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Native CDFI Capital Access Convening



Uplifting Tribal Energy Sovereignty Through ‘Just Transition’ Investments in Indian Country



Tribal Energy Alternatives, A GRID Affiliate
Tanksi Clairmont, Co-Executive Director
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Sponsors:



Overview

- Who we are
- Impacts in Indian Country
- Just Transition
- Investing in Tribal Energy
- Tribal Energy Projects
- Q&A with Audience
- Resources



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TRIBAL ENERGY ALTERNATIVES

A GRID AFFILIATE

Our mission is to support Tribal Nations build community-powered solutions to advance economic and environmental justice through sustainable energy

Our vision is a balanced transition to energy sovereignty for Tribal Nations grounded in traditional values for future generations.



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Six Pillars of Our Work

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

Hands-on solar training, job placement, and career pipeline building for tribal community members.

Includes IBT (Installation Basics Training), solar installation experience, and long-term workforce readiness.

Scholarships, internships, fellowships, and Summer Energy Associates.

Focused on building knowledge and leadership in the clean energy field among Native students and career minded professionals.



CONSTRUCTION

Deployment of solar and renewable energy projects in tribal communities

Staffed by Native teams that travel to and work directly within tribal communities.

Technical assistance and proposal development for Project Management and engineering and design

Outreach program for community engagement and awareness of tribal-led energy projects

GRANTS & FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Direct funding opportunities for tribes and tribally-led organizations to support solar and energy projects, infrastructure, and planning

Includes Facility & Residential, Gap Funding, Capacity Building, and Energy Planning grant programs.

POLICY & ADVOCACY

Dedicated to breaking down structural barriers to tribal energy sovereignty. Supports engagement with federal, state, and tribal policy while elevating Native voices.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Includes participation and managing federal funding for tribal energy development

WIN-SFA program focused on residential solar energy in 6 states:
CA, NV, UT, AZ, NM, CO

CALIFORNIA PROGRAMS

California-specific tribal support programs for 109 Federally recognized tribes. Expands impact geographically while maintaining culturally-rooted strategies.

OUR VALUES

Empowerment

Uplifting Tribal Sovereignty and Indigenous worldviews. Tribal Sovereignty is the authority to establish our own governments, the ability to exercise our treaty rights, determine membership requirements, enact legislation, and establish law enforcement, court systems, and infrastructure.

Generosity

Generosity means contributing to the well-being of one's people and all life by sharing and giving freely. Sharing is not just about objects and possessions but emotions like sympathy, compassion, and kindness. It also means to be generous with one's time. The act of giving and not looking for anything in return serves in alignment with being a good relative.

Conservation

The worldview is deep and intense and infused with spiritual meaning. Everything in Native American culture ties into their belief system and their love for land and people. With the collective support of family and community comes the sense of satisfaction and belonging that defines happiness.

Community

Native American communities understand the importance and interconnection of all creation; people, animals, and grandmother earth. Traditional ecological knowledge and intergenerational teachings is inherent in our communities and is adhered to and respected as we consider every aspect of the environment.

Humility

We are no more no less than all that lives, we honor the beauty, imperfections, brilliance and humanness as a common man (human).



Impact: WFD & Construction

2024 Achievements:

- Completed 5 major solar installations, reducing household energy costs by up to 90%.
- Partnered with tribal colleges, schools, and local industries to provide training and paid fellowship opportunities.

Western Indigenous Network Solar For All (WIN-SFA):

- Goal: Provide solar and storage solutions to 2,910 Native American households by 2029.
- 2024 Impact: Installed 2.4 MW of solar, saving an estimated \$9.5 million in lifetime energy costs.
- \$5.1 million in funding supported 78 tribal members in workforce training, engaging 69 tribal partners.



2024 TRIBAL IMPACTS

\$5.1 million

FUNDING
AWARDED
TO TRIBAL
PARTNERS

2.4

MEGAWATTS
SOLAR FOR
TRIBAL NATIONS



18

STATES
WORKED IN



78

TRAINEES



\$9.5 million

LIFETIME ENERGY SAVINGS



69

TRIBAL PARTNERS

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Impact: Grants & Education

- Facility & Residential, Gap Funding, Capacity Building, and Energy Planning grant programs.
- Scholarships, internships, fellowships, and Summer Energy Associates.
- Focused on building knowledge and leadership in the clean energy field among Native students and career-minded professionals.



TRIBAL IMPACTS (TO DATE)

\$13.3 million

FUNDING
AWARDED
TO TRIBAL
PARTNERS

8+

MEGAWATTS
SOLAR FOR
TRIBAL NATIONS



19
STATES
WORKED IN



\$44 million
LIFETIME ENERGY SAVINGS



75+
TRIBAL PARTNERS

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What is a Just Transition



“A Just Transition in tribal communities” involves shifting power to local communities as they invest in housing, food systems, and local businesses to create economies that honor Indigenous knowledge, reflect community values, forge equitable partnerships, and restore the land (Jessica Stago, the Native American Economic Initiatives Director).



TEA's Just Transition in Indian Country



- Energy self-sufficiency and independence
- Environmental Sustainability
- Economic Development
- Community Resiliency

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Challenges and Opportunities of a Just Transition



Challenges

- Lack of resources and funding (capital, experts, workforce)
- Unfavorable net metering, cumbersome interconnection policies
- utility lack of collaboration
- Rural areas is difficult for mobilization
- Federal and State Policies and incentives are inconsistent
- Supply and Demand
- Environmental concerns

Opportunities

- 16+ Tribally-Owned Electric Utilities in the U.S. - replicable model of complete energy sovereignty
- Distributed solar policies enable benefits; virtual net metering subscriptions
- PPA's and RECs
- IRA and BIL Funding Opportunities
- Rising Costs of Traditional Energy Production (e.g. Fossil Fuels)
- Land and resources*



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Opportunities for a Just Transition



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How Do We Fund This Work?



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Funder role in a Just Transition

- **Financial Support and Resource Mobilization**
 - Grants and investments
 - Unrestricted vs restricted funding support
 - Leverage diverse funding streams
- **Strategic Influence and Capacity Building**
 - Promoting equitable funding practices
 - Supporting leadership and community as experts
 - Building funder networks and collaboration
 - Advancing policy and advocacy efforts
- **Driving Accountability and Learning**
 - Promoting transparency and accountability in the funder ecosystem
 - Sharing knowledge and best practices



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EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS FUNDED AND INSTALLED



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Elko

System Size: 48 kW-DC and 73.2MWh annual production

Project Details: Elko Indian Colony Gymnasium, pole mount installation

Number of Trainees: 2

Lifetime Production (20 years): 1,570 MWh | Lifetime bill savings: \$229,000



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Elko Colony Health & Wellness Center



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Pueblo of Santa Ana

System Size: 138 kW-DC and 238.6 MWh annual production

Project Details: Tamaya Wellness Center

Number of Trainees: 6 some training, 3 full project

**Lifetime Production (20 years): 4,400 MWh | Lifetime bill savings:
\$350,000**



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Santa Ana Tamaya Wellness Center



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Thank You! Questions?

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