
NATIONAL INDIAN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION



Project Title:	Assessing the Needs of Reservation-based Enterprises and Native-owned Manufacturers
Award Amount:	\$194,101
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	9/30/2004 – 2/28/2006
Grantee Type:	Native Non-Profit

PROJECT SUMMARY

- 1 job created
- 1 Native American consultant hired
- 15 elders involved
- \$25,200 in resources leveraged
- 81 people completed training
- 9 partnerships formed
- 6 products developed

BACKGROUND

The National Indian Business Association (NIBA) is a non-profit organization headquartered in Washington, DC. NIBA's mission is to assist in the advancement of Native business development by providing information, programs and services specifically designed to address the unique needs of American Indian and Alaskan Native business owners, entrepreneurs and governments.

In 2002, a number of Native-business owners attended a workshop at a Native economic development summit concerning a lack of Department of Defense procurement opportunities. The presenter suggested that these businesses may not have the necessary clearances and certifications to be considered for government contracts.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of Assessing the Needs of Reservation-based Enterprises and Native-owned Manufacturers (Project) was to address the institutional challenge that many Native American businesses lack the required certifications and security clearances.

The first objective was to design, develop and distribute a comprehensive survey to Native-owned businesses. Data to be collected included production capabilities, current levels of production and current certifications and clearances. The Project successfully designed the survey and solicited stakeholder input. The survey was originally planned for distribution to 562 Native-owned manufacturing businesses. However, NIBA was only able to compile a list of 324 viable Native-owned businesses. NIBA received 30 replies.

The second objective was to compile 600 reports that would summarize the findings from the comprehensive survey and would be available to participating Native-owned businesses. This objective was completed. The compiled data is now available as a database to all Native-owned enterprises via the NIBA website.

The third objective was to research federal government agencies' certification and security clearance requirements to begin the development of educational training materials. NIBA staff contacted 12 federal agencies. This research was assembled for training development.

The fourth objective was to create and develop educational manuals for training symposiums and distribution. NIBA staff shared the developed manuals. No training materials were shared that addressed federal certifications and security clearances.

Finally, the Project planned to train at least 80 Native-owned manufacturing businesses using the developed manuals and supplemental materials.

This project had several challenges. High turnover in the Project Manager position, the Project's only full-time staff member, posed a continuous challenge for project staff. The development of the comprehensive survey posed a daunting task as no standard template existed for analysis of Native-owned manufacturers. Finally, ANA funded this project with a reduced budget and decreased timeframe from 24 months to 18. Much of the resources leveraged by this project came from NIBA's coffers to complete these objectives.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

The survey completion, subsequent data compilation and the creation of targeted procurement educational materials for Native-owned businesses are positive achievements for this project. The subsequent use of the training materials during two training forums gave Native-owned enterprises the opportunity to increase their knowledge of how to obtain federal contracts.

Of the 324 Native-owned businesses with which NIBA established contact through its

survey, 81 attended a training conference. (NIBA was unable to provide the number of attendees at the security clearance and certification specific seminars). The conference focused on broadening institutional knowledge of federal manufacturing contracts and their documentation requirements. Practice-based completion of the requisite security clearance and certification forms was part of the conference. As of this report, 17 certification and clearance forms have been completed and submitted to the appropriate federal agencies as a direct result of this grant. This project also provided a forum for Native business leaders to network. The survey data compiled during the life of this project has been made available to all training attendees and is also available on NIBA's website.