** *"We received many excellent proposals because there is both growing demand and substantial need for funding for this type of work."* **First Nations** initially received 47 letters of intent from those interested in applying for grant funding. From those 47, twelve groups were invited to submit full proposals. Of the twelve, six were selected for funding.

The six organizations to be awarded grant funding under the **LESF** program are the **Wigamig Owners Loan Fund Inc., Sitting Bull Tribal Business Information Center (TBIC), Turtle Mountain Community Development Financial Institution, the Oregon Native American Business & Entrepreneurial Network (ONABEN), Katikitegon Community Development Corporation, and the Ho-Chunk Nation.** The grants range in value from \$12,000 to \$40,000, and the projects include financial education, loan funds, and entrepreneurship development. Three grants will be given to help groups start community development financial institutions (CDFIs), two grants specifically support financial education programs, and one grant will support an entrepreneurship training program.

"We are proud to be able to support these innovative economic development organizations that play such an important role in creating an 'enabling environment' for economic development on Indian reservations and in other Native communities," stated **Michael E. Roberts, President of First Nations Development Institute.** *"We are thankful to our funders who have supported this grant program."* **The Little Eagle Staff Fund** is currently capitalized by Bank of America, the Johnson Scholarship Foundation, the Washington Mutual Foundation, and a fourth partner, as well as through the generous support of **First Nations'** individual donors.

The focus of the **LESF** projects is to educate individuals about successful financial management techniques with the broader implication that this knowledge will support Native individuals and communities to become self-reliant and economically prosperous. *"Our mission is to change our economic landscape one family at a time by providing the essential educational components related to making sound financial decisions,"* stated **Chrystal Cornelius, Executive Director for the Turtle Mountain CDFI.** *"We are also creating an*

outlet to provide capital and lending products that will increase community and individual assets and help build wealth within our community."

First Nations Development Institute is a national American Indian-led 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that was founded in 1980. Through a three-pronged strategy of educating grassroots practitioners, advocating systemic change, and capitalizing Indian communities, **First Nations Development Institute** is working to restore Native control and culturally-compatible stewardship of the assets they own – be they land, human potential, cultural heritage, or natural resources – and to establish new assets for ensuring the long-term vitality of Native communities. **First Nations** was founded with the belief that when armed with appropriate resources, Native peoples hold the capacity and ingenuity to ensure the sustainable economic, spiritual, and cultural well-being of their communities.

For more information about this project, contact Sarah Dewees, Director of Research/ sdewees@firstnations.org; or visit First Nations Development Institute's website at www.firstnations.org.

###

Web Site: <http://www.firstnations.org>

**Contact Details: 703 3rd Ave, Suite B
Longmont, CO 80501**

Media Contact: Sarah Echohawk Vermillion, Vice President

Phone: 303-774-7836

Fax: 303-774-7841

e-mail: svermillion@firstnations.org