
TURTLE MOUNTAIN BAND OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS



Project Title:	Turtle Mountain Entrepreneurial Development Project
Award Amount:	\$451,916
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	Sept. 2008 – Sept. 2011
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 34 full-time equivalent jobs created
- 10 businesses created
- 4 elders involved
- 150 youth involved
- \$40,026 in resources leveraged
- 204 individuals trained
- 14 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians is located in north-central North Dakota, with approximately 30,000 enrolled members. The tribe has a six- by 12-mile reservation, in addition to approximately 200,000 acres of allotted land in parcels owned by members near the reservation. The reservation and surrounding area has a population of over 11,000 tribal members. Turtle Mountain tribal headquarters are located in Belcourt, North Dakota, in Rolette County where 82 percent of the population is Native American.

Although the reservation attracts many members, the tribe suffers from a weak and

aging economic infrastructure, widespread poverty, and geographic isolation from urban economic activity. The tribe's large population and small land base present further challenges to economic self-sufficiency.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this project was to provide assistance for entrepreneurs to start and develop new businesses and create employment opportunities on the Turtle Mountain Reservation and in the surrounding community. The first objective was to establish an entrepreneurial training program to generate, nourish, and strengthen the small business sector. With the help of four entrepreneurial instructors, the project director conducted four adult and four youth financial literacy trainings each year. Every session had an average of 15 to 20 students, and the project director reported that 127 participants successfully completed training and received certificates. As a result of the entrepreneurial training program there have been approximately 10 new business start-ups, creating 29 jobs. The project also involved many existing local businesses by

establishing mentoring and job shadowing opportunities for program participants.

The youth training grew out of the recognition that community members should be learning financial literacy and becoming interested in entrepreneurship at a younger age. It was important for the youth curriculum to be balanced between non-native mainstream, which tends to be too technical for young students, and traditional, which is not always relevant to their lives. Therefore, the project director adapted the Indianpreneurship curriculum from the Oregon Native American Business and Entrepreneurial Network Inc., a Native American business network, to make it more interactive and relevant to tribal youth.

The second objective was to establish an Entrepreneurial Development Center (EDC) to support the development of the small business sector by providing resources, training opportunities, and on-going technical assistance. The tribe does not have an economic development office, so the project director worked through the Turtle Mountain Renewal Community to obtain office space for the EDC in downtown Belcourt. Outside of financial literacy training sessions, the EDC served nearly 50 clients, with an average of six new clients per quarter. The center includes offices for two business development counselors to help clients with business plans and provide technical assistance as needed. The counselors will remain with the EDC to serve as expert technical assistance providers, and to conduct follow up with new businesses to determine the economic impacts of the project. The EDC also houses a small computer lab that is open to clients and training participants.

In addition to the downtown office, project staff also utilized the Anishinaabe Cultural and Wellness Center, an extension campus of the Turtle Mountain Community College

near Belcourt. A permanent EDC space was secured at the Anishinaabe Center, where staff will relocate in 2012 to continue offering services and training.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The EDC has become a satellite center for entrepreneurial training and business counseling in Rolette County, and is an important resource for existing and new business owners on the reservation. The center provides services that would not otherwise exist for the tribe, and has encouraged the entrepreneurial spirit among youth and adults. The project director stated that the training and resources provided through the EDC have also helped overcome old ways of doing business, such as not using a bank to manage money and running improper payroll. The project director was also influential in starting the Turtle Mountain Community Development Financial Institution, which provides credit repair and business loan programs, and will continue its services after this project ends.

While the financial literacy trainings were very well-received, the project director reports that there is demand for more training on other topics like organizational management, record-keeping, and using QuickBooks. Project staff stated, "This project has become more than what we thought it would, and we have had to expand outside of our original target population because people were calling up about a whole range of issues." The EDC continues to give important assistance to individual entrepreneurs, as well as guidance for future economic development endeavors for the tribe. In addition to providing much-needed resources for economic development on the reservation, this project also highlighted economic development needs that still exist, and has established a foundation for addressing those needs with long-term solutions.

TURTLE MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Project Title:	Kitchitwa Ondweve Nooding (Sacred Voices in the Wind)
Award Amount:	\$301,153
Type of Grant:	Language
Project Period:	Sept. 2009 – Sept. 2011
Grantee Type:	Tribal College

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 3 full-time equivalent jobs created
- 137 elders involved
- 120 youth involved
- \$9,175 in resources leveraged
- 44 individuals trained
- 7 partnerships formed
- 3 language surveys developed
- 225 language surveys completed
- 50 youth increased their ability to speak a native language

BACKGROUND

Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC) is an accredited, tribally-controlled post-secondary institution chartered by the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians. Established in 1972, the college provides higher education services primarily for the Turtle Mountain Reservation, awarding associate and bachelor degrees, as well as certificates of completion. The college and tribal headquarters are located in Belcourt, North Dakota on the tribe's six- by 12-mile reservation, 10 miles south of the Canadian border.

There are two native languages on the Turtle Mountain Reservation. Ojibwe is the traditional language of the Anishinaabe people, and Michif is a hybrid language based on Cree, Ojibwe, and French. Previous language assessments by TMCC found that in 2000, there were only 31 fluent and 20 semi-fluent Ojibwe speakers remaining. Michif was once the most commonly spoken language on the reservation, but in 2000 was used by only one percent of the population.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this project was to document, preserve, and transmit Turtle Mountain's native languages by providing increased opportunities for tribal members to learn and use them. The first objective was to identify fluent speakers of Ojibwe and Michif, and involve them in planning a language preservation program. Project staff first worked to identify all fluent and semi-fluent speakers on the reservation. They documented a total of 74 speakers: 25 Ojibwe (13 fluent, 12 semi-fluent), 45 Michif (24 fluent, 21 semi-fluent), and four dual speakers. TMCC then hosted a forum for each language during the summer of 2010, providing an opportunity for speakers

to gather and highlighting the urgent need to preserve the languages. Twenty to twenty-five participants attended each forum.

Through the forums and other meetings, both Ojibwe and Michif speakers provided input for the tribe's language preservation plan, which focused on curriculum development to provide a foundation for language learning on the reservation.

The second objective was to involve 40 percent of the identified fluent language speakers in oral documentation of Ojibwe and Michif. Project staff reported that 31 speakers participated in oral documentation, representing 42 percent of all identified speakers. Twenty-two of those were Michif speakers, eight spoke Ojibwe, and one was a dual speaker. Together they produced an estimated 520 hours of oral documentation with the help of the college's studio recording students. The recordings are on CDs that will be archived in TMCC's library, with the goal of using them in the future as a resource for creating and training language teachers. They will also be available for use by the general community and the college's students, faculty, and staff.

The third objective was to develop dual language curricula for adult and early childhood learners, including language activities and a master list of core words and phrases documented by fluent language speakers. Project staff contracted an education consultant to compile the curriculum materials and align them with North Dakota state standards for educational content. Once the curricula were complete, project staff conducted a six-week trial run with approximately 20 students in the Head Start program, and piloted an adult curriculum project with 10 to 15 participants over 10 sessions. The project director then met with the local Ojibway Indian School and the public school systems in Belcourt, Dunseith, and Turtle Mountain to establish partnerships and an implementation plan for

teaching the curriculum in Head Start through third grade. The curriculum materials, including 50 language activities and a list of 1,000 words and phrases, have been finalized and are ready for implementation.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Prior to this project, certified language teachers at TMCC taught courses in Ojibwe and Michif, but interest in these classes was limited. As a result of this project, however, TMCC staff has noted increasing interest in culture and language among college students as well as the tribal community, accompanied by a greater sense of urgency to save the tribe's native languages.

After the speakers' forums, elders also became more involved in passing on their knowledge of the languages. Through the process of oral documentation, as well as increased participation in TMCC's summer culture and language camp, elders have had more opportunities to interact with youth and young adults. This project also allowed school staff to document the way elders speak naturally, preserving a mixture of words, storytelling, and interviews, which is a critical step in revitalizing the language.

Providing exposure to Ojibwe and Michif has given youth pride in being native, and project staff reported they have seen students starting to reconnect with their tribal identity. Many parents did not pass the language on to their children as a result of historical trauma, but over the project period staff saw attitudes change. They noticed more young people participating in traditional activities and ceremonies, and parents offering greater support for youth learning the native languages. Project staff stated that as a result of this project, "hope is spreading in such a good way, and there is hope for the culture and language where there was not before."