

First Nations Development Institute's  
Board of Directors  
is proud to share the...

## IMPACT REPORT

# OUR Journey *Together*



7 YEARS IN A ROW



FIRST NATIONS  
DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

# WE Believe

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE *and the* CORE OF ALL OUR WORK

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

## OUR APPROACH

First Nations was founded in 1980 with the mission to assist Native peoples in their efforts to control and develop their assets. Through that control, Native communities build the capacity to direct their economic futures in ways that fit their values and cultures. Since its inception, First Nations has been working in partnership with Native communities to implement a range of asset-building strategies. This approach takes a comprehensive view of assets, which include:

- o Natural Resources
- o Human Capital
- o Physical Assets
- o Institutional Assets
- o Social Capital
- o Legal and Political Assets
- o Financial Assets
- o Cultural Heritage

To increase assets requires different strategies that fall within these broad categories:

**educating** • **advocating** • **capitalizing**

## ASSET-BUILDING

*Our team shares more about its perspectives on and commitment to this positive, collaborative and long-term approach....*



**Catherine Bryan** | Navajo  
DIRECTOR of PROGRAMS –  
STRENGTHENING TRIBAL &  
COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

## Educate Grassroots Practitioners

**162**

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE  
SESSIONS in 2018

**4,765**

PEOPLE EDUCATED THROUGH  
CONVENINGS, WEBINARS &  
CONFERENCES in 2018

**283**

TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIPS  
PROVIDED for CONFERENCES  
& CONVENINGS in 2018

**20**

ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS  
PROVIDED to STUDENTS in 2018

“First Nations’ research in 2018 has underscored the disproportionate scarcity of available resources for Native-led nonprofits and tribal programs. Resources specifically targeting the institutional capacity of these entities are even harder to come by, which can result in our community partners being forced to neglect their infrastructure needs. We know that ultimately this can affect their long-term sustainability and, in turn, their impact. With this in mind, First Nations remains committed to listening to our community partners about the resources they need to strengthen their capacity, such as their board governance, management capacity, or their internal processes like communications and evaluation.”

PHOTO BY RENAN OZTURK



PHOTO BY GATHER FILM



## Advocate for Systemic Change

**Raymond Foxworth** | Navajo  
VICE PRESIDENT of  
GRANTMAKING, DEVELOPMENT  
& COMMUNICATIONS

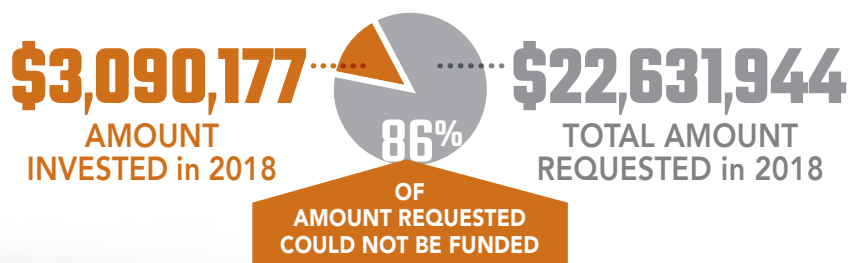
**21**  
PUBLICATIONS  
PRODUCED  
in 2018

**94,920**  
PUBLICATIONS DOWNLOADED  
from ONLINE KNOWLEDGE CENTER  
in 2018

*Engagement with Our Communities and Beyond*

“First Nations’ policy and advocacy work champions bottom-up approaches to build power in Native communities, and ensures representation and policy responsiveness. Our efforts fundamentally support tribal sovereignty and are an extension of our core values rooted in the belief that Native people have the ingenuity to control their own assets, including their own systems of governance. Given that policy plays such an important role in determining access to resources and services along with impacting the overall quality of life for tribal communities, policy and advocacy in Native communities will remain important strategies to strengthen Native control of Native assets.”

**163**  
GRANTS AWARDED  
in 2018



**Michael E. Roberts** | Tlingit  
PRESIDENT & CEO

## Capitalize Native Communities

“The optimism and genius of Indian communities inspires me. I will share that when I was working in venture capital, I was volunteering to serve on the grants review committee at First Nations. I remember a particular week when I had spent a great deal of time with entrepreneurs telling me that they could not possibly survive on the \$15 million or \$20 million we were proposing to invest in their company. And then I showed up at the First Nations grants review committee meeting where folks were telling us that they were going to change the world in their Native communities for \$5,000 or \$10,000. It is easy to see which conversation you would want to be part of. What’s truly amazing, and not at all surprising, is that people in Indian communities did and continue to change the world for the people in their communities with their optimism, their resourcefulness and their genius.”

Please visit [www.firstnations.org/Impact2018](http://www.firstnations.org/Impact2018) for a full interview with Michael E. Roberts to learn more about First Nations' commitment to helping capitalize Native communities.

# ADVANCING OUR

# Mission:

"What inspires me about my community is our culture, our resiliency and our humor. We have individuals and families that set goals, work hard, come together, lead, laugh and inspire. Communities are for uplifting one another, teaching each other and being there for one another. We are stronger together as one voice."

Andrea Reese  
TRAINING & LENDING MANAGER  
Bii Gii Wiin Community Development Loan Fund



We strive to strengthen American Indian economies to support healthy Native communities. We invest in and create innovative institutions and models that strengthen asset control and support economic development for American Indian people and their communities.

## FIRST NATIONS' 5 PROGRAM AREAS

### 2018 IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

#### Bii Gii Wiin Community Development Loan Fund

PROJECT: Investing for the Future Train-the-Trainer Program

Bii Gii Wiin Community Development Loan Fund provides training and access to capital to promote home ownership, entrepreneurship and financial capabilities among American Indian families. In November 2018, Bii Gii Wiin Community Development Loan Fund trained staff members to, in turn, become trainers in First Nations' Investing for the Future educational curriculum, which focuses on teaching basic investment concepts that will have a ripple effect in Native communities. The goal of this curriculum is to provide a way for financial educators and others in Native communities to teach others by offering a simple, effective investment training that leads to effective management of assets. In 2018, 25 individuals were trained to teach the Investing for the Future curriculum. To learn more about the Bii Gii Wiin Community Development Loan Fund, visit [www.biigiwiin.org](http://www.biigiwiin.org).

### ACHIEVING NATIVE FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

Economically empowered Native families contribute to vibrant economic, cultural and social systems. First Nations' work in this area promotes increased financial knowledge, enhances financial capability and ultimately leads to financial empowerment for Native people. First Nations and its subsidiary, First Nations Owesta Corporation, work in partnership with American Indian tribal governments and community leaders to design and administer financial and investor education programs. These programs result in increased investment levels and economic growth in Native communities. First Nations' *Building Native Communities: Financial Skills for Families* curriculum is a catalyst for this work.





## INVESTING in NATIVE YOUTH

Native youth represent the future of Native communities, and their health and well-being determine the health and well-being of a community overall. By investing in youth and giving them a sense of place rooted in tradition, a community ensures that it will have bright and innovative future leaders. First Nations invests in Native youth and their families through many programs. Two key initiatives include the Native Youth and Culture Fund, which annually provides grant support to numerous youth-related projects, and the Native Language Immersion Initiative, which aims to build the capacity of and directly support Native language-immersion and culture-retention programs.

## ADVANCING HOUSEHOLD & COMMUNITY ASSET-BUILDING STRATEGIES

First Nations collaborates with national and local partners to identify, develop and implement household and community asset-building strategies. Working with tribal colleges and community development financial institutions, or CDFIs, ideas are shared through peer learning and programs are bolstered through grantmaking. First Nations also produces research on issues related to predatory lending in Native communities and works to raise awareness of this problem. This program endeavors to move families and communities toward financial security.

## STRENGTHENING TRIBAL & COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

Through grant support, technical assistance and training, First Nations provides tribes and Native communities with the tools and resources necessary to create new community-based nonprofit organizations and to strengthen the capacity of existing nonprofits and tribal agencies or departments. First Nations believes strengthening tribal and community institutions builds economically stronger and healthier Native communities for the long term. A core effort is the Native Arts Initiative, whose goal is to stimulate long-term perpetuation, proliferation and revitalization of traditional artistic and cultural assets in Native communities.

## NOURISHING NATIVE FOODS & HEALTH



PHOTO BY GATHER FILM

With a commitment to increasing Native-control of food systems and improving nutrition and health, First Nations supports community-based models that are building sustainable food systems. Currently, almost every reservation in the U.S. is located in a food desert, where there is limited access to affordable, safe and nutritious food. Without access to healthy food, good health is out of reach for American Indians. This is the result of historical policies of land displacement, removal and federal programs that replaced traditional foods with government rations having little nutritional value. To combat this, there is a dynamic and growing movement underway in Native communities to increase access to fresh and healthy foods, create economically viable food-related business models, offset the disproportionate amount of household income spent on food, and create policies to exert greater control over the local food system. First Nations also participates in policy forums that help develop legislative and regulatory initiatives within this sector.

# BUILDING *Healthy* ECONOMIES

## Why First Nations' Long-Term Strategy Works



**Sherry Salway Black**  
Oglala Lakota

*Sherry Salway Black served as the Senior Vice President for First Nations Development Institute for two decades and was on the boards of First Nations and First Nations Oweesta Corporation. After her tenure at First Nations, she worked with the National Congress of American Indians and as a private consultant. Sherry is now focused on board service with First Peoples Fund, Johnson Scholarship Foundation, Prosperity Now, National Indian Child Welfare Association, and on the new Keepseagle Fund.*

### *Reflections*

from **Sherry Salway Black**

[ THE FULL INTERVIEW CAN BE VIEWED AT [WWW.FIRSTNATIONS.ORG/IMPACT2018](http://WWW.FIRSTNATIONS.ORG/IMPACT2018). ]

**As one of the original staff members of First Nations Development Institute, could you tell me why Native asset control was a key focus of First Nations' mission? What makes this so important today?**

“Rebecca Adamson, the founder of First Nations, came out of the Indian-Controlled School Movement that started in the 1960s. That movement, as part of the activism of the 1960s and 1970s, was the start of tribal or Native control of our educational institutions leading to self-determination of tribal governments (legislation passed in 1975), the beginnings of the tribal colleges (first one in 1969) and the emergence of many Native-controlled organizations in the 1970s and 1980s. First Nations' strategies focused on 'development from within' and 'culturally appropriate, sustainable development' that was holistic and built from our own people and ideas. Previous and existing development attempts in Native communities were typically brought in by outside experts mostly from the federal government with a one-size-fits-all approach. We believed that community leaders knew what was needed in their own communities and just wanted technical and financial support to realize their ideas. After working with communities throughout the 1980s and learning from the people and the work, a framework emerged to better understand development in Native communities.”

**What most inspires you about the work being done in Native communities today?**

“We believed that, as Native people and tribal nations took back control of our assets, over time with the appropriate support, we would do a better job managing them – the increased financial and other returns and benefits that came from effective management of our own assets and building new assets would help lift us out of poverty and forward to prosperity. It sounds simple but it has been hard work by many people, tribal nations and organizations over decades, but the results are starting to come in. Our assumption is correct. We are doing a better job managing our assets – and realizing these benefits. More work is needed to lift all toward prosperity.”

**What is important to know about Native asset control, when funders are considering investing in Native communities?**

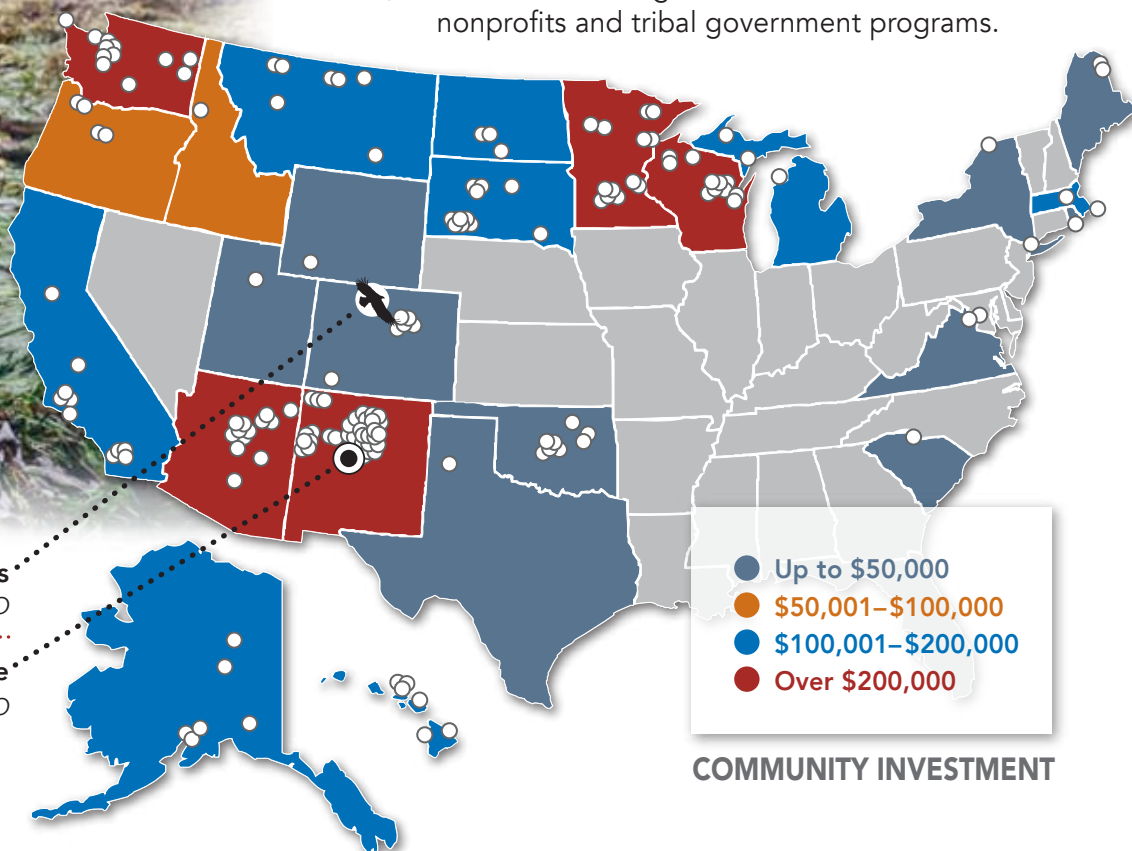
“I believe it is most important to recognize that the programs and efforts that support asset-building strategies in Native communities will take time to have an impact. We need 'patient capital' invested in these efforts – long-term investments in the future. There are a number of private foundations that have made a commitment to Indian Country over the long term, and much can be learned from their investment strategies.

Another important lesson is that no matter what subject area or program is supported by a particular funder – whether it be health, business, community development, art, language preservation, institutional development, youth, education, and on and on – there are excellent organizations and programs doing work in those areas in Indian Country. And they are likely seeking to build capacity to build and manage assets.”



## GRANTEE COMMUNITY PARTNERS

In 2018, First Nations made grants to **163** Native-controlled nonprofits and tribal government programs.



**First Nations Headquarters**  
LONGMONT, COLORADO

**Field Office**  
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

## 2018 IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

### Dakota Wico'han

PROJECT: Šunḡtāŋka Wicayuhapi  
(They Care for the Horse) Program

Dakota Wico'han recently received a grant through First Nations' Native Arts Initiative to support its *Šunḡtāŋka Wicayuhapi* (They Care for the Horse) Program, a cultural-enrichment program that seeks to revitalize the Dakota tradition of dressing the horse. Through this grant, Dakota men and women taught youth how to make their own regalia. Dakota youth also learned how to take care of the horses and how to make traditional horse regalia, which is used for different events at family days, local parades and other cultural events.

"An example of how this grant strengthened our community is best expressed by sharing the story of Aiyanna. She has been in the *Šunḡtāŋka Wicayuhapi* Program for three years and now has her own horse," said Eileen O'Keefe (Lower Sioux Community), Program & Finance Director. "She recently rode in the Dakota 38+2 Memorial Ride, a horseback ride from South Dakota to Minnesota to honor the 38 Dakota warriors hanged in the largest mass execution in U.S. history. By taking part in the ride, she and other youth connect themselves with their ancestors and their horse relatives.

They also develop a deeper understanding of their history and appreciate the beauty of their culture. The *Šunḡtāŋka Wicayuhapi* Program truly builds their confidence and pride in being Dakota."

To learn more, visit [www.dakotawicohan.org](http://www.dakotawicohan.org).



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAKOTA WICO'HAN

## 2018 IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

### Nipmuc Community Development Corporation



PHOTO COURTESY OF NIPPEASH WAAPEMOOASH

Through a Native Youth and Culture Fund grant Nippeash Waapemooash (Waters Rise Up) developed a tribal civics/rites-of-passage initiative that addressed the unique challenges Nipmuc youth experience, and which promoted a positive sense of self-worth and cultural pride within the tribe. The goal was to prepare youth for adulthood through a traditional approach – one that is guided by culture, family and Nipmuc values. Youth, grades 5 to 9, were introduced to histories, traditional arts, farming and tribal government/civics in a year-long mentoring process with elders and tribal leaders.

"The Nipmuc youth cohort gives our kids tribal knowledge and the opportunity to listen, observe and learn traditions and practices that are part of our culture and way of life," said Liz "ColdWind" Santana-Kiser, a tribal elder. "Many traditions are vanishing with each generation. That's why it's so important for our kids to preserve our traditions for the next generation." Learn more at [www.nippi.org](http://www.nippi.org).

## Accountability to Our Supporters and the Communities We Serve

We encourage you to view our most recent complete audit available at [www.firstnations.org](http://www.firstnations.org).

7 YEARS IN A ROW



We are proud that for the seventh year in a row, First Nations has received the highest rating of Four Stars from Charity Navigator. Only 4% of the charities it rates in the U.S. achieve this highest distinction for seven or more consecutive years.

In 2018, First Nations again earned the Platinum GuideStar Nonprofit Profile Seal of Transparency, the highest level of recognition offered by GuideStar. First Nations is also an Accredited Member of the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance. Further, **85%** of your donated dollars to First Nations goes directly to our programs and the communities that need this support the most.

– Benny Shendo, Jr.  
First Nations Board Chair



## GOVERNANCE

**100% of our board members are Native.** Our board is led by:

**Benny Shendo** | Jemez Pueblo  
BOARD CHAIR

**Marguerite Smith** | Shinnecock  
VICE CHAIR

**Susan Jenkins** | Choctaw  
TREASURER

**Shyla Sheppard** | Mandan/Hidatsa  
SECRETARY

For a complete list of our board members and biographies, visit [www.firstnations.org/our-values/board-of-directors](http://www.firstnations.org/our-values/board-of-directors).



## FIRST NATIONS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Digital versions of First Nations' full Annual Report can be found at [www.firstnations.org/knowledge-center](http://www.firstnations.org/knowledge-center).

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