
COHARIE INTRA-TRIBAL COUNCIL, INC.



Project Title: Economic Development Capacity Building Project

Award Amount: \$76,493

Type of Grant: Social and Economic Development Strategies

Project Period: 9/30/2005 – 9/29/2006

Grantee Type: Native Non-Profit

PROJECT SUMMARY

- 2 jobs created
- \$15,249 in resources leveraged
- 30 people trained
- 12 partnerships formed
- 2 businesses created
- 22 elders involved

BACKGROUND

The Coharie Tribe is a state-recognized tribe and the Coharie Intra-Tribal Council, Inc. provides the enrolled members with housing, economic, employment and educational opportunities. The contemporary Coharie community consists of four settlements: Holly Grove, New Bethel, Shiloh and Antioch in rural southeast North Carolina. The current tribal roll has 2,520 members, with approximately 20 percent of these members residing outside the tribal communities.

The Coharie members are facing bleak economic conditions due to the decline of the tobacco and textile industries. The state Native American high school graduation rate is only 24 percent and 25 percent of Native American families in the state live below the poverty level. In a 2003 study,

the University of North Carolina recommended that the Tribe hire an economic development specialist to create an Economic Development Plan and assist tribal members in starting small businesses.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Economic Development Capacity Building (Project) purpose was to develop plans for improving the tribal members' and the Tribe's economic self-sufficiency. The first objective was to help tribal members start or expand business ventures. The second objective was to explore business opportunities for a new tribal business. The Project expected to expand ten businesses and create five new businesses in the first year of the Project. The Coharie Intra-Tribal Council hired a 2004 high school graduate as the Economic Development Specialist to lead the Project.

The first objective was to implement the approved Economic Development Plan recommendations and establish a small business center within the Tribal Center to assist 15 individuals who wanted to start or expand a business. To assist tribal members, the Project planned to host bi-weekly small business development workshops. However, the first workshop failed to generate any community

participation and no subsequent workshops were scheduled. The Project succeeded at helping potential entrepreneurs in setting up action plans, but the number of members who received help fell well below expectations. By July 2006, two businesses (a lawn care service and a painting and pressure washing company) had opened with success, and other entrepreneurs were developing other small businesses.

The Project attracted potential partners who were encouraged to join the Economic Development Committee. Initially, the Project had difficulty convening the Economic Development Committee. To overcome poor meeting attendance, the Project sponsored breakfast meetings. As a result, these potential partners were more responsive and the Committee became much more active.

The second objective was to explore business opportunities for the establishment of a Tribal business operation and plan its development. By the fourth quarter of the Project, staff was struggling to find a business opportunity for the Coharie Tribe. The Project planned to recommend a vending machine operation, and had scheduled a presentation to the Tribal Council.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

The Project did make strides towards assisting tribal entrepreneurs and the Tribe in the development of small businesses. Tribal members and entrepreneurs developed management and business skills. The Tribal community now has an established and comfortable place in which members can initiate their entrepreneurial inquiries. Entrepreneurs came away with a variety of business ideas such as a bowling alley, restaurant, landscaping business, vending machines, painting and more. Each person who came in was at a different stage

in their planning process and all received assistance in planning and goal setting. All of the entrepreneurs who took advantage of the services that the business center offered are encouraged with their small business developments. Those who worked with the Project received individual attention and assistance and the participants were generally grateful.

As a result of the Project, the Tribal Council gleaned a wealth of knowledge about small businesses. Many attended workshops and conferences on small business development and are more informed to make business decisions for the Tribe. The Project worked closely with the Council.

The benefits of this project extend beyond the Coharie Tribe. Due to the many partnerships formed, the outside community has also been positively impacted. The Economic Development Committee brought together many business leaders from the community who shared ideas and best practices and gained a greater understanding of the Coharie Tribe's culture. The Committee's knowledge was invaluable to the Project staff and Tribe. In addition to what it shared and learned, the Tribe's businesses saw growth as the community became more aware of the Committee's services.

The Coharie Tribal community has taken strides towards self-sufficiency and is pleased with the results of the Economic Development Building Capacity Project.

GUILFORD NATIVE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION



Project Title: Economic Development Through Clothing Design, Production and Sales

Award Amount: \$595,873

Type of Grant: Social and Economic Development Strategies

Project Period: 9/30/2004 – 9/29/2006

Grantee Type: Native Non-Profit

PROJECT SUMMARY

- 2 jobs created
- \$28,200 in resources leveraged
- 11 people trained
- 6 partnerships formed
- 502 products developed
- \$10,500 in revenue generated
- 1 business created

BACKGROUND

The Guilford Native American Association (GNAA) serves the needs of the Native American population in the Greensboro metropolitan area. Their services include employment training and social and cultural support to almost 5,200 Native Americans residing in their 11-county service area.

Many in the GNAA community have expressed their concerns about the lack of employment in the Greensboro, North Carolina metropolitan area. GNAA developed a project to provide opportunities for skill advancement in textile design and to increase the number of employment opportunities for the members of the GNAA community.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Project planned to purchase a double-head embroidery machine and employ community members to work the machines and manage a new business. The new embroidery business would create a denim wear clothing line embroidered with southwestern Native American symbols. The Project planned to sell the clothing line in their existing Pocosin Native American Store, located in downtown Greensboro. The Project also planned for the new embroidery business to solicit contracts to apply labels and embroidery on other clothes and items.

The Project had originally anticipated working in the space that they leased for their Pocosin Native American Store. However, they encountered problems on the lease and GNAA moved the store to Greensboro's art district. While ideal for retailing, the facility was not suitable for embroidery production. The Project eventually found an old converted textile mill that fit the Project's needs, but it took almost a year to find the new location.

The Project successfully started a business, Pocosin Native Embroidery, and hired six part-time employees. The embroidery

business used ten native designs for which GNAA owned the rights and embroidered men's and women's jean shirts. These were sold at the Pocosin Store, but sales were limited; this also limited the positions to part-time jobs. The denim-wear line stalled as it was too overwhelming to develop at the same time as they attempted to market their embroidery services in private contracts.

During the second year, the Project staff worked hard at building new contracts. By the end of the grant period, new contracts included a cap-production contract with the neighboring Occaneechi Tribe, Southern Fasteners (200 polo shirts); Dougherty Equipment Co. (450 embroidered shirts); Robarge Handy Man; People's Choice Construction Company; and Accelenondo Point of Sales Systems. At the end of the Project, three previous customers and one new customer were also working on new designs and preparing contracts.

In addition to the facility set-back, the Project encountered another major challenge. The Project had originally planned to hire a marketing specialist, but was unable to fill the position. Instead, they hired a consultant whose fees were much higher than budgeted. Although the consultant produced a few marketing pieces, the budget was not sufficient to sustain the position throughout the 24-month timeframe. However, the organization has undertaken its own marketing campaign and formed a partnership with Arrowhead Graphics of Greensboro, NC, who assists with printing and referrals. They displayed products at the GNAA Fine Art Gallery as well as the 30th Annual GNAA Pow Wow and Cultural Festival.

Although the Project did not achieve its denim-wear objective, the Project successfully created a sustainable business. The embroidery business was generating

revenue and providing employment for Native Americans.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

The Project had the biggest impact on the six new hires. While the jobs created needed income, the employees also gained job maintenance skills, work ethic and pride and ownership in their work. The employees were all very pleased with the work they accomplished. One benefit of a small group was that each employee was cross-trained and some learned how to fix the embroidery machine if the thread broke. The employees were more than just colleagues – they were a cohesive team. The Pocosin Native Embroidery employees commented, “The Project has been a good learning experience as far as business” and “It's been really hard at times, but also good and even a lot of fun sometimes.”

The Guilford Native American Association also benefited from this project. The opening of Pocosin Native Embroidery attracted attention from both the Native and outside community. Articles were printed in several local newspapers, and postcards were mailed out that helped market the business as well as inform the community about the organization, including its goals and needs.

Customers were pleased with the quality of the clothing, sport bags, towels and other materials that Pocosin Native Embroidery had embroidered. Many were return customers and all recommended Pocosin products. A new customer commented, “I've seen their products and was impressed with them and wanted to try them out for my company.”