



List of Eighteen Suggestions to Better Support Native Practitioners Administering Asset Building Programs in their Communities

Prepared by the Oklahoma Native Assets Coalition, Inc.

April 27, 2022

- 1) Directly fund the Native nonprofits and tribes that are administering asset building programs such as Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, Native-specific financial education, Children's Savings Accounts, Emergency Savings Accounts, emergency cash assistance, down payment assistance, financial coaching, matched or incentivized savings, banking access in their communities, and fund administration of Native asset building coalitions and national Native asset building networks. Provide flexible, multi-year, and unrestricted funding.
- 2) Include Native communities as eligible applicants for racial equity RFPs.
- 3) Provide multi-year funding for Native asset building programs to hire and retain staff.
- 4) Funders adjust the ideas about success in terms of numbers served. It is still very important to serve smaller tribal and rural communities.
- 5) Support Native intermediaries, tribal programs, Native nonprofits that are not Native CDFIs, and Native CDFIs with adequate funding.
- 6) Support asset building projects with at least five to ten-year investments in the projects.
- 7) Allow funding for those proposing fintech solutions to deliver Native asset building programming, including allowing funding to support the increased staff time and infrastructure needed to also work with those with flip phones and no broadband access (so that no tribal citizens are left out of asset building programs).
- 8) Increase funding for the Administration for Native Americans and the Social Economic Development (SEDS) grants offered. Keep supporting Native CDFI development, as part of the SEDS grants, while amending the legislation so that it does not give priority funding to applicants for Native CDFI development. This amendment will give nonprofits and tribes that do not seek to develop a Native CDFI an equal chance to gain that source of federal funding for their asset building projects.
- 9) Increase federal funding for HUD Section 184 loans, USDA 502 Direct Loans, and VA Native American Direct Loans (NADLs) and make those loan products known to and available to tribal citizens in any state they reside.
- 10) Increase federal funding for the IRS to provide more VITA grants in Native communities.
- 11) It would be effective if more bankers and credit unions (especially those located in or near Native communities), considered offering Bank On certified accounts (or comparable accounts) to help tribal citizens have greater access to safe and affordable financial accounts.
- 12) Consider making larger gifts to support the smaller and mid-sized Native nonprofits that are in need of help to grow endowments to weather changes in philanthropic community funding agendas.
- 13) Co-author papers with Native asset building practitioners to bring their realities and voices to a larger audience. Also, help promote the distribution of essays and reports being written by Native asset building authors.
- 14) Help introduce a variety of Native asset building practitioners to those interested in funding this work. We need help with networking.



- 15) It would help if there was further examination of the Community Reinvestment Act and the incentives that depository institutions receive if they offer to teach financial education. Many Native asset building practitioners are already using Native-specific materials they feel comfortable using. Many Native nonprofits and tribal government programs are not in need of non-Native bankers teaching non-Native financial education to our clients. We do, though, really need funding from financial institutions to administer the asset building programs we have designed.
- 16) Include more tribal citizens on foundation boards and hire more Native foundation staff.
- 17) Build in sufficient time, in RFPs, for tribal governments to take a grant proposal to tribal council for approval, if that is part of their process for grant applications. Many often need at least one month to move through that part of the grant application process within their government requirements.
- 18) When contracting with those to provide technical assistance and training for Native asset building practitioners, we suggest that you contract with the Native consultants, organizations, etc. that have had direct experience administering asset building programs on a day-to-day basis. Trainers with experience in the field can provide the necessary training to their peers.