



STATE-TRIBAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The STED Commission and the Montana Department of Commerce have approached economic development in Indian Country as a 3-legged stool. Each part of the economic development stool is critical to promoting balanced a sustainable economic development in the tribal communities in Montana.

Commission Responsibilities

Launched under the Native American Economic Development Act of 1999 and permanently established by the 2007 Legislature, the State-Tribal Economic Development Commission is administratively attached to the Department of Commerce.

Among other things, the commission is tasked with:

- Helping to develop business enterprises on reservations;
- Identifying the availability of federal, state, and private sector funds for tribal governments, Indian business enterprises, and communities located on Indian reservations in Montana;
- Conducting a comprehensive assessment of economic conditions on each of the Indian reservations in the state;
- Applying for or assisting tribal governments in applying for grants listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance for which either the commission or the tribe are considered eligible and would supply tangible economic benefits to any or all Indian reservations in Montana; and
- Working cooperatively with tribal government officials, the state Coordinator of Indian Affairs, and appropriate state officials to help foster state-tribal cooperative agreements (Title 18, Chapter 11, part 1) that enhance the economic development on Indian reservations and to help the Department of Commerce fully implement and comply with the economic development provisions tasked to the Department of Commerce at MCA 90-1-105.

In carrying out the duties listed above, the Commission actively:

- Works with the tribal governments and the State of Montana to support, develop, and grow Indian-owned private sector businesses on Montana Indian reservations and elsewhere;
- Works with tribal governments and the State of Montana to support, develop, and grow tribal government-owned businesses on Montana Indian reservations and elsewhere;

- Provides the Department of Commerce information and advice on investments of economic development funding in Indian Country;
- Consults with each tribal nation of the State Tribal Economic Development Commission and the State of Montana on avenues to improve the economic well-being of Indian citizens and businesses;
- Discusses and shares best practices in economic development that have been implemented by tribal governments in Montana; and
- Provides a venue for Indian people and tribal governments to learn about local, state and federal resources that are available for projects and activities in Indian Country.

Special Commission Projects for the Current Biennium

Montana Indian Language Preservation Pilot Program

During the 2013 legislative session, Senate Bill 342 established the inaugural Montana Indian Language Program (MILP). The pilot program was created to help preserve the eroding Native languages that are traditionally spoken in the state. During the current biennium, each of the eight tribal nations received \$186,000 in 2016 to produce preservation products that will help memorialize their languages while at the same help to perpetuate language usage. Each of the tribes has their own schedule and prioritization of goals and activities for the year. The activities include digitizing language products, recordings of stories and book publishing, online classes, development of interactive language dictionaries and other language learning activities, summer language immersion classes, and strategic planning for language programs. As well as supporting oversight for each of the Tribal Language Program the MILP program has held their first MILP All Tribes Language Summit at the same time and location as the Montana Indian Education Conference which allow Indian Educators to participate in the workshops that were available from each of the Montana Language programs. The STED Commission created the administrative rules and guidelines for MILP and is the administrative/project management arm working with each local community on producing deliverables and reporting budgetary and activity updates. The MILP program works to ensure that all the program deliverables are submitted to the Montana Historical Society for inclusion into the colorful history of Montana. The language programs have a biennial budget of \$1.5M for all eight tribes including the State recognized Little Shell Tribe.

Strengthening State Tribal Economic Development Networks

STEDC staff have traveled to each of the reservations multiple times to address tribal councils, discuss projects with tribal staff and Indian businesses and to share with the tribal communities the various funding and technical assistance opportunities that are offered through the state and beyond. Staff has participated in intra-agency meetings and economic development events including the Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) presentations, Montana Department of Transportation Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) panels, Montana Indian Business Alliance (MIBA) keynote, Innovate Montana Symposium, State Tribal Relations Interim Committee meetings, and Montana Indian Education Association Conference keynote. The staff also hosted an inaugural Governor's Tribal Leader Summit reception at the Helena Indian Alliance to strengthen the ties between urban off-reservation tribal members and the tribal nations.

Restructuring of Indian Country Economic Development (ICED) Funding

Commissioners convened in August 2015 and May 2016 to review, approve, and recommend adjustments in Indian Country Economic Development (ICED) program funding for fiscal years 2016 and 2017.

- Tribal Business Planning Grants (formerly Tribal Priority Grants),
- Native American Business Advisors (NABA) Grants (formerly Indian Entrepreneur contracts),
- Indian Equity Fund (IEF) Small Business Grants

Adjustments to the Indian Country Economic Development funding included focusing \$224,000 per fiscal year in tribal government grant funding on business development and planning, increasing Indian Equity Fund grants from \$120,000 to \$320,000 per fiscal year, and developing a Native American Business Advisor grant program with \$120,000 in dedicated grant funding for local Native American organizations to increase their capacity to provide business technical assistance services and to assist clients with the online Indian Equity Fund application. Tribal Business Planning projects for 2016 currently underway are:

- Blackfeet Health Programs Centralized Third Party Billing Feasibility Study
- Chippewa Cree Rocky Boy's Fuel Pump Feasibility Study/Business Planning
- Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes Hot Springs Facilities Renovation Feasibility Study
- Crow Apsaalooke Pure Bottled Water & Arrow Creek Ranch Market and Economic Feasibility Studies
 - Fort Belknap Data Management System
 - Fort Peck 'Old Airport Area' zoning planning
 - Little Shell Tribal Enterprise Legal Assistance & 615 Central Avenue Renovation Documents
 - Northern Cheyenne Museum Feasibility Study, Business Plan, and Architectural Renderings

Native American Business Advisor (NABA) organizations that were awarded funds for fiscal years 2016 and 2017 are:

- BLACKFEET: NACDC Financial Services Inc.
- CHIPPEWA CREE: Stone Child College
- CONFEDERATED SALISH & KOOTENAI TRIBES: Sovereign Leasing and Financing
- CROW: Apsaalooke Development Fund
- FORT BELKNAP: Fort Belknap Tribal Credit
- FORT PECK: Economic Development Department
- LITTLE SHELL: Native American Development Corporation
- NORTHERN CHEYENNE: People's Partner for Community Development

These organizations were granted funds to increase their capacity to provide robust technical assistance services to local entrepreneurs and assist Indian Equity Fund applicants.

Indian Equity Fund (IEF) Small Business grants were awarded to the following businesses across Indian Country:

- Blackfeet:
 - Feather Woman Mountain Adventures (Tom Crawford)
 - Gussman Enterprises LLC (Marie Gussman)
 - P'ita Paintings (Sammy Bird)
 - Blackfeet Tours (Alger Swingley)
- Chippewa Cree:
 - Centennial Café at Stone Child College (Robert Belcourt)

- Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes:
 - Caroline Antionette Photography (Caroline Lozeau)
 - Caudill Industries, LLC (Boyd Caudill)
 - idSTUDIO (Travis Irvine)
 - NW Construction and Abatement (Mervyn Camel)
- Crow:
 - TruColors (Patricia Huntley)
 - Indian Battle Tours (Rose Williamson)
 - River Crow Trading Post (Theo Hugs)
 - Big Man Ranch Co. (Alden Big Man Sr.)
- Fort Belknap Indian Community
 - Main Event Photography (Breanne Main)
 - Blue Heaven Guest Ranch (Toby Werk)
 - Juanita's Machine Quilted Star Quilts (Juanita Colee)
- Fort Peck:
 - Dakota Trading Post (Raymond White Tail Feather)
 - RY Enterprises LLC (Yvonne Basahy)
 - Rosa's Embroidery (Eliane Boyd)
- Little Shell:
 - Cottage Floral and Gifts (Deb Dulaney)
- Northern Cheyenne:
 - Burns Burger Barn (Ron Burns)
 - F Heart Performance Horses (Rowdy Alexander)
 - 7XL Cattle (David Bixby)
 - Mudzz Bucket Disposal (Alden Big Man Sr.)
 - C Heart Cattle (Whisper Kelly)
 - CF Welding (Casey Fredericks)

Aligning Tribal Programs Into a Cohesive Section:

The following programs were organized into and branded as the "Indian Country Programs" section under the Business Development Bureau:

- State Tribal Economic Development Commission,
- Montana Indian Language Program,
- Tribal Business Planning Grants (formerly Tribal Priority Grants),
- Native American Business Advisors (NABA) Grants (formerly Indian Entrepreneur contracts)
- Indian Equity Fund (IEF) Small Business Grants,
- Native American Collateral Support (NACS) Program, and
- Tribal Tourism Development

These programs were aligned in a section to better organize and more efficiently management the staffing, goals, activities and performance of these programs.

Digital Conversion for Grant Applications

Starting with the fiscal year 2016 all grant program applications for the Indian Country Programs converted to an online application interface called Submittable™, a Missoula, MT company to accept online applications for all of its grants programs. This conversion has increased the efficiency of staff, grant review committees, and the grant management process. Staff hosted webinars for each program prior to their launch so that participants had an opportunity to learn system.

Indian Law, Agriculture, and Tourism Targets

Additional STED Commission activities focused on bringing attention to tribal codes and laws and the impact on business development, a renewed focus on agriculture as a viable economic development tool and job creator for rural reservations, and developing the capacity of individual and tribal tourism operators to host domestic and international tourism opportunities. The STED Commission worked with tribal leadership to host a spring reservation legal system tour of Alexander Blewett III Indian Law School students at the University of Montana at each reservation in Montana. Tribal code development as it relates to business development is an eligible activity for FY 2017 Tribal Business Planning grants. Agricultural activities were included as eligible activities for funding under the Indian Equity Fund and the Native American Collateral Support. Tourism development activities included training and workshop opportunities with the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA), the Governor's Conference on Tourism participation, developing more robust Indian Country content for the visitmt.com website, and National Association for Interpretation certification and training.

Native American Collateral Support (NACS)

Staff launched the Native American Collateral Support program after researching domestic high-performing collateral support programs. The program addresses a lack of access to capital for Native American owned businesses. The program has assisted with a \$100,000 certificate of deposit on a \$379,000 loan for the purchase of Wolf City Auto Napa in Wolf Point, MT and \$65,000 on a \$225,000 land acquisition and commercial building construction for Flathead Raft Company in Polson, MT. Staff has met with financial institutions both on and near the reservations to make them aware of the program.

Policy/Program Recommendations

The STED Commission has actively participated in and made recommendations on the program framework and budget for the Indian Country. Commissioners carried key conversations articulating the vision of the MILP project during its infancy as well as offering recommendations throughout the life of the pilot program. A consistent focus for the commissioners is addressing the barriers of accessing capital for tribal and individually owned tribal member businesses. The STEDC has brainstormed creating a program that will assist tribal members in garnering consumer business loans through the use of the Native American Collateral Support Program.

Board Membership

The commission is comprised of one member from each of the seven federally recognized tribes in Montana and one member from the Little Shell band of Chippewa Indians. A tribal government may advertise for individuals interested in serving on the commission and develop a list of applicants from which it may choose its nominee to recommend to the Governor. In place of choosing from a list of applicants, a tribal government may select an elected tribal official to recommend for membership on the Commission. If a tribal government nominates or otherwise recommends more than one person for membership on the Commission, the Governor shall select one individual from among those recommended persons. Governor Bullock has appointed the following Board members:

Shawn Real Bird, Chairman (*Crow*)

Alternate: Norbert Hill

Richard Sangrey, Vice Chairman (*Rocky Boy*)

Shelly Fyant, (Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes)

Alternate: Len Twoteeth

Gerald Gray (Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana)

Alternate: Clarence Sivertsen

Joe Fox Jr. (Northern Cheyenne)

Alternate: Merlin Sioux

Harry Barnes (Blackfeet)

Alternate: William Old Chief

Lonnie Headdress, Sr. (Fort Peck)

Alternate: Rodney Miller

Jim (Alvin) Kennedy (Fort Belknap)

Alternate: Delina Cuts the Rope

Jason Smith (Governor's Office of Indian Affairs)

Montana Director of Indian Affairs

John Rogers (Governor's Office of Economic Development)

Chief Business Development Officer

Meg O'Leary (Montana Department of Commerce)

Director