



ONAC Newsletter, December 2015

ONAC Awards Three New Grantees in November 2015

On November 23, 2015, ONAC announced three new ONAC mini grant awardees. The three awardees are the Mvskoke Loan Fund, Citizen Potawatomi CDC, and the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma.

In January 2014, ONAC released our first ONAC Mini Grant Request For Proposals (RFP) to fund Native asset building projects in Oklahoma. We received seven excellent applications from tribal governments and tribal programs based in Oklahoma. At that time, we had funding for four projects. Thus, we awarded a total of \$14,000 in mini grants to four ONAC constituents. Those awardees have since completed their projects. Over the past eighteen months, ONAC has worked to raise additional funds to support the three remaining applicants. At this time, we have secured funding through the Ford Foundation and its generous support of First Nations Development Institute and ONAC.

ONAC is excited to work with the three new awardees as they continue to offer Native asset building projects to their tribal members. If needed, ONAC is available to provide free training and technical assistance to the grantees as they implement their asset building programs.

Below is information about the three new ONAC mini grant awardees and their projects:

- **The Mvskoke Loan Fund** will enroll one of their staff members in the credit counseling certification program offered by Rural Dynamics, Inc. The staff will then work with entrepreneurs to improve their credit rating and help prepare them to receive business loans (awarded \$3,500).



- **Citizen Potawatomi Community Development Corporation (CPCDC)** will offer Shonya Mbwaka (Money Smart) to stimulate sustainable economic opportunity for the Citizen Potawatomi tribal community and all past and current clients. Through this project, the CPCDC will provide five workshops for a target of 50 people. The main topic will be investing, but they will also review the basic financial essentials. Participants will receive a plan developed for their situation in the form of workshops, individual credit sessions, and budgeting sessions (awarded \$3,500).
- **The Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma** will offer their tribal employees the opportunity to become more economically self-sufficient as they participate in Dave Ramsey “Financial Peace University” classes. Through video teaching, class discussions, and interactive small group activities, this financial education program will present culturally-appropriate and practical steps toward economic self-sufficiency. Employees will be taught how to get rid of debt, manage money, spend and save wisely, and plan for retirement. Additionally, during this project, the tribe will provide youth financial education materials for the tribal employee’s children. To incentivize class participation, the tribe will offer \$50.00 each, in opening deposit funds for a family emergency savings account, to twenty-four of the tribal employees who complete the financial education program (awarded \$3,500).

Award Total: \$10,500. Congratulations to these grantees!

ONAC to Release Request for Proposals for Next Round of Mini Grants

On January 5, 2016, ONAC will release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for another round of ONAC mini grants. Two of the grants that will be awarded will be for family emergency savings accounts. The remaining mini grant will be available to support other asset building programs such as credit builder/credit repair, financial education, matched savings accounts, foreclosure prevention, homebuyer education, Children’s Savings Accounts, etc. The applications will be due on February 18th. Applicants will be notified about award determinations on March 4, 2016. The grant period will run from March 15, 2016, to March 14, 2017. If any Oklahoma tribes or Native nonprofits have questions about a potential proposal, please contact Christy Finsel at cfinsel@oknativeassets.org or (405) 401-7873.



2016 ONAC Conference

The 2016 ONAC Conference will be held on **July 12, 2016**, at the Oklahoma History Center, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Please save the date! More information to follow.

Children's Savings Account Pilot Updates

ONAC has been preparing materials for our Children's Savings Account (CSA) pilot. The Cherokee Nation Child Support Program was the first of our six confirmed partners (tribes and Native nonprofits in Oklahoma) to launch the project. They opened their first account in December 2015. They will work with their child support clients to open Children's Savings Accounts for families with an annual income equal to or less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level who have children ages birth to eight. ONAC will provide the \$100.00 initial deposit, as well as a piggy bank, Native-specific financial education booklet, and certificate of participation for the child. The other five partners will launch their Children's Savings Accounts pilots throughout the next year. We are excited to get the 320 savings accounts opened!

As part of our CSA campaign over the past several years, ONAC has worked with child support contacts to tease out alternatives to state owned debt forgiveness (such as with the CSA in the state of Kansas) as state owed debt forgiveness is not currently allowed in Oklahoma. We have arrived at an alternative option that tribally-administered CSAs may want to offer their clients.

To add extra incentive for parents served by the Cherokee Nation Child Support Program to deposit funds in the accounts, they will offer the custodial and non-custodial parents, who have established cases, an offer for private mediation. If both parties are willing, and the non-custodial parent owes a custodial parent money, in order to work a good obligation, the non-custodial parent may deposit money into the Children's Savings Account for the benefit of their child. This reduces the non-custodial parent's debt, and helps the child to have a bigger nest egg of savings. We hope that this Children's Savings Account project, with an added debt reduction component, may be a model for other tribally-administered Child Support Programs that wish to offer Children's Savings Account programs. We appreciate the opportunity to partner with the Cherokee Nation Child Support Program to launch this program.



ONAC Welcomes Donations and Memberships

As part of our efforts to sustain and grow the coalition, ONAC welcomes donations and memberships. For more information about donations and memberships, please go to www.oknativeassets.org. ONAC appreciates your support!

ONAC Thanks Our Constituents and Friends Who Donated to ONAC Through NativeGiving.org

With your support, we reached the match gift challenge. ONAC thanks those who have donated to ONAC through NativeGiving.org.

Happy New Year and thank you for your support of ONAC!

Christy and the ONAC Board and Advisory Committee Members