



**April 16, 2024**

## **ONAC Announces National Grant Awards in Support of Native Asset-Building Efforts**

The Oklahoma Native Assets Coalition, Inc. (ONAC), a national Native-led nonprofit, announces that it awarded \$205,000 in invitation-only subgrants to twenty Native Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites during this recently-concluded tax season to assist them in providing Native-led tax preparation services for their tribal communities. The twenty grant awards represent the largest number of grant awards made in the country, during this tax season, by one grantor in support of Native VITA sites. As a national intermediary grant funder, ONAC was able to make these awards through the support of the **Wells Fargo Foundation** with additional funding from the **Bank of America Charitable Foundation**. To support this VITA initiative and ONAC's other programs, ONAC also received general operating resources from **The Kresge Foundation** and the **Target Foundation**. ONAC is grateful for this generous support and believes that funding Native VITA programs is a crucial piece of its efforts to provide integrated asset-building services in Native communities.

These grant awards are part of ONAC's ongoing coordination of the only nationally-focused Native Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)/Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Network. ONAC organizes this Network to provide resources and peer learning exchanges among Native VITA practitioners and related supporters throughout the country. As part of ONAC's coordination of the Network, ONAC serves on the national Taxpayer Opportunity Network (TON) Steering Committee and is in regular communication with IRS staff and other national entities working on EITC outreach and VITA. For those interested in joining the ONAC Native EITC/VITA Network, with coordination led by Patsy Schramm (Cherokee Nation) of ONAC, please complete the following online registration form: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ONACVITA>.

**ONAC congratulates the following ONAC 2024 Native VITA mini-grant awardees on a successful tax season:**

- Cherokee Nation Commerce Services (Tahlequah, Oklahoma)
- Chief Dull Knife College (Lame Deer, Montana)
- Community Development Financial Institution of the Tohono O'odham Nation (Sells, Arizona)
- Duck Valley Housing Authority (Owyhee, Nevada)
- Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe (Fallon, Nevada)
- Four Directions Development Corporation (Orono, Maine)
- Lakota Funds (Kyle, South Dakota)
- Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi (Fulton, Michigan)



- Pueblo of Acoma Housing Authority (Pueblo of Acoma, New Mexico)
- Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation (Fort Hall, Idaho)
- Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians (Bowler, Wisconsin)
- The Chickasaw Nation (Ada, Oklahoma)
- The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin (Keshena, Wisconsin)
- The Muscogee Nation (Okmulgee, Oklahoma)
- Tlingit Haida Regional Housing Authority (Juneau, Alaska)
- Walker River Paiute Tribe (Schurz, Nevada)
- Warm Springs Community Action Team (Warm Springs, Oregon)
- White Earth Investment Initiative (Ogema, Minnesota)
- White Mountain Apache Housing Authority (Whiteriver, Arizona)
- Ysleta del Sur Pueblo (El Paso, Texas)

Since 2014, ONAC has awarded a total of 105 grants (\$868,900 total) to tribes and Native nonprofits in support of their asset-building programs. Grant awards have been made in Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin. As additional resources are secured, ONAC will continue to expand grant support in other states. ONAC appreciates the partnerships with these grantees and all their work to build assets in Native communities.

#### **The importance of Native VITA programs:**

Native VITA services are crucial as this free tax preparation is offered by trusted sources in local Native communities. For those without broadband access and affordable devices on which to complete online tax returns, in-person Native VITA services help tribal citizens to claim their tax credits and to use tax time as asset-building time. ONAC will receive the data reports from the 2024 grantees this fall (as some offer year-round VITA services). To convey the impact of Native VITA services, ONAC can report on the data from twenty grantees in 2023. **Those twenty ONAC grantees served 12,235 tribal citizens and helped them claim \$19,670,489 in federal tax refunds. Of those 12,235 tribal citizens, 3,450 individuals claimed \$6,618,538 through the EITC and 2,561 families claimed \$4,413,077 through the Child Tax Credit (CTC).** It is important to note that these funds went directly to Native VITA clientele, in full, without any filing fees.

#### **About the Oklahoma Native Assets Coalition, Inc.:**

The Oklahoma Native Assets Coalition (ONAC), started in 2001, is a national Native-led nonprofit that works with tribes and partners interested in establishing asset-building initiatives and programs in Native communities, for the purpose of creating greater opportunities for economic self-sufficiency of tribal citizens. ONAC is an intermediary funder, grassroots network coordinator, and also a direct service provider that works with Native families to build their assets through ONAC's provision of Native-specific financial education and financial coaching, as well as funding of Children's Savings Accounts (CSAs), Emergency Savings Accounts (ESAs), down payment assistance, incentivized Bank On accounts, and emergency cash assistance.



The mission of ONAC is to build and support a network of Native people who are dedicated to increasing self-sufficiency and prosperity in their communities through the establishment of integrated and culturally relevant financial education and financial coaching initiatives, as well as seed-funded account programs, down payment assistance, EITC outreach, free tax preparation, expanded banking access, and other asset-building strategies.

Asset-building programs often simultaneously address family economic security, food sovereignty, financial literacy, and preservation of Native languages and arts. ONAC believes strongly in the importance of creating programming that incorporates Native worldviews, traditions, arts, and languages into Native asset-building efforts.

**For further information:**

Contact Christy Finsel, Ph.D., (Osage Nation), ONAC Executive Director, [cfinsel@oknativeassets.org](mailto:cfinsel@oknativeassets.org). Also, see <https://www.oknativeassets.org>.