



Inokesquetee Saki Yellowbird Fellowship

Workforce Development for the
Native CDFI Industry



OVERVIEW:

NACDC Financial Services, Inc.

Our mission is to provide alternative financing opportunity for Native American Entrepreneurs and small businesses in communities on and near Indian Reservations in Montana.



CANADA

IDAHO

WYOMING

OVERVIEW:

NACDC Financial Services, Inc.



NACDC

Financial Services, Inc.

- Founded in 2010
- Loan products offered:
 - Small dollar
 - Consumer
 - Business
 - Agriculture
 - Artist line of credit
 - Home loans
- Grown from 3 to 15 staff since founding
- Deployed \$35.4 million in capital since founding

OVERVIEW:

Mountain | Plains Regional Native CDFI Coalition

- Founded February 2020
- **Members:**
8 Native CDFIs + 1 CDC
- **Target market:**
MT, WY, SD, ND
- **Leadership:**
6 of 8 executive directors are Native women





OVERVIEW:

Mountain | Plains Regional Native CDFI Coalition

Capital:

23 unique private philanthropy, impact investor, and government investments

Largest capital source:

2022 EDA Build Back Better Regional Challenge awardee

Purpose:

To fortify the Mountain | Plains Indigenous finance industry

Why:

To reestablish traditional, vibrant trade routes

Strategy:

Amplify strength, unify action, sustain generations

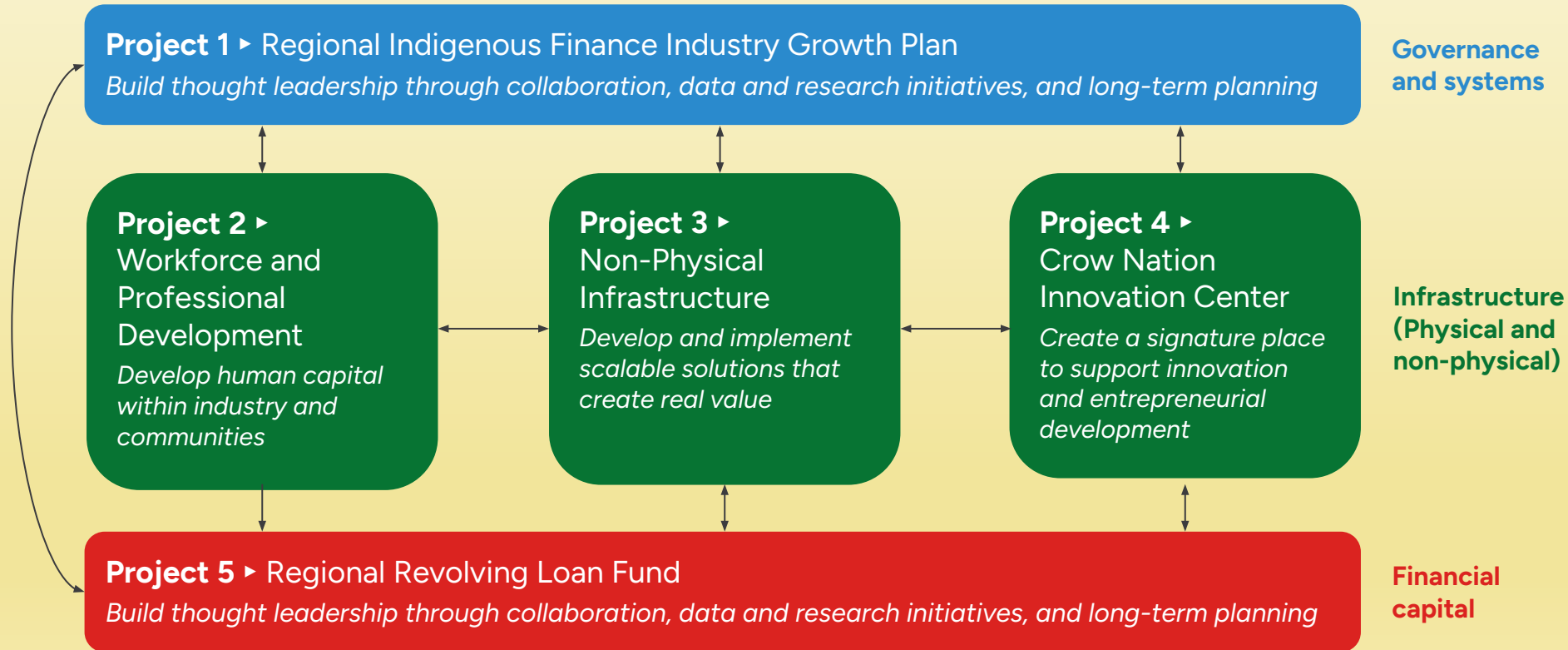


OVERVIEW:

Mountain | Plains Regional Native CDFI Coalition

COMPONENT PROJECTS:

Creating an innovation ecosystem that accelerates economic growth in Native American communities





Native CDFI Workforce and Professional Development Study: **Key findings**

- While there were many resources available, accessibility and applicability were limited. The burden on Native CDFIs to train **newly onboarded staff** impacted efficiency and overall sustainability of organizations.
- Fewer than 5 educational resources covered the following topics of interest:
 - **Underwriting and processing**
 - Board development and engagement
 - Loan software
 - Pipeline management





Native CDFI Workforce and Professional Development Study: Key findings

- Most existing resources were not geared to CDFIs.
- As expressed by Native CDFI executive directors, professional development needs included:
 - Business counseling, planning, and management
 - Underwriting
 - Data management and reporting
 - Grant writing
 - Loan processing and management
 - Creative financing for CDFIs
- Onboarding a new officer took 6–12 months and cost \$56,500.

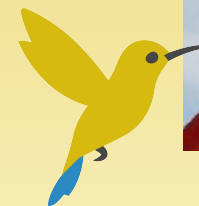


Elouise Cobell

(Yellow Bird Woman)

The Inokesquetee Saki (Yellowbird Fellowship) was named in honor of Elouise Cobell, an advocate for change who fought for what she believed was right for Indian Country.

She founded the first national bank on an Indian reservation owned by a Native American tribe.

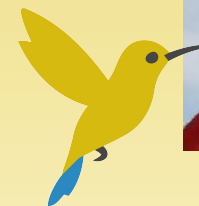




ABOUT OUR NAME

Elouise Cobell famously filed a class action lawsuit against the federal government for mismanaging funds. Thirteen years later, the government settled for \$3.4 billion, the largest settlement in US history.

Throughout her life, she received many honors for her accomplishments, including the MacArthur Genius Award for her work in financial literacy. Elouise passed away in 2011 and was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.





Yellowbird Fellowship



Duration

- 1 year
- Aligned with the academic calendar, from fall to spring



Key focus areas

- Native CDFI industry and broader finance
- Support for Native women
- Resources (stipends, technology, office equipment, Wi-Fi, childcare, travel)





Learning structure

- In-person meetings (3 a year) and weekly virtual sessions designed for relationship building and knowledge sharing
- Field experience at participating Native CDFIs and other financial institutions
- Mentoring/coaching



Completion

- Micro-credentialing and digital badges for accomplishments
- Partnership with Native Women Launch



First-Year Fellowship Participants

- 9 fellows in first cohort
- Fellows with different levels of industry experience had the opportunity to share their differing perspectives and knowledge with each other

Length of time working in Native CDFI industry

1–2 years



3–5 years



Less than 1 year



Fellowship Panel

- What is the most valuable skill or experience you've gained through the Yellowbird Fellowship?
- Participants in the Yellowbird Fellowship frequently highlight the importance of the relationships and networks developed throughout the fellowship. Can explain how those relationships and connections form and why they are so valuable?
- How would you rate your confidence level? What's changed, since participating in the fellowship? Please explain.
- Why should individuals apply for this fellowship?





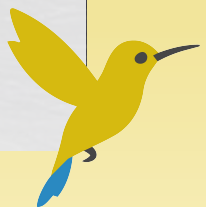
Fellowship Impacts

- Increased confidence in leadership abilities
- Increased understanding of financial leadership
- Ongoing peer collaboration after completion of fellowship
- Increased representation of Indigenous leadership in Native CDFIs and other professional spaces
- Long term investment in Native talent, innovation and self-determination
- Development of a sustainable support networks among fellows, mentors and partners
- Increased readiness to pursue or sustain a career path in finance





Our fellows, mentors, and instructors came together to build relationships, learn, and enjoy the beauty of the Blackfeet Nation. Fellows completed the first portion of the "Introduction to Native CDFIs" course.



Mountain | Plains Regional Native CDFI Coalition

Akiptan, Inc.

Four Bands Community Fund

NACDC Financial Services, Inc.

Native American
Development Corporation

Montana Native Growth Fund

Mountain Plains CDC

People's Partner for
Community Development

Plenty Doors CDC

Wind River Development Fund





THANK YOU!



Yellowbird Fellowship

Workforce Development for the Native CDFI Industry