

Workforce Grantmaking in Native Nations and Communities Awards Inaugural Funding

Over \$500,000 awarded to organizations from across the country to support workers and learners in Native nations and communities

August 15– The Workforce Grantmaking in Native Nations and Communities Initiative, a new initiative spearheaded by Workforce Matters, announced eight awardees who will each receive funding of up to \$70,000 to implement initiatives that center workers and learners in Native nations and communities in designing or implementing workforce policies and programs. The awardees, organizations from across the country designed to meet the distinct workforce development needs of Native Nations, and Native workers and learners will receive flexible resources and support to pilot, innovate, or extend strategies.

"These eight organizations are leaders among workforce development initiatives in Indian Country," said Natasha Hale, Navajo, project lead for the Workforce Grantmaking in Native Nations and Communities Initiative. "We are excited to provide funding and support to expand their work and uplift new, innovative strategies that can lead to systemic change for Native workers."

The awardees include:

- [Purple Mai'a Foundation](#), Alea, Hawaii
- [Kenaitze Indian Tribe](#), Kenai, Alaska
- [Little Big Horn College](#), Crow Agency, Montana
- [Red Lake Nation- Oshkiimaajitahdah](#), Redby, Minnesota
- [Saad Kidilye](#), Albuquerque, New Mexico
- [Northern California Indian Development Council, Inc.](#), Eureka, California
- [Change Labs](#), Tuba City, AZ
- [MIGIZI Communications Inc.](#), Minneapolis, Minnesota

"We are proud to support these eight organizations, which are led by and for Native people, and are advancing workforce development in self-determined ways in their communities," said Christianne Lind, program officer with Northwest Area Foundation and funder advisory committee member to the Workforce Grantmaking in Native Nations and Communities Initiative. "Supporting work in Native communities is central to our collective work in building more inclusive and equitable workforce development systems nationally"

The [Workforce Grantmaking in Native Nations and Communities Initiative](#) (WGNNC) is an initiative of Workforce Matters, advised by Native leaders and funders to: strengthen workforce-focused organizations, programs, and initiatives led by and for Native Nations and communities (collectively referred to as Indian Country); and shift/influence thinking and behaviors of partners (funders, federal and state policymakers and agencies, and researchers) so they can effectively support Indian Country.

“For most Native Nations and communities, workforce development is more holistic and collective than it is in non-Native mainstream cultures. In Indian Country, workforce development is about building the human capacities to rebuild Native nations and communities. It is about preserving cultures, languages, and ways of life to ensure prosperity for future generations. This includes a focus on all Native community members, young people to adults.” said Kwelin Waller, Senior Program Manager with the AIR Equity Initiative and WGNNC funder advisory committee member.

The Workforce Grantmaking in Native Nations and Communities Initiative is led by an [Advisory Committee](#), which is composed of grantmakers, policy experts, and tribal practitioners and leaders committed to advancing WGNNC's priorities and work. Advisory Committee members assist in developing the learning priorities, programs, and grantmaking of the initiative. For questions, please reach out to Workforce Matters at nativenations@workforce-matters.org.

Workforce Matters is a national network of grantmakers who work together to strengthen workforce development philanthropy. Drawing on expert and practitioner knowledge, Workforce Matters empowers workers, learners, and job seekers to realize their full potential; dismantles inequities based on race, gender, ability, and other individual characteristics; and advances equitable education and employment outcomes for youth and adults. To learn more, visit workforce-matters.org