



# FOUR DIRECTIONS

DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The mission of Four Directions Development Corporation is to improve the social and economic conditions of the Native American tribes in Maine — the Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot — through education and investment in affordable housing, tribal business ventures, and Native entrepreneurship.



FOUR DIRECTIONS  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

# BUILDING CAPITAL ACCESS THROUGH ARTISAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

# Welcome & Introductions

## Introduction of Presenters

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### Simon Perry

- Credit Operations / Program Oversight
- Application review and operational coordination
- Artisan grant systems and workflow management

### Jonathan Warren

- Business Advisor & Marketing Strategist
- Marketing and outreach coordination
- Applicant support and technical assistance
- Program development and systems improvement

# Agenda

## Building Capital Access Through Artisan Entrepreneurship

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### Welcome & Introductions

- Introduction of Presenters
- About Four Directions Development Corporation

### Why the Artisan Grant Was Created

- Barriers Native artisans face
- Creating pathways to capital access and entrepreneurship

### Artisan Grant Program Overview

- Grant structure and funding
- Eligibility and supported expenses
- Technical assistance integration

### Building Better Systems

- Historic program vs current program
- Operational improvements and scalability
- Tools, workflows, and review systems

### Grant Timeline & Program Operations

- Marketing and outreach strategy
- Application period and applicant support
- Committee review and decision process

### Deep Dive Into the Application

- Business plan walk through
- Entrepreneurial development through the application itself

### Beyond the Grant Dollars

- Technical assistance and financial capability
- Building entrepreneurial confidence and networks
- “Everyone is a winner” approach

### Future of the Artisan Grant Program

- Growth opportunities
- Expanded ecosystem support
- Long-term vision for Native entrepreneurship

### Success Stories & Community Impact

### Questions & Discussion

# About Four Directions Development Corporation

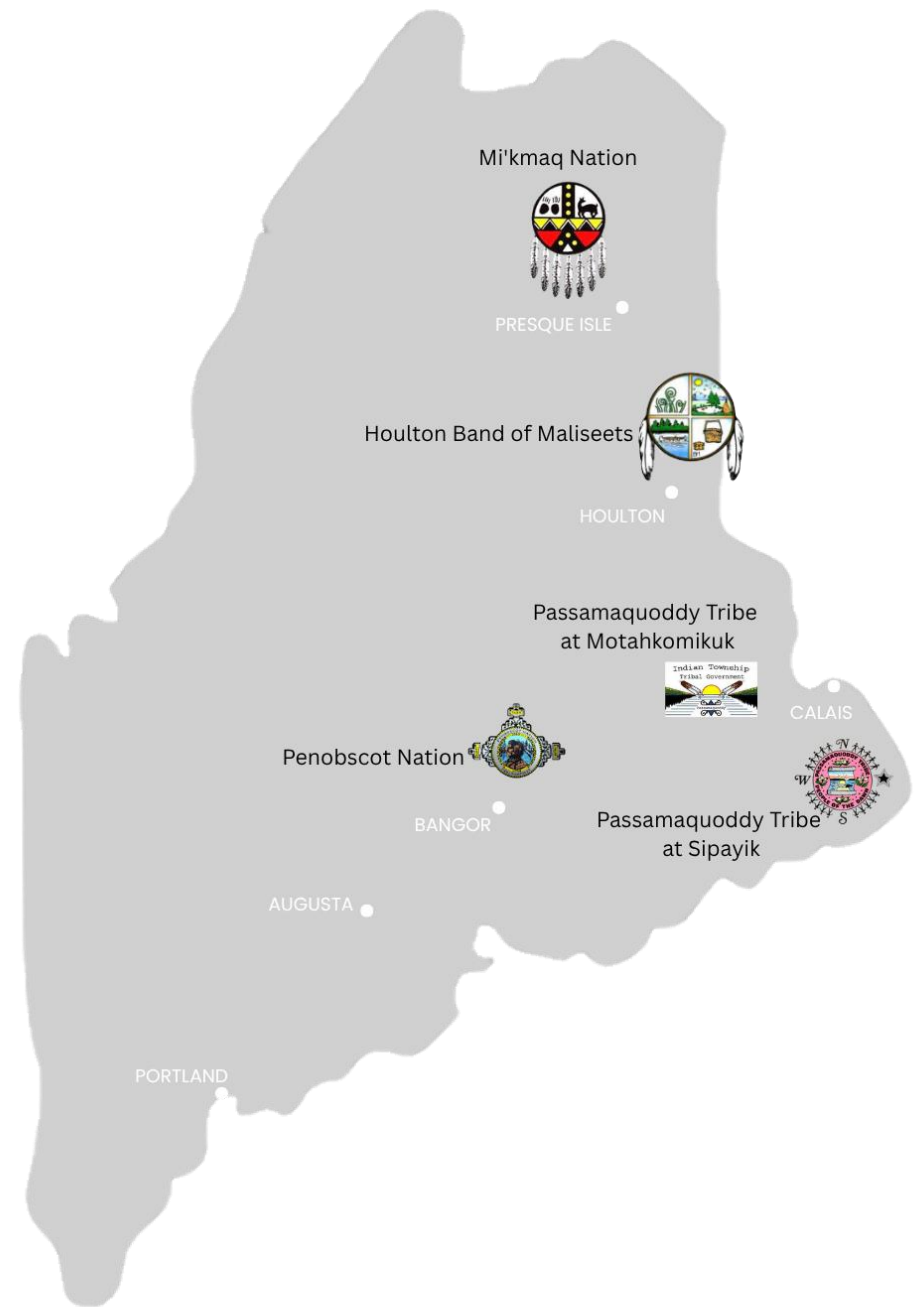
## Who We Are

Four Directions Development Corporation (FDDC) is a Native Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) serving the Wabanaki communities of Maine.

Our mission is to strengthen Native communities through:

- Housing services
- Financial capability education
- Small business development
- Technical assistance
- Community Development

We believe entrepreneurship can be a powerful tool for preserving culture, building wealth, and strengthening communities.



# 2026 Artisan Grant Fund


Apply for the **FDDC 2026 Artisan Grant** for a chance to receive **\$2,000** for tools, materials, marketing, and more. Applications **OPEN April 6th CLOSE April 27th**.


## Apply Today!

- ✓ **Apply Online:** before April 27, 2026
- ✓ **Application Review:** April 28, 2026 – May 7, 2026
- ✓ **Selected** grantees notified May 8<sup>th</sup> 2026

SCAN ME!

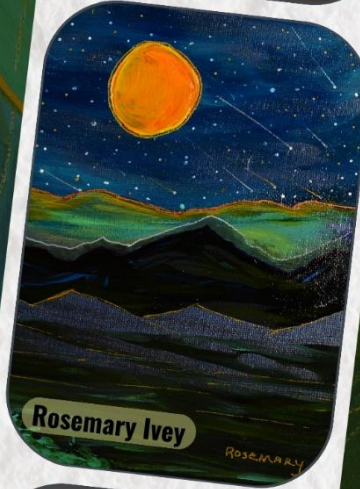


 JWarren@fourdirectionsmaine.org

 <https://fourdirectionsmaine.org/native-artisan-grant-fund/>



Brenda Moore-Mitchell



Rosemary Ivey



Meagan Loring

## What is the Artisan Grant?

### Program Purpose

- A \$2,000 cash grant designed to support Native artisans with working capital needs that significantly impact business growth.

### Eligible Uses

- Equipment and materials
- Shipping and freight
- Marketing and branding
- Professional services
- Rental fees
- Registration fees
- Operational support

# Why the Artisan Grant Was Created

## Identifying the Need

Native artisans often face barriers including:

- Limited working capital
- Limited access to traditional financing
- Geographic and economic challenges
- Marketing and operational barriers
- Lack of formal business structure
- Limited access to business development resources

FDDC developed the Artisan Grant Fund to support Native artisans while creating pathways toward long-term entrepreneurial sustainability and capital readiness.



Cassandra Candelmo

# Historic Program vs Current Program



Cricket Griffith

# What Wasn't Working vs What's Working Now

## Previous Challenges

- Manual tracking systems
- Less structured workflows
- Communication gaps
- Limited scalability
- Inconsistent review structure
- Harder applicant support tracking
- Paper application Limited grant availability.

## Current Improvements

- Structured operational timelines
- Organized review systems
- Shared scoring workflows
- Coordinated outreach strategy
- Improved communication systems
- Scalable application processes
- Improved applicant support

Our focus shifted from simply administering grants to building sustainable systems and stronger applicant experiences.

# Systems & Tools Used



Chance Griffith

To improve program efficiency and applicant experience, FDDC implemented:

- Online application systems
- Shared review workflows
- Excel-based scoring systems
- Marketing schedules and outreach tracking
- Centralized communication systems
- Organized file management
- Internal review meetings and timelines

These systems helped improve:

- Transparency
- Coordination
- Scalability
- Communication
- Operational consistency

# Grant Timeline Overview & Workflow



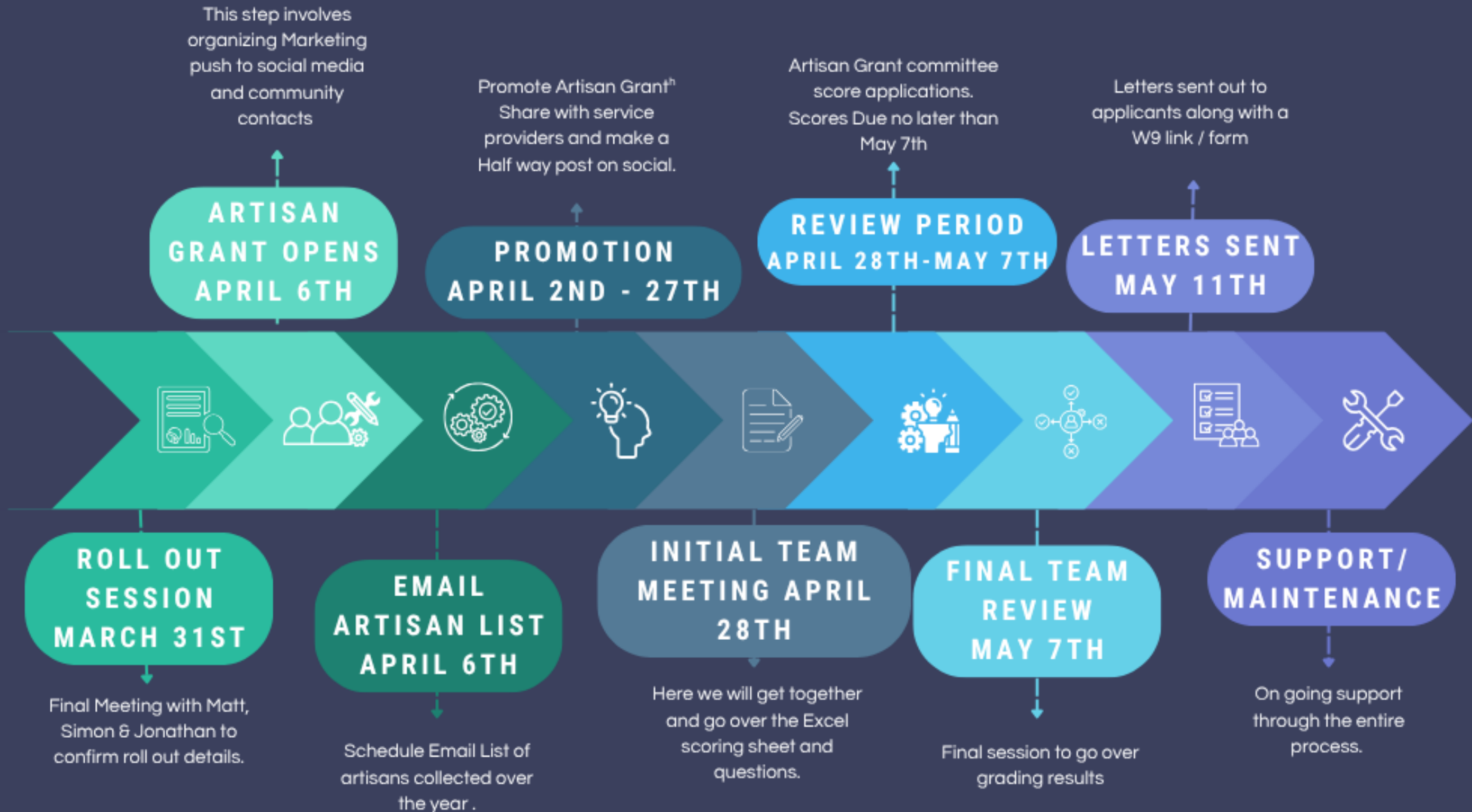
Carolyn Anderson

## Key Program Stages

- Rollout planning session
- Promotion and outreach period
- Application launch
- Applicant support and technical assistance
- Initial review meeting
- Committee scoring period
- Final review session
- Award notifications and follow-up
- Ongoing support and relationship building

Strong timelines and communication structures improved both internal operations and applicant experience.

# 2026 ARTISAN GRANT





Jennifer Pictou

# Marketing & Outreach Strategy

## Community-Centered Outreach

- Our outreach strategy focused on relationship-based engagement through:
- Social media campaigns
- Email marketing
- Community partnerships
- Service provider networks
- Artisan contact lists
- Reminder campaigns and updates
- Flyers and visual storytelling

## Key Takeaway

Community trust and visibility are essential to participation and engagement.

# Application Period & Applicant Support

## Support Starts Before Funding

- Throughout the application period, FDDC focused on reducing barriers and increasing support by:
- Assisting applicants during the process
- Providing technical assistance
- Helping structure ideas
- Connecting artisans with advisors and resources
- Encouraging long-term entrepreneurial development

The application process itself became an opportunity for learning, planning, and relationship building.

Lydia Soctomah



# Deep Dive Into the Application



Geo Neptune

## The Application as a Business Planning Tool

- The Artisan Grant application encourages entrepreneurs to think critically about:
- Products and services
- Target market
- Pricing strategy
- Revenue sources
- Marketing activities
- Competition
- Funding needs
- Suppliers and partnerships

## Key Insights

Many applicants leave the process with a stronger understanding of their business model and future direction.

The application is more than a funding request — it is a **business plan development exercise.**

# Review & Decision Process

## Community-Centered Review Process

- Applications are evaluated through a structured committee review process focused on:
- Business impact
- Feasibility
- Entrepreneurial growth
- Use of funds
- Community value

## Review Process Includes

- Committee scoring sheets
- Team discussions
- Internal review meetings
- Final review sessions
- Transparent evaluation structure



# Evaluation Sheet

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	<b>Applicant Name:</b>	Simon Perry							
2			Score	Weight	Weighted Score		Scoring Criteria:	0 to 3	Lacks required information/does not align with goals of the grant.
3			0 - 10					4 to 6	Application provides necessary details and shows potential, but lacks clarity, depth, and impact.
4	<b>Application Quality</b>	Did the applicant give thoughtful and relevant answers to all of the questions?		25%	0			7 to 9	Application is exceptional with clear and compelling vision and strong alignment with grant goals. Shows high potential for impact and follow through.
5	<b>Mission Alignment</b>	Does the applicant clearly state their goals/barriers and how the grant will help them achieve goals/overcome barriers?		20%	0			10	Perfect 🏆 💯 100%
6	<b>Feasibility of Application</b>	Is the budget feasible? Does the budget and proposed activities align with the rest of their proposal?		20%	0				
7	<b>Impact</b>	Does the applicant explain how the grant will impact them in the long term?		10%	0				
8	<b>Marketing</b>	Does the applicant understand their product, their customer, and how to reach them?		15%	0				
9	<b>Financial Need</b>	Does the applicant demonstrate a genuine financial need?		10%	0				
10		<b>Total Score</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0</b>				
11									
12	<b>Comments:</b>								
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									
18	<b>Strengths:</b>								
19									
20									
21									
22									
23									
24	<b>Weaknesses:</b>								
25									
26									
27									
28									
29									



Marilyn Carlton

# Everyone is a Winner

Applicants who are not selected still gain:

- Business planning experience
- Technical assistance **awareness & access**
- Initiate 24/7 access
- Awareness of other FDDC services
- Financial capability connections
- Access to professional networks
- Relationships with advisors and service provider partners
- Artisan Photography



*cj photography*

Chelsea Chavaree

# Success Stories

## Economic Impact

Artisans increased production and stabilized income by investing in equipment and inventory through the grant.

## Cultural and Personal Growth

Grants enabled artisans to dedicate time to craft, teach family, and revive traditional techniques.

Where do we go now?



Meagan Loring

Thank You and  
Open Discussion

# Contact Information



**Simon Perry**

Credit Operations Officer  
Four Directions Development Corporation  
20 Godfrey Drive, Unit 7, Orono, ME 04473  
**Tel:** (207) 866-6545 ext. 111  
**Fax:** (207) 866-6553  
**Email:** [sperry@fourdirectionsmaine.org](mailto:sperry@fourdirectionsmaine.org)



**Jonathan J Warren**

Business Advisor & Marketing Strategist  
Four Directions Development Corporation  
20 Godfrey Drive, Unit 7, Orono, ME 04473  
**Tel:** (207) 866-6545 ext. 102  
**Fax:** (207) 866-6553  
**Email:** [jwarren@fourdirectionsmaine.org](mailto:jwarren@fourdirectionsmaine.org)