



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oweesta Expands Communications Team to Advance Native Economic Sovereignty

Sacha Adorno and Madonna Dolphus join Oweesta to share Native CDFI impact, amplify the organization's impact, and build support for Native-led economic solutions.

LONGMONT, Colo. — October 13, 2026 — Oweesta Corporation, a national Native Community Development Financial Institution (Native CDFI) intermediary, today announced the expansion of its communications team with the addition of Sacha Adorno as Communications Director and Madonna Dolphus, an enrolled member of the Otoe-Missouria Tribe, as Communications Officer.

The investment reflects Oweesta's commitment to advancing Native economic sovereignty by building greater understanding of the Native CDFI industry — its role in increasing access to capital and creating lasting economic opportunity in Tribal communities.

"Through our strategic-planning process, we heard clearly from our stakeholders that Oweesta must continue strengthening how we communicate the distinct value, impact, and leadership of Native CDFIs," said Mel Willie, Chief Officer of Strategic Partnerships, Oweesta. "Expanding our communications capacity is an important investment in the strategic priorities that will guide Oweesta over the next five years: elevating storytelling and advocacy, strengthening partnerships across sectors, and creating greater visibility for the Native CDFI industry among the funders, investors, policymakers, and partners needed to advance opportunity in Native communities."

Native CDFIs are locally rooted financial institutions that invest in small businesses, homeownership, community facilities, and other asset-building opportunities to keep capital circulating in Indian Country. Oweesta advances the Native CDFI field through training, technical assistance, investments, research, and policy advocacy that help Native communities build a full range of asset-building tools and services, from financial education to lending and other financial products.

"Native CDFIs have a unique and powerful story to tell," said Chrystel Cornelius, President and CEO, Oweesta. "They respond to the priorities, opportunities, and strengths of their own communities. We have a responsibility to share their story in a way that recognizes their successes and ensures Native-led economic solutions remain at the forefront of the dialogue around capital access, community development, and economic sovereignty."

Together, Adorno and Dolphus will lead communications that connect Oweesta's institutional priorities with the broader needs of the Native CDFI industry. They will help share the field's impact in meaningful ways,



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strengthen relationships with partners within and beyond Indian Country, and equip funders, policymakers, investors, and other stakeholders to better understand — and support — Native-led economic development.

Adorno brings more than two decades of experience in strategic communications, storytelling, and stakeholder engagement for mission-driven organizations in and outside of the community development sector. She spent more than a decade advising on communications strategy for Opportunity Finance Network, the national network of CDFIs, helping shape narrative positioning and communications efforts across policy, research, programs, events, executive leadership, and industry initiatives.

Her work also spans healthcare, higher education, and philanthropy. As a communications partner to executive leaders and cross-functional teams, Adorno has worked with ChristianaCare Health System, Yale University, the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, City First Bank, Fahe, and the Great Plains Housing Initiative. She holds a bachelor's degree in history from Barnard College.

Dolphus offers more than ten years of experience in strategic communications, branding, creative direction, and visual storytelling. Throughout her career, she has partnered with Native organizations, health initiatives, and community-based programs to develop culturally responsive communications that strengthen engagement and elevate Native voices. Her work blends communications strategy with culturally grounded design to create communications that reflect Native communities.

She holds a Master of Arts in Strategic Communication and Digital Strategy from the University of Oklahoma, and her creative work has received national recognition, including selection as a featured artist by the National Indian Health Board and exhibition with the Great Plains Art Museum.

In Oweesta's more than 25-year history, its partners have invested in roughly 33,000 Native individuals and nearly 7,000 Native businesses, including more than 5,000 Native-owned businesses. Supported by more than 300 investment partners and a current loan portfolio of \$74.4 million, Oweesta is helping build the capital, relationships, and visibility needed to strengthen Native CDFIs and expand economic opportunity throughout Indian Country.

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About Oweesta Corporation

Oweesta Corporation provides opportunities for Native people to develop assets and create wealth by assisting in the establishment of strong, permanent institutions and programs, leading to economic independence and strengthening sovereignty for all Native communities. As the longest-standing Native CDFI intermediary, Oweesta offers financial products and development services exclusively to Native CDFIs and Native communities. These services include training, technical assistance, investments, research, and policy advocacy to help Native communities build an integrated range of asset building tools.

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