

**CHIPPEWA CREE TRIBE**



<b>Project Title:</b>	Chippewa Cree Tribe Family Resource Center
<b>Award Amount:</b>	\$203,924
<b>Type of Grant:</b>	Social and Economic Development Strategies
<b>Project Period:</b>	Sept. 2009 – Sept. 2010
<b>Grantee Type:</b>	Tribe

**PROJECT SNAPSHOT**

- 4 jobs created
- 1 Native American consultant hired
- \$500 in resources leveraged
- 6 partnerships formed
- 20 elders involved
- 16 youth involved

**BACKGROUND**

The Chippewa Cree Tribe, with 3,800 members, is based on the 122,000 square acre Rocky Boy Indian Reservation, the smallest of seven reservations in Montana. In 2007, the reservation had a 68 percent unemployment rate, and 18 percent of the employed population earned an annual income below federal poverty guidelines.

The Chippewa Cree Tribe’s Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Department provides support to families struggling with unemployment and poverty. In 2008, the TANF Department served an average of 173 families and 372 children per month. Working directly with families, department staff recognized a need for a family service center that would provide

clients with a central point of contact for services provided by the tribe’s multiple health and human services departments.

**PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

The project’s purpose was to build the organizational framework for a planned Chippewa Cree Family Resource Center. Project staff envisioned that the Resource Center would be a “One-Stop Shop” intake center for human services on the reservation.

The project’s first objective was to establish the facility by recruiting, hiring, and training new staff members and equipping the Family Resource Center’s offices. To accomplish this, project staff hired a project coordinator, instructor, and family resource coordinator, and identified appropriate strengthening families and fatherhood curricula for staff training. Staff completed training by June, and conducted a workshop for 50 families later in the project period. The project team also equipped the center with necessary office and medical equipment and internet access. Unfortunately, a series of devastating floods in June 2010 destroyed the road to the office, damaged the lower floors of the building, and interrupted the internet

service. Despite these challenges, the project team was able to relocate the office temporarily and carry out trainings in GED attainment, finance, life skills, budgeting, fatherhood, and employment readiness for clients.

The second objective was to develop partnerships with at least 10 organizational entities to enable the Family Resource Center to become a centralized location for receiving human services. The social worker met with 10 health and human services organizations to negotiate memoranda of understanding and identify processes or services that could be merged with those of other organizations, eliminating unnecessary duplication of effort and clarifying service choices for clients. Ten organizations, including the Boys and Girls Club, Social Services, Stone Child College, and the Child Support Project, signed the memoranda.

The third objective was to develop a common intake process for all human service organizations on the reservation. This included working with partners to develop common forms, obtaining approval of the intake process from the Chippewa Cree Business Committee, implementing the intake process, and developing a common database for client tracking to prevent duplication of services. Project staff met with partners to develop a list of existing and desired common data points to assess client needs and integrated these data points into the draft intake form. All partners agreed upon the form, and by the project's end, the form had been submitted to the Chippewa Cree Business Committee for approval. In addition, the database was almost finalized by the end of the project period.

## **OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT**

By creating a "One-Stop-Shop" Chippewa Cree Family Resource Center, the project team increased access to health and human services for Rocky Boy tribal community members. The new collaboration amongst reservation human services organizations and the tools produced will enable more comprehensive services for Family Resource Center clients.

Even though the damage caused by the June 2010 flooding forced the office to relocate, the partnerships formed during the project helped sustain pre-existing community programming and project activities. Project staff continued to provide meaningful programming for youth, including training in employment readiness, GED attainment, and driver's education. Project staff also sustained strengthening families programming for parents.

The strong relationships formed and the dedication of project staff will enable the Center to have a lasting impact on the community as it continues its inter-agency collaboration efforts in the future.

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## FORT BELKNAP COLLEGE

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<b>Project Title:</b>	White Clay Language Immersion School Expansion Project
<b>Award Amount:</b>	\$603,550
<b>Type of Grant:</b>	Language
<b>Project Period:</b>	Sept. 2007 – Sept. 2010
<b>Grantee Type:</b>	Native Nonprofit

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### PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 4 jobs created
- \$10,255 in resources leveraged
- 9 partnerships formed
- 7 elders involved
- 12 youth involved
- 9 people achieved fluency in a native language
- 185 native language classes held
- 2 language teachers trained
- 1 language curriculum developed

### BACKGROUND

Fort Belknap College is a tribally-run community college located on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in north central Montana. Fort Belknap is the home of the Gros Ventre (White Clay) and Assiniboine (Nakoda) Tribes.

A March 2007 community survey counted fewer than 25 fluent White Clay speakers alive today, and most were 65 years of age or older. In the past four years, the number of White Clay language speakers between the ages of 61 and 100 has decreased by 50 percent. Among the remaining elders fluent

in White Clay, several either have moved to rest homes off the reservation or have become homebound due to health problems. Thus, the number of fluent elders able to teach the White Clay language to younger generations is declining rapidly.

The Tribe's plan for language revitalization identified intensive instruction for the tribe's children as the most viable course of action. In 2004, Fort Belknap College established the White Clay Language Immersion School. Since then, the school has offered all-day instruction in a full range of academic subjects to children between seven and 10 years old. Instruction takes place in a total immersion setting, where all teaching and learning is embedded in an educational context that celebrates tribal history, culture and language.

### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The project's purpose was to produce young White Clay language speakers, building on the initial success of the White Clay Language Immersion School. The first objective was to hire and train two language teachers and one teacher's aide, develop an advisory council to advise on curriculum, and develop curriculum and training materials. Project staff succeeded in

developing the advisory council, hiring and training the teachers and teacher's aide, and establishing a curriculum. The teachers received formal instruction from the White Clay linguists and elders, who were part of an advisory council to review all material. During the project's three years, the advisory council provided feedback and the team prepared 10 interdisciplinary curriculum modules, produced a White Clay grammar manual, 12 interactive language CDs, and nine 10-minute instructional documentary films covering topics such as the resurgence of White Clay language, culture, and traditional dance.

The second objective, occurring in the second year of the project, was for 12 students to complete fifth grade successfully at the White Clay Language Immersion School and demonstrate comprehensive fluency in speaking the White Clay language. At the end of the year, all 12 received a "satisfactory" or higher score on progress reports evaluating language proficiency, personal-cultural identity, and cognitive development. All 12 demonstrated increased fluency in the White Clay language on end-of-year exams.

The project's third objective, completed in the third year of the project, was for nine students to complete the sixth grade successfully at the White Clay Immersion School and demonstrate fluency in the White Clay language. All of the nine immersion students received scores of "satisfactory" or higher on their quarterly reports, and 100 percent also received scores of "very good" on their year-end language proficiency exams. Four interactive instructional language CDs and four 10-minute documentary films were produced during the third year. In addition, the project director and a language consultant collaborated to produce a finalized White Clay Grammar Manual during the third year.

## OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

According to project staff members, the most important indicator of project success was the increased level of White Clay fluency achieved by the core group of nine students matriculating from fifth through sixth grade. Additionally, beyond the youth at the immersion school, three other speakers greatly increased their ability to speak the language, achieving fluency in the language by utilizing materials developed by the project. Another important indicator of success was the increased capacity of the immersion school, through teacher training and materials developed, to deliver high-quality instruction to community youth. The interactive, accessible language resources produced by this project, particularly those utilizing diverse media forms, provide a means by which White Clay instructors can reach younger audiences effectively. These materials have solidified the Immersion School's curriculum and established the school as a model for other tribes interested in implementing a similar school.

Student presentations for tribal members, Head Start students, and the larger community inspired enthusiasm and support for White Clay language revitalization efforts within the Fort Belknap community. Recognizing the value of language preservation, several community members, including elders and social services professionals, volunteered to support the school. Judging by the impressive fluency gains of White Clay Immersion School pupils, the greater availability of language learning resources at the school, and the high level of community support for language preservation and revitalization, the Fort Belknap community is in a good position to guide younger generations in learning and sharing the White Clay language.

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## STONE CHILD COLLEGE

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<b>Project Title:</b>	SCC Cree Language Nest Planning Project
<b>Award Amount:</b>	\$139,626
<b>Type of Grant:</b>	Language
<b>Project Period:</b>	Sept. 2008 – Dec. 2010
<b>Grantee Type:</b>	Tribal College

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### PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 2 jobs created
- 2 Native American consultants hired
- 28 elders involved
- \$18,934 in resources leveraged
- 10 partnerships formed
- 1 language nest curriculum developed

### BACKGROUND

The Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation was established by Act of Congress in 1916. The reservation's unusual name is derived from the leader of a band of Chippewa Indians. Translated from the Chippewa language, the name of the leader means "Stone Child," however, the name was mistranslated into English as "Rocky Boy." Chief Stone Child's people were among a number of Chippewa Indians whose ancestral home was in the Great Lakes Region, but migrated to the northern plains of Montana and North Dakota. Chief Little Bear, who led a band of Canadian Cree, also settled on the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation with Chief Stone Child's band of Chippewas.

Intermarriage between the Chippewa and Cree people created the unique tribe now known as the Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation. The present size of the reservation is 121,957 acres, and the tribe has 5,850 members.

According to project planners at Stone Child College, the Cree language is in steep decline on the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation. The latest update on the status of the language, provided to the Chippewa Cree Business Committee in October 2006 showed that approximately 14 percent of reservation residents were fluent speakers of Cree; 24 percent could understand but not speak Cree; and the remaining 62 percent could not understand or speak the language. Of the fluent Cree speakers surveyed, 63 percent were 56 years of age or older, 24 percent were 31 to 55, 8 percent were 19 to 30, 3 percent were 11 to 18, and 1 percent were 10 or below. There has been a 75 percent reduction in fluent Cree speakers from 1950 to present, and the percentage of non-speakers has increased from 10 to 86 percent.

### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The project's purpose was to develop a Cree Language Nest Immersion Program for

infants and toddlers to promote fluency in the Cree language and address the decline in Cree speakers. The project's first objective was to plan and design a comprehensive Cree Language Nest operating plan. First, two staff visited the Blackfeet and Salish Kootenai Tribes to observe their language nests. Next, project staff considered and decided where to house the program, put in place a staffing plan utilizing the college's certified elder and fluent Cree teachers, and began collaboration with the reservation's Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Through these efforts, the project team developed a final operating master plan including partnering agreements, a testing regimen, and a plan for creating the curriculum.

The second objective was to plan and design an age-appropriate Cree language nest teaching curriculum for infants and toddlers ages birth to three years, and to disseminate project media materials. To complete this objective, the project director hired two elder consultants, who assisted in developing the curriculum. Divided into three components, the curriculum was focused on three distinct age groups: zero to nine months, eight to 18 months, and 16 to 36 months. For each age group, the consultants developed lesson plans, including age and culturally-appropriate lullabies, songs, and stories in the Cree language, and pre- and post-tests.

To generate interest among the children's parents, outreach materials were developed and disseminated throughout the community. At the conclusion of the project, the language nest program began taking applications.

#### **OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT**

Via the master plan and curricula created by this project, the tribe improved its capacity to provide language nest training to young

tribal members. The language nest curriculum created by the project team is age-appropriate, culturally-specific, user-friendly, and includes a wide range of interesting, enjoyable activities to enable tribal children to learn the Cree language.

The immersion school will be centrally located in the community, making it accessible for any child whose parents wish for him/her to learn Cree. According to project staff, educating and involving parents already has fostered significant community interest and planted the seeds for the long-term sustainability of the language nest program. Through this project, the project staff stated, the Chippewa Cree Tribe has taken a significant step toward revitalization and preservation of the Cree Language.