



FIRST NATIONS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Our Core Values & Guiding Principles

Our values are part of our DNA. They guide the way we work with our business partners, within our communities and with each other.

Through integrity, accountability, passion, humility, simplicity and a focus on success, we have created a vibrant company culture where ideas can blossom, people can thrive and success can flourish.



Communities First

At First Nations Development Institute, we strongly believe in Native communities and draw on their expertise and genius, as such;

- We approach our work with Native communities with a clear understanding of accountability to them.
- First Nations approaches each and every interaction from a service-driven perspective. Our interaction with Native communities is all about mutual respect, listening rather than telling, and with an approach that is responsive and inclusive of the communities' needs and solutions.
- Our work is governed by a culturally appropriate/sensitive research policy in which we believe that data created and gathered belongs to the communities who generate it.



Our People

At First Nations, we know our work would not be possible without the talented and committed staff who work with us on behalf of Indian Country, as such;

- We are committed to treating others and ourselves with courtesy, humility, dignity and respect.
- We value humor and fun in the workplace; we laugh at ourselves and with each other.
- We believe in an open-door policy where everyone's opinion is valued and can bring ideas and perspectives to the table.
- We are committed to employee empowerment and innovation and seek to hire, train, promote and build the professional capacities of Natives and others who support our mission.



Program Strategy

First Nations has a strong belief in the genius of Native people. Our first approach is to invest in community driven solutions and, on occasion, we design and carry out programs with the understanding that risk-taking is essential for innovation and success. First Nations will focus on and communicate the positive in our search for long-term systemic and institutional change, as such;

- We are willing to act with courage and challenge the status quo. We are not opposed to trying new models and to take risks.
- Leadership and staff see themselves as 'good translators' – educating philanthropic funders about the needs in Native communities, as we have a strong connection and familiarity with the Native communities we serve.
- We highlight the strength of Native assets rather than capitalizing on Native social and economic inequities.
- We recognize that the best solutions for Indian Country come from Indian communities and we invest capital and TA so that Indian communities can achieve success.



Trust & Responsibility

At First Nations, we nurture trust and responsibility and are committed to transparency, high ethical standards and honest and timely communications, as such;

- We exercise transparency and an open-door policy with grantees and partners.
- We hold ourselves – our board, our staff and our consulting partners – to high ethical standards in our ongoing goal to be both honest and fair.
- We treat the resources entrusted to us as sacred – exercising a high level of responsibility with money and resources in our care, as we recognize that these belong to Indian Country, not us.
- We value our high ranking with nonprofit watchdog agencies, as these are good proxies of our fiscal and programmatic stewardship, and demonstrate to our financial partners and our community partners our efficacy.
- We believe in honest, timely reporting and communication with our funders, our partners and the communities we serve.

"We believe that when armed with appropriate resources, Native peoples hold the capacity and ingenuity to ensure the sustainable, economic, spiritual and cultural well-being of their communities."