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Oweesta Is First Native CDFI to Receive National Opportunity Finance Network Award for Organizational Growth and Change

The Adina Abramowitz Impact Award recognizes Oweesta's leadership in implementing organizational change that strengthens the Native CDFI industry, making the field more effective and better equipped to serve Native communities across Indian Country.

LONGMONT, Colo. — October 23, 2026 — Oweesta Corporation, the nation's longest-standing Native Community Development Financial Institution (Native CDFI) intermediary, has become the first Native CDFI organization to receive the Adina Abramowitz Impact Award for Organizational Growth and Change from Opportunity Finance Network (OFN). OFN presented the national award on October 22 during its 42nd Annual Conference in New Orleans.

The award recognizes a CDFI that exemplifies the excellence, innovation, and commitment championed by its namesake throughout her more than three decades in community finance. After serving on staff at OFN, Abramowitz founded Consulting for Change and later served as managing partner of CDFI Friendly America, helping mission-driven lenders nationwide strengthen their operations and deepen their impact. She passed away in December 2023.

"Adina was an incredible mentor, thinker, and guide. She taught a generation of CDFI leaders that reinvention is essential to growth and that strengthening our organizations is just as important as strengthening our markets," said Chrystel Cornelius, President and CEO of Oweesta. "She brought that wisdom to Native CDFIs and always challenged us to do our best work on behalf of our communities."

"I knew Adina as both a colleague and a friend. Receiving an award in her name is an extraordinary honor to me, personally, and to our remarkable team who embody her principles daily. Native CDFIs demonstrate what is possible when Native people lead with our own capital, our own institutions, and our own vision for economic sovereignty. This recognition belongs to every Native CDFI that continues to show the country what that leadership looks like."

Native CDFIs are Native-led, mission-driven financial institutions that are accountable to the communities they serve. Today, more than 65 Native CDFIs operate across Indian Country, financing the small businesses, affordable housing, homeownership, and community development projects prioritized by Tribal Nations and Native families.

For more than 26 years, Oweesta has helped Native communities build the financial institutions needed to grow culturally aligned, locally controlled economies. The organization supports both emerging and

established Native CDFIs through capital investments, training, technical assistance, and research, enabling them to expand access to financing and increase their impact across Indian Country.
As the Native CDFI movement has grown, so has Oweesta. Today, it's one of the nation's largest Native-led financial institutions, with a loan portfolio of $74.4 million as of June 30, 2026. The Native CDFIs and partners Oweesta supports have created more than 14,000 jobs and invested in nearly 5,000 Native-owned businesses, 1,200 homes, 2,400 Native agriculturalists, and more.

Under Cornelius's leadership, Oweesta has helped mobilize hundreds of millions of dollars into Native communities through partnerships spanning philanthropy, financial institutions, impact investors, and federal agencies. Oweesta's Four Directions of Capital framework guides this work by connecting readiness, lending, risk-sharing, and ownership to transform community priorities into lasting assets rooted in Native Nations.

Looking ahead, Oweesta aims to participate in and facilitate $500 million in lending across Indian Country by 2030.

Oweesta joins previous recipients of the Adina Abramowitz Impact Award: Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (2024) and Latino Community Credit Union (2025).

About Oweesta Corporation
Oweesta Corporation creates opportunities for Native people to build assets and generate wealth by strengthening the institutions and programs that support economic self-determination and Tribal sovereignty. As the nation's longest-standing Native CDFI intermediary, Oweesta provides financial products and development services exclusively for Native CDFIs and Native communities, including training, technical assistance, investments, research, and policy advocacy.

Learn more at www.oweesta.org.

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