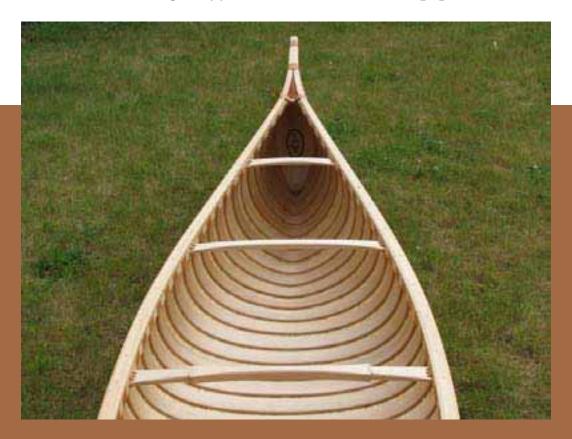
Growing Economies in Indian Country:

Taking Stock of Progress and Partnerships,
Summary & Opportunities for Further Engagement



September 20, 2011



Growing Economies in Indian Country: Taking Stock of Progress and Partnerships Workshop Summary & Opportunities for Further Engagement

In an effort to continue the dialogue generated by the recent <u>Growing Economies in Indian Country Workshop</u>, the Organizing Committee has summarized workshop-evaluation comments that capture the themes of the day and point to specific opportunities for ongoing dialogue, engagement, and action. This document is not intended to be all-inclusive but to provide readers with a snapshot of perspectives from the forum held in Bangor, Maine on September 20, 2011.

For those who completed the evaluation, we thank you for your valuable input. Overall, we achieved a response rate of 41%. Below, we summarize the response rate by sector as a percentage of the total completed evaluations.

- 1. Economic Development 26.67%
- 2. Federal, State, and Local agencies 26.66%
- 3. Tribal Government 11.11%
- 4. CDFIs 8.89%
- 5. Banking 6.67%
- 6. Workforce Development 6.67%
- 7. Other 13.33%

Overall, 95.5% of the participants rated the workshop as either "Excellent" or "Very good."

What if any "take-aways" did you learn from the event?

- A heightened understanding of Tribal leaders' goals in Maine.
- The need to increase intertribal communication, coordination, and collaboration.
- The need for a permanent economic development coordinator to coordinate services to Maine's tribal economic and planning professionals.
- Federal, state, and local services providers need to extend their reach into Native communities.
- Federal, state, and local service providers need to coordinate their efforts more effectively to maximize impact.
- Current and future workforce development efforts need to be aligned and supportive of traditional tribal cultural values and interests.
- Gaps continue to exist in programming and services provided to Maine's tribal communities.
- There is a need for increased cultural sensitivity.
- There are an abundance of opportunities and resources that Maine's tribal communities could benefit from if provided the appropriate information and resources.

What lessons shared today do you believe are applicable to your community, tribe, or work?

- How to position available funds when discussing agency opportunities.
- The challenges of working with Native communities expressed by non-Native participants.

- As a service provider, the workshop opened my eyes for opportunities to collaborate with tribes and other service providers to increase the impact of the assistance we provide.
- Collaboration among federal, state, and local service providers is essential in advancing the economic development of the tribes.
- There is a need for unrestricted matching dollars, extra support for innovation (particularly when addressing barriers), and the development of soft skills in the workforce.
- Trust building is essential.
- Understanding the role of culture and the barriers native people face within their own communities.
- Remembering that economic development is an ongoing process and a lot of hard work requiring everyone's involvement.

What would you like to learn more about?

- Financing on tribal/trust lands.
- Community development projects that leverage and incorporate the assets of colleges and universities to benefit tribal communities.
- Potential for tribes to host Small Business Development Center staff.
- Types of services and programs currently offered by tribal governments and what they require from the state and local systems.
- How do we put what transpired at this workshop into action?
- A better understanding of Native culture how that affects communications, decision-making, and future projects.
- The level of collaboration among the tribes; what types of efforts they currently work together on and what they don't.
- The types of programs available that encourage more financial institutions to become involved with tribal community and economic development activities.
- How tribes are governed and what community development programs exist to meet their unique development challenges as well as those programs where they must compete.
- How to better navigate the federal system when seeking program assistance.
- Workforce Investment Act funding for tribal communities.
- How we can help educate youth on the reservation and support them while they receive their education in an effort to close the current skills gap in this state.
- The importance of planning and community-driven strategic planning that addresses previously defined problems or issues rather than pursuing available funds without a well-thought-out plan.
- Specific information on grant and loan programs for Native American entrepreneurs.
- The issue of bonding and collateral in Native American communities when interfacing with nontribal-organizations.
- Food-based economic development
- Hub zone certification, 8(a) status, and the Small Business Administration.

Would you like to see follow-up activity from today's event and if so what kind?

- A follow-up gathering in six months to discuss progress, initiatives taken, successes achieved, barriers encountered, etc.
- Follow-up on how nontribal CDFIs can be more of a resource to each tribe.
- The opportunity to discuss tribal engagement with regional and local economic development organizations and how better synergies can be realized.
- Same format next year ... more packaged solutions presented.
- Increased opportunities to interface and meet with additional United Southern & Eastern Tribes (USET).
- Smaller meetings focused on the topics highlighted in each breakout session.
- An online public forum.
- Specific breakout/follow-up sessions held on the reservations so people can see and feel the issues and challenges being discussed.
- Increased opportunities for tribal economic development professionals to meet and learn from one another.
- Listserv connecting Maine tribes and service providers.
- Detailed action/plans that promote the self-sufficiency of tribal entities.

In closing, this document captures the major themes of the day and is not intended to represent an all-inclusive document of all that transpired throughout the workshop and individual breakout sessions. The authors would like to thank Four Directions Development Corporation for the leadership they provided the Bangor workshop and for their continued efforts at creating equitable economies and sustainable communities within Maine's indigenous communities.