



Desert Blooms: Nourishing Future Abundance Through Investment

CDFI Workforce and Professional Development Study

An assessment of resources and opportunities to support the Indigenous Finance Industry



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Executive Summary

While there may be locals interested in employment in Native CDFIs there is a need for supportive training and education services to solidify a sustainable career path, both for interested individuals and for Native CDFIs. In order to explore this issue more thoroughly NACDC Financial Services hired Sweet Grass Consulting to do a combination resource inventory and workforce needs assessment so that innovative solutions to support the Indigenous Finance Industry workforce could be explored. What we found is that while there is a good deal of resources available the accessibility and applicability of those resources were limited and the burden on Native CDFIs to train newly onboarded staff impacts efficiency and overall sustainability of organizations. The research presented here has led NACDC Financial Services and the Mountain | Plains Regional Native CDFI Coalition (Coalition) to plan creatively to fill the gap by developing curriculum and offering certification through local tribal colleges as well as through the Coalition to support Native CDFIs across the country in securing quality and trained employees.

Getting to Know You



<https://www.menti.com/al55p78ea8yh>

Methods

Resource Inventory

A total of 129 resources were examined across 55 entities/organizations including Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). Details of each resource were documented including topics, type (classroom, consulting), if it was Native-specific or not, and its available resources. A map was generated to view the information from all 129 resources.

Needs Survey

A survey was sent first to the Mountain | Plains member CDFIs (nine total organizations including the Mountain Plains Community Development Corporation), then to the larger Native CDFI industry (14 additional responses), that included questions around loan products and portfolios, development services, professional development needs, organizational resources and gaps, the needs and gaps of executive directors, and wrap-around supports to attract quality employees.



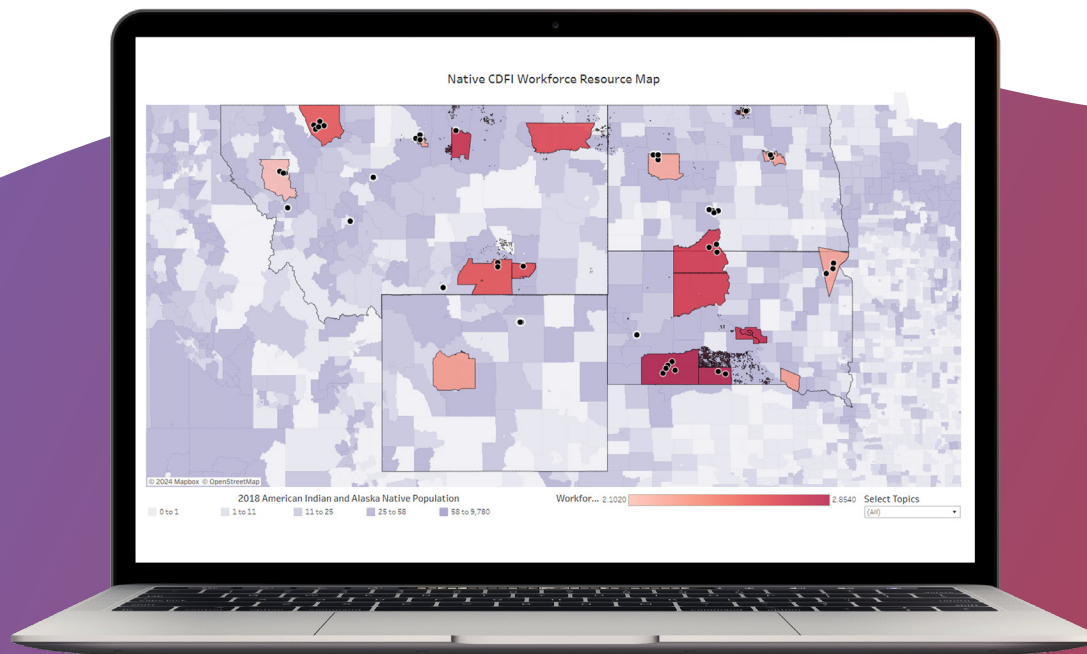
Resources



Topics/Areas of Interest	Total Resources	TCU	Non-TCU Classroom-Based	One-on-One/ Consulting
Accounting & finance	79	65	12	4
Management & leadership	71	56	14	5
Communications & marketing	60	54	2	4
Collections & legal	42	41	0	1
Human resources	28	25	2	1
Product-specific (business, homeownership, agriculture)	16	1	10	4
Grant writing, management, & reporting	13	9	2	2
IT & data security	12	4	6	2
Capitalization planning	12	0	10	3
Project/client management	11	8	2	1
Facilitation & training	10	0	7	5
Impact measurement & reporting	9	0	4	5
Getting started & networking	8	2	4	2
Loan policies & documents	7	0	7	0
Trauma-informed approaches to lending/financial capacity building	6	5	1	0
Underwriting & processing	4	0	4	0
Board development & engagement	2	0	1	2
Loan software specific (TEA, DLM, Calyx, etc.)	1	0	1	0
Succession planning & awareness	1	0	1	0
Pipeline management	1	0	1	0

Native CDFI Workforce Resource Map

In order to facilitate accessibility and create a long-term tool, an interactive map of the available resources was created. Users can search for specific types of training/education topics as well as searching by location. Another layer of data for understanding long-term impact is a “workforce index” which brings together secondary census data to explore the workforce situation from an external view. Over time we hope to see shifts in this index based on investments and innovations to support growth and professionalization of the Indigenous Finance Industry workforce.



To access the map, visit [Bear Cognition](#) and enter the username: `nacdc@sweetgrassconsulting.net` and password: `Public Access`.

Overall Takeaways

A few key takeaways emerge from this inventory of existing resources for CDFIs and Native CDFIs.



The bulk of available resources are degree and certificate programs at TCUs. These resources are generally not CDFI-specific, but are rather more broadly applicable to business, business administration, and/or finance.



Of the 20 topics/areas of interest examined, resources pertaining to the following five topics are by far the most common: accounting & finance (79), management & leadership (71), communications & marketing (60), collections & legal (42), and human resources (28).



On the other hand, nine of the 20 topics/areas of interest were covered by fewer than ten resources, with five being covered by fewer than five resources.



Overall accessibility and applicability are two of the largest pieces to consider within the inventory of existing resources.



Even though most of the resources are not CDFI-specific, the vast majority are Native-specific.

What did we miss?



<https://www.menti.com/alguumerwq76>



Opportunities

Staff Needs

Top Needs

- Business counseling, planning, & management
- Underwriting
- Data management & reporting
- Grant writing

Ranked Needs

- Underwriting
- Business counseling, planning, & management
- Loan process & management

Ranked Gaps

- Loan process & management
- Underwriting
- Data management & reporting

A training/certification program would clearly need to focus on loan process & management, business counseling, planning, & management, and data management & reporting.

Do these resonate?



<https://www.menti.com/al7xj3xv96c7>

Staff Training/Development Areas	Needs	Ranked Needs	Ranked Gaps
Business counseling, planning, & management	79%	15%	3%
Underwriting	75%	17%	14%
Data management & reporting	67%	7%	13%
Grant writing	67%	3%	8%
Loan process & management	63%	14%	19%
CDFI creative financing	58%	3%	5%
Marketing	58%	3%	1%
Fundraising	58%	8%	4%
Federal lending programs (USDA, HUD, VA)	50%	3%	N/A
Community connection & knowledge	42%	2%	5%
Project/client management & organization	42%	4%	7%
Financial management	42%	3%	5%
Homeownership process & counseling	42%	2%	7%
Personal financial management & credit counseling	42%	4%	4%
Customer service	29%	2%	2%
Bank office services	17%	N/A	4%
Other	4%	9%	1%
None of the above	0%	N/A	N/A

Executive Director Needs

Top Needs

- Succession planning
- Growth & change management
- Capitalization planning
- CDFI creative financing
- Organizational development

Ranked Needs

- Succession planning
- Capitalization planning
- Growth & change management

Ranked Gaps

- Capitalization planning
- Growth & change management
- Succession planning

Executive directors rely heavily on peer-to-peer relationships as well as trusted consultants to provide professional development services in these areas currently, but still feel there is need to grow the industry especially in the areas of growth & change management and succession planning.

How accurate do you feel these needs are?



<https://www.menti.com/alygvttayfzw>

Executive Director Training/Development Areas	Needs	Ranked Needs	Ranked Gaps
Succession planning	75%	30%	13%
Growth & change management	75%	15%	15%
Capitalization planning	50%	16%	16%
CDFI creative financing	46%	1%	5%
Organizational development	46%	6%	7%
Advocacy	42%	1%	5%
Fundraising	42%	6%	11%
Grant writing	33%	4%	3%
Data management & reporting	33%	3%	12%
Strategic planning	25%	1%	N/A
Public relations	25%	N/A	N/A
Financial management	21%	4%	3%
Loan process & underwriting	21%	N/A	1%
Marketing	17%	N/A	1%
Community connection & knowledge	13%	4%	N/A
Other	8%	7%	1%
None of the above	0%	2%	6%

Wrap-Around Services

Top Needs

- Livable wage/income
- Childcare
- Housing and transportation

Ranked Needs

- Childcare
- Housing
- Livable wage/income

Childcare and housing are clear areas of continued focus and opportunity to support the Indigenous Finance Industry workforce. Projects such as the childcare initiative as part of the Coalition and the work of most member CDFIs in supporting homeownership are key to investing in the necessary supports to grow the workforce.

Wrap-Around Services to Attract Quality Employees

	Needs	Ranked Needs
Livable wage/income	75%	14%
Childcare	67%	30%
Housing	54%	24%
Transportation	54%	5%
Benefits	50%	7%
Healthcare & access to healthcare professionals	46%	2%
Food services (restaurants)	33%	1%
Groceries/healthy food	33%	2%
Quality education services	17%	N/A
Entertainment industry (movie theater, youth services, recreation, etc.)	17%	N/A
Retail services (clothing, furniture, personal items)	8%	2%
None/does not apply	8%	14%
Other	4%	N/A

What was surprising here?



<https://www.menti.com/alfa8sr193a1>



Overall Takeaways



Summary

- Ultimately, the resources available have not met the reported continued needs of the 23 CDFIs surveyed.
- The need for staff in the **professional development** space is great. There were 18 options provided for staff training and development with half of those options selected over 50% of the time. On average, each CDFI reported nearly nine areas of staff need. The most selected:
 - Business counseling, planning, & management (79%)
 - Underwriting (75%)
 - Data management & reporting (67%)
- There is a **gap in staff professional resources**. Of the topic options provided for professional development gaps, 16 of them were selected. By weighted average, the top gaps identified:
 - Loan process & management (19%)
 - Underwriting (14%)
 - Data management & reporting (13%)

- The need for **executive director training and development** was also found to be significant. Of the 17 options provided, seven were selected 42% or higher. Succession planning and growth & change management were deemed the most critical at 75%.
- **Executive director resource gaps** are of demonstrated need. Of the options provided, 14 were selected, while the top needs:
 - Capitalization planning (16%)
 - Growth & change management (15%)
 - Succession planning (13%)
- **Wrap-around services to attract quality employees** could benefit CDFIs. Of the 13 options provided, six were selected 46% or higher. The top services selected:
 - Livable wage/income (75%)
 - Childcare (67%)
 - Housing and transportation (54%)



Solutions



Summary

While there are a number of resources available, the accessibility and applicability of those resources are, overall, limited. This places an unnecessary burden on Native CDFIs to train newly onboarded staff and severely impacts their organizational efficiency and sustainability.

Three solutions have been posited to address the gaps found during this research:

1. Native CDFI-developed curriculum
2. Partnership with tribal colleges to develop a certificate program (48% of respondents noted a certificate would be at least “a good deal helpful”)
3. Training course hosted by the Coalition or the Mountain Plains Community Development Corporation (MPCDC)

It typically takes 6–12 months (or up to five years) to onboard a new loan officer, with associated costs ranging from \$56,500 to as high as \$115,000. This includes expenses such as salary, senior staff time for training, and covering training attendance costs.



Questions?

Your Turn—Solutions



<https://www.menti.com/alvss9zj4o8p>

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9th Annual Native CDFI



Capital Access Convening

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For more information:



<https://www.menti.com/alp3jzt1icpb>