
2021 **NATIVE CDFI AWARDS**

NATIVE CDFI CATALYST AWARD

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Native CDFI Awards Program

Overview

The **Native CDFI Awards** is a partnership among Opportunity Finance Network (OFN), Oweesta Corporation, and Wells Fargo. The three-year (2019-2021) awards program provides \$125,000 each year to Native CDFIs (community development financial institutions).

Across tribal communities, Native CDFIs create innovative solutions to help tribal members breakthrough substantial barriers to economic development opportunities and capital access. The Native CDFI movement is a powerful example of how tribal members change the economic landscapes of their communities by providing financial services and products that build individual assets and community wealth in Indian country across the United States.

2021 Native Awards

Native CDFIs directly provide Native American communities with tools and capital support that drive real and sustainable job creation, small business development, commercial real estate development, and affordable housing/home ownership. These mission driven lenders also offer basic banking services and financial literacy training to “underbanked” Native American communities historically targeted by predatory lending practices.

Native CDFIs provide an array of asset-building tools and direct financing products that stimulate reservation economies nationwide by offering tribal communities the opportunity to acquire financial management skills and build and accumulate assets through small business creation, homeownership, and educational endeavors.

Every year, the Native CDFI Awards will honor two Native CDFIs through two Awards: the Native CDFI Catalyst Award and the Native CDFI Seed Capital Award.

In 2021, the Awards will celebrate Native CDFIs creating opportunity and promoting self-sovereignty measures and strategies that advance local efforts for community asset building within their tribal communities.

Examples of potential strategies for Native CDFI Awards applicants could include (but are not limited to):

- COVID-19 recovery efforts
- New products or new product innovations
- Geographic expansion
- Product and program replication
- Back-office infrastructure development
- Marketing and distribution innovations
- Integration of financial education or financial counseling
- Innovative new partnerships
- Use of technology (e.g., software, impact tracking, online platforms, mobile phone applications)



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Award Types

There are two Native CDFI Awards categories in 2021:

- Native CDFI Catalyst Award
- Native CDFI Seed Capital Award

The Native CDFI Catalyst Award

The **Native CDFI Catalyst Award** will provide a \$100,000 grant to one Native CDFI that presents the most compelling application outlining its plans to execute on its potential strategy. Prospective award applicants should demonstrate high capacity, solid financial performance, and a high level of readiness to implement its strategy within 6 months of receiving an award. Native CDFI applicants must have at least \$3 million in assets and audited financial statements and be a certified CDFI.

The Native CDFI Seed Capital Award

The **Native CDFI Seed Capital Award** will provide a \$25,000 grant to one Native CDFI to support a strategy with great potential. For the Seed Capital Award, applicants might be in various stages of development of their strategies and should demonstrate the benefit of a grant to help develop or expand a promising idea with the potential to implement within 12 months. There is no minimum asset size for applicants and applicants do not have to have audited financial statements.

Award	Award	Strategy Focus	Who Can Apply
Native CDFI Catalyst Award	\$100,000 unrestricted grant	Any range of financial products or services Strategy must include a financing component	Native CDFIs with assets greater than \$3 million Native CDFIs with a strategy that is ready to implement within 6 months of receiving award
Native CDFI Seed Capital Award	\$25,000 unrestricted grant	Any range of financial products or services Strategy does <i>not</i> have to include a financing component	Native CDFIs of any asset size Native CDFIs with a strategy that is ready to implement within 12 months of receiving award



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Awardee Benefits

The Native CDFI Awards provide multiple ways to support Awardees' expansion strategies. Awardee benefits include:

- Monetary Awards as specified above for the Native CDFI Catalyst Award and Native CDFI Seed Capital Award
- Visibility campaign to increase recognition for and support of Awardees' expansion strategies that includes:
 - A press release to announce the Awardees
 - A video that tells the story of Awardees' work, borrowers, and strategy (*Native CDFI Catalyst Awardee only*)
 - Promotion of Awardees on the Native CDFI Awards website, and in OFN, Oweesta, and Wells Fargo marketing and social media campaigns
- Recognition by industry peers and others in Native CDFI Awards Ceremony at the OFN Conference
- Mentorship opportunity with a certified CDFI to help advance the proposed strategy. Mentors will be selected by OFN and Oweesta with input from the Awardee

Conditions of the Award

Awardees are required to sign grant documents associated with their Award.

Awardees will be required to submit a narrative report related to progress of the Awardees' strategy and a financial report related to the use of funds due one year following receiving an award.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

Note about applicants:

- Native CDFIs do *not* need to be an OFN member to apply for the Native Awards.
- Native CDFIs *cannot* apply for both the Native CDFI Catalyst Award and the Native CDFI Seed Capital Award.
- All Native CDFIs are eligible to apply, including Native CDFIs that have previously won a Native Circle of Honor Award between 2006-2018.

CONFIDENTIALITY: OFN will to the best of its ability ensure the confidentiality of all application materials. OFN staff, contractors, and members of the Selection Committee will review materials submitted in connection with the 2019 Native Awards, as necessary and appropriate.

DISCLAIMER: OFN reserves the right to reject any and all applications, and no applicant has any rights to any award unless and until granted in writing and applicant complies with all terms and conditions of the Native CDFI Awards program.



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Application Materials for the Native CDFI Catalyst Award

Eligibility to Apply

To be eligible for the Native CDFI Catalyst Award organizations must satisfy each of the nine conditions specified below.

1. Charitable Purpose

Applicant is a U.S. tax-exempt organization with a current 501(c)(3) determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service. If your organization does not have this tax status, it may be eligible if it is a U.S. Treasury CDFI Fund certified CDFI.

NOTE: CDFI Fund certification does not automatically guarantee eligibility. If the organization is not a 501(c)(3), OFN may request additional information during the application review process to determine whether the activities that would be supported by the Native Award comply with relevant rules and regulations for charitable giving. For more information on the CDFI Fund, please visit www.cdfifund.gov.

2. Community Development Mission & Impact

Applicant has a primary mission of community development and strives to have a positive impact on low-income, low-wealth, and other disadvantaged people and communities. If the institution is part of, or controlled by, another corporation(s), the other corporation(s) must also have a primary mission of community development.

3. Finance-based Strategy

Applicant is a private non-governmental financial intermediary that uses financing as an integral part of its community development strategy.

4. Three Years of Financing Experience

Applicant has been providing financing to achieve a community development mission for at least three years.

5. Audited Financial Statements

An applicant must upload its *audited* financial statements for at least two years. If the applicant is a credit union, the credit union can substitute both a 5300 report and supervisory committee audit for an audited financial statement.

6. Current Plan

Applicant is operating under a business plan or strategic plan that was written or updated within the last five years.

7. Total Assets

Applicant reports more than \$3 million in total assets.

2021 Selection Criteria

The Native CDFI Catalyst Award is seeking applicants in various stages of development of their strategies that present the most compelling application to benefit Native communities.



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The Native Award Selection Committee will evaluate eligible applicants according to the four criteria below.

1. Impact

A credible and compelling analysis of projected impact from applicant's strategy over a two to three-year time horizon.

2. Readiness and Viability

A strong management team and other resources in place or planned to execute applicant's strategy within a twelve-month timeframe of receiving an award. A strong grasp of internal and external challenges and how this strategy will impact financial management, sustainability, and risk to the organization.

3. Use of Funds

A compelling use of funds that demonstrates how the applicant will use the Native CDFI Seed Capital Award to advance the applicant's strategy in ways that otherwise would not be possible.

4. Financial Strength and Performance

Solid financial performance, and a sound business model that positions the organization for sustained growth and success.

2021 Timeline

July 15

APPLICATION AND GUIDELINES POSTED

Application and guidelines posted on the Native CDFI Awards website.

July 15-August 13

APPLICATION PERIOD

Applications and supporting documents are uploaded at the Native CDFI Awards website.

All applications must be submitted online. Hard copy applications will not be accepted.

The cutoff for applying is **11:59 PM EST on August 13, 2021**. Applications will not be accepted after this deadline.

August 2021

EVALUATION PERIOD AND SELECTION COMMITTEE MEETING

Applicants are screened for eligibility based on the requirements detailed above. Eligible applicants are evaluated against the selection criteria for the 2021 Native CDFI Catalyst Award detailed above. The Selection Committee includes senior executives from Wells Fargo, Oweesta, Opportunity Finance Network, Northwest Area Foundation, as well as highly regarded leaders and experts in CDFIs and Native communities. The Selection Committee will determine and notify the Awardees by the end of August.

September/October 2021

VISIBILITY CAMPAIGN AND CELEBRATION EVENT



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Opportunity Finance Network will work with Awardees on a visibility campaign which includes a press release, media outreach, and an Awardee video. The Awardees will be recognized at an evening celebration during the virtual OFN Conference on October 20.

How to Apply

Applicants must submit applications electronically through the Native CDFI Awards website at nativeawards.org/awards. We will not accept hard copy documents.

The final deadline to submit an application for the Native CDFI Awards is 11:59 PM EST on August 13, 2021. The website's online application function will become inactive after this deadline.

Applicants whose responses to the Eligibility Questionnaire meet the 2021 Native CDFI Awards eligibility requirements will be prompted to begin the online application.

Required formats and maximum word counts for these items are specified in the detailed application guidelines below.



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Detailed Application Guidelines for the Native CDFI Catalyst Award

The following is a complete list of the materials you will need to submit an application for the 2021 Native Awards.

**Applicants must upload all items except #1 Organizational Information. The Organizational Information section is an online questionnaire.*

1. Organizational information: Online questionnaire

The application will prompt applicants to enter the legal name and address of the headquarters of the entity seeking to receive an award. Email addresses and phone numbers will be requested for a lead contact person and/or the President or Executive Director.

2. Native CDFI Catalyst Award Statement:

Word document; max. 1,500 words

A statement which addresses the following (key questions to address are bolded):

Overview

- **Briefly describe the mission and core activities of applicant.**

Rationale for Strategy

- **What are/were the motivators for your CDFI to consider its strategy?**
- **What is the unmet market demand that your CDFI is addressing?**
- Does your strategy depend on having other partners or community resources in place? Describe any agreements with significant partners, or where you are in the process with partners.
- **Describe your organization's target market for its strategy.**
- Please describe any innovations in your strategy in terms of the products offered, populations served, and/or program design (e.g. marketing, technology)?
- Does your strategy have replication potential in the CDFI industry, and if so, how (e.g., a platform that other CDFIs could use or a product, innovation, or strategy that other CDFIs could adopt)?
- Are you planning to expand geographically with your strategy?

Use of Funds

- **How will you use the funds and how would a Native CDFI Catalyst Award advance your strategy in ways that may otherwise not be possible?**
- Does your CDFI have or plan to raise other loan capital or grant sources to support the strategy?

Impact

- **What outcome and impact measures will be the most relevant to your strategy? How do you plan to collect the data, and how will the data collection be integrated in your current systems to track data?**

Readiness and Viability

- **Describe your organization's level of readiness to act on your strategy in a**



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short period of time (within 6 months) if awarded a Native CDFI Catalyst Award.

- **How will your organization implement your strategy? What additional resources will you need, if any? What team member(s) is leading the proposed strategy and what changes, if any, are needed at the staff or board level to implement your strategy?**

3. Current Business or Strategic Plan: PDF format preferred; No max. length

Please provide a copy of the applicant's current business plan and/or strategic plan. This document should be updated within the last five years.

4. Latest Interim Financial Statements: PDF format preferred; No max. length

Please provide interim financial statements for your most recently completed quarter or month.

6. Impact / Outcomes

Please provide a sample impact tracking report or a list of impact and outcome indicators your CDFI collects.

7. Three Years of Audited Financial Statements; PDF format; No max. length

Audited financial statements for the three most recently completed fiscal years. If the applicant is a credit union, the credit union can substitute both a 5300 report and supervisory committee audit for an audited financial statement.

8. Mission Statement(s); PDF format preferred; No max. length

A mission statement for the applicant organization.

9. Key Staff; PDF format preferred; No max. length

A document listing key staff (name and position) with a summary of their experience and qualifications.

10. Board of Directors; PDF format preferred; No max. length

A list of the members of the Board of Directors with institutional affiliations.

11. IRS Tax-Exempt Determination Letter(s) or Proof of CDFI Fund Certification; PDF format; No max. length

Provide copy(ies) of 501(c)(3) tax-exempt determination letter(s) from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service regarding the applicant organization's charitable purpose and tax-exempt status OR provide proof of CDFI Fund certification (letter or other correspondence from the CDFI Fund).

