More than half are for projects in Opportunity Zones

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WASHINGTON – Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Tara Sweeney is proud to announce that the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (IEED) awarded business development grants totaling $727,229 to 21 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes. Over half of the awards are for proposed or existing projects located in Opportunity Zones.

The awards from IEED's Native American Business Development Institute (NABDI) Feasibility Study Program will enable tribal leaders to better evaluate and identify viable economic opportunities for their communities.

"Native American Business Development Institute grants are a cost-effective means that tribal governments can utilize to investigate whether or not potential economic activities are viable for them and their communities," Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Tara Sweeney said. "They must consider all ways, including Opportunity Zones, that will help them build sustainable tribal economies that generate revenue, meet community needs and create jobs. The 2019 NABDI awardees are a reflection of how seriously tribal leaders view their goals for creating economic self-determination. These grants are just one of the ways we assist them in achieving their goals."

NABDI awards fund feasibility studies that weigh the viability and risks of an economic development project, opportunity, enterprise, or business or the practicality of a technology a tribe may choose to pursue. The studies may be used to determine the likelihood of success for businesses in specific American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

When performed by a reputable third party, an economic development feasibility study also can be used to help persuade lenders and investors to provide financial backing. A study that concludes a project is worthwhile and financially sustainable can often fulfill many of the lender's or investor's due diligence requirements by answering questions about a project's chances of success, resulting in a more rapid loan approval or better loan terms. Feasibility studies can also be used to examine the credibility of a project promoter and claims made regarding a specific project.

Grants are awarded on the basis of a proposal's potential to create jobs for tribal members and stimulate economies in Native American communities.

The grant recipients and award amounts are:

- **Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation,** Montana: $29,500 for a feasibility study on developing and operating a hotel and conference center on a 69-acre parcel of property located adjacent to the Poplar Airport and U.S. Highway 2, an east-west route across the reservation.
- **Chippewa Cree Indians of the Rocky Boy's Reservation,** Montana: $30,000 for a feasibility

study on building and operating an on-reservation, combined fuel station, convenience store and oil change facility.

- **Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation,** Washington: $35,000 for a feasibility study to determine the best use for its Bigler parcel and to examine what types of tenants could further the Tribes' goals for its light industrial/warehouse/distribution center project.
- **Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation,** Nevada and Utah: $36,000 to examine a 16-acre proposed commercial site on the Tribes' reservation land parcel in Nevada for tourism, including a recreational vehicle (RV) park.
- **Delaware Nation,** Oklahoma: $20,000 for a feasibility study to quantify and describe the public sector market opportunity, identify target customers and go-to-market sales and marketing strategies, contracting details, and assess labor and other operational aspects of opening a proposed second Channel Blend call center in the state.
- **Elk Valley Rancheria,** California: $30,000 to study the development of a destination resort comprised of a hotel, conference center, casino and parking facility on its 203.5-acre land parcel situated along U.S. Highway 101 that is more accessible to customers than its currently located gaming business.
- **Elko Band (Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone Indians of Nevada):** $39,700 for a feasibility study to determine the financial viability of constructing a tribally owned-and-operated 20-bed, for-profit hospital and elective surgery center on a 10-acre commercial site within the Elko Band Colony.
- **Fond du Lac Band (Minnesota Chippewa Tribe):** $33,400 to investigate the feasibility of starting a commercial wood boiler manufacturing business on the Band's reservation in Carton County, Minn.
- **Gila River Indian Community,** Arizona: $35,000 to take advantage of investments in digital communications access, training and small business support.
- **Hoopa Valley Tribe,** California: $39,750 for a feasibility study to determine the size, scope and viability of a travel center to be located on the Tribe's reservation.
- **Hualapai Indian Tribe,** Arizona: $40,000 to study utilizing the Tribe's location on Route 66, its close proximity to and having the only road access to the bottom of the Grand Canyon, for a major tourist attraction that includes an RV park.
- **Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria,** Nevada: $34,807 for a feasibility study to determine the viability of a for-profit abalone farm and serve as a third-party due diligence document for raising capital for the project.
- **Leech Lake Band (Minnesota Chippewa Tribe):** $35,000 for retaining outside consultants to assist the Band with determining the feasibility of developing on-reservation affordable housing and with structuring tax- and business-related incentives to secure outside investment to support these efforts, and doing this on a scale that meets the demand for on-reservation housing for the next 20 years.
- **Lower Brule Sioux Tribe,** South Dakota: $38,000 for a feasibility study to explore the costs and benefits of having the Tribe's business and economic development arm pursue expansion and evolution of its existing propane program into the more formal and official Lower Brule Propane Company.
- **Nulato Village,** Alaska: $40,000 for a feasibility study to identify which parts of a house, if made of wood, can be standardized using locally sourced lumber and standardized procedures.
- **Organized Village of Kake,** Alaska: $34,300 for a feasibility study for a mariculture business developing seaweed in the waters around the village that will be part of a sustainable, diversified local economy providing permanent jobs with living wages.

- **Passamaquoddy Tribe - Pleasant Point,** Maine: $35,000 for a proposed on-reservation project that would re-direct and re-invest monies the Tribe spends off-reservation on fuels for its tribal government-owned land and water transportation and road maintenance fleets.
- **Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe,** Michigan: $30,938 for a comprehensive market analysis on the development of a proposed on-reservation Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) complex for tribal members and their families, whose members are in recovery from substance use disorders (SUDs).
- **Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe,** New York: $40,000 for a feasibility study, and for business and capitalization planning, to assist the Tribe with its plans to renovate and re-purpose a historic 92-year old former hydroelectric power dam building as an art park/art gallery.
- **Sitka Tribe of Alaska:** $35,834 for a feasibility study to determine if a proposed project to create value-added products and ensure a safe, educational tannery experience for tourists visiting Sitka is a good economic opportunity for the Tribe.
- **South Fork Band (Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone Indians of Nevada):** $35,000 for a financial feasibility study on its RV park project to provide assurances that the master site development's third phase has a reasonable chance of financial success, and help ensure the enterprise's options are economically sustainable over an extended period of time without long-term external subsidies and reconfiguration or delays in the construction and opening of the development.

The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs oversees the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, which implements the Indian Energy Resource Development Program under Title V of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. IEED's mission is to foster stronger American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities by helping federally recognized tribes develop their renewable and nonrenewable energy and mineral resources; increasing access to capital for tribal and individual American Indian- and Alaska Native-owned businesses; assisting tribes in building the legal infrastructure necessary for their economic progress; and enabling tribally and individual AI/AN-owned businesses to take advantage of government and private sector procurement opportunities.

Visit the Indian Affairs website for more information about IEED programs and services.

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