



Testimony of Tanya Fiddler

- Vice President, First Nations Oweesta Corporation
- Co-chair, Native CDFI Network
- Previous Executive Director, Four Bands Community Fund

To the House Committee on Financial Services Hearing on:

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (CDFIs)—
THEIR UNIQUE ROLE AND CHALLENGES SERVING
LOWER-INCOME, UNDERSERVED AND MINORITY COMMUNITIES**

March 9, 2010

Pilamaya ye, thank you!

Chairman Frank, Ranking Member Bachus, and distinguished Members of the House Committee on Financial Services—*Mitakuyapi, Tuktel He Najin Oyate Wiyankapi Win Lakota emaciyapi na Tanya Fiddler English emaciyapi, k'sto*. To all of you, my Lakota name is “She Stands Where the People Watch Her Woman” and my English name is Tanya Fiddler. I am an enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. I have run a nationally recognized Native CDFI in Eagle Butte, South Dakota for the past 10 years. I am now the Vice President of Programs and Operations at First Nations Oweesta Corporation, a role I assumed in January. I am also the co-chair of the newly formed Native CDFI Network.

Let me begin by saying *Pilamaya ye, thank you*, for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of Oweesta, the Native CDFI Network, and Native communities throughout the US.

Introduction

Oweesta is a national, certified Native CDFI intermediary that provides training, technical assistance, and investments to help Native communities across the country establish sustainable, vibrant, and healthy economies. A principal focus of our work is to help communities build and strengthen CDFIs in lower-income, underserved, and minority communities—the focus of your hearing today.

One of the areas where Oweesta has done extensive work is the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation. This is the reservation where my family is from and where I have spent much of my adult life. I am here to say that communities on my reservation, like many other Native communities, are experiencing REAL changes—we are replacing poverty with entrepreneurship and financial skills.

Self-sufficiency, wise resource management, and entrepreneurship are all traditional Native values, and over the last decade Oweesta has been leading the movement to renew these values in today’s modern Native communities. The movement we are part of is greatly enhanced by the support Native communities have been receiving - and continue to receive - from the US Treasury’s CDFI Fund. I cannot say enough good things about the role the Fund is playing—but I will do my best to address some of key contributions being made as part of my response to the questions I received from Chairman Frank.

I also want to note that there are many other partners working together with the CDFI Fund, Oweesta, and the many Native CDFIs we support. We are a team of governmental and non-governmental organizations, Native and non-Native leaders, networks and coalitions—too many to even attempt to list. I will point out one network of which I am a part that is specifically focused on CDFIs - the Native CDFI Network. This network promotes peer-to-peer learning among Native CDFIs and collaboration focused on strategic policy priorities.

As requested by the Committee, I am going to focus my remarks on the questions sent to me. Lakota people value humility, and in our culture it is inappropriate to brag of your accomplishments. In order to validate an individual’s contributions there must be a story teller, a witness who informs the community. In the Lakota oral tradition of *Waktoglaka*, “telling of our victories,” I come here as that witness to share the successes of Native CDFIs and their customers—Native American families and communities.

Question 1: What has been your general impression of the usefulness of the community development financial institutions (CDFI) Fund?

The CDFI Fund is a critical element in Native economic development!

Since the inception of the Native Initiatives Program at the CDFI Fund in 2002, 221 awards totaling \$46.8 million have been made to Native CDFIs serving almost 100 Native communities throughout the United States. The result has been a remarkable growth in the Native CDFI industry. In FY 2001, the year before the Native Initiatives Program was launched, there were nine certified Native CDFIs in the United States. By January 2010 the CDFI Fund had certified 55 Native CDFIs, and another 60 Native CDFIs are preparing for certification and receiving specialized technical assistance and training. A list of the 55 certified Native CDFIs is attached to the end of this testimony.

In 1999, the CDFI Fund conducted a Native American Lending Study that examined access to capital and financial services in Native communities. This pivotal document identified 17 major barriers to economic development in Native communities—among those barriers were credit worthiness, lack of equity, lack of financial and business skills and training, and lack of financial institutions and legal infrastructure. The Study offered a variety of recommendations to address these barriers.

My community, the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation, participated in the Native American Lending Study. The Reservation encompasses Dewey and Ziebach counties in South Dakota, two of the poorest counties in America according to the 2000 U.S. Census. In 2000, we used the findings from the report to promote the development of Four Bands Community Fund, a Native CDFI that provides financial skills and business training, technical assistance, and revolving loan funds to residents of the Reservation. When Four Bands began operations, 80 percent of the Reservation population was Native American but less than one percent of the businesses were Native-owned. This disparity provided immense opportunity for Four Bands' products and services.

In response to the Native American Lending Study, the CDFI Fund established the Native Initiatives Program in 2002, and began to work in partnership with organizations like Oweesta to address the barriers preventing access to capital and financial services to Native Americans. The Fund began offering Native-specific funding that not only recognized the unique set of circumstances that Native communities face in spurring economic development, but it also created greater opportunity for community-based financial institutions to develop and expand. Prior to the establishment of this program, Native CDFIs received funds through the CDFI Fund awards that targeted all CDFIs, Native and non-Native. The Native Initiatives Program today administers the Native American CDFI Assistance (NACA) Program. Through its NACA Program, the CDFI Fund provides funding to build the community development capacity of certified Native CDFIs, emerging Native CDFIs, and sponsoring entities, and to increase access to capital in Native communities throughout the country.

What makes the Fund's role in promoting growth in Native CDFIs so useful? It is because Native CDFIs are the leading source of capital for small businesses and home buyers in low-income, Native communities. These communities have never been well served by mainstream financial institutions, making them great targets for predatory lenders that have been happy to fill the void. When Tribal governments tried to step in on their own and become the source of loan capital, the agencies and individuals providing these loan services often had no experience or "best practices to follow" in the loan business or in private business development and therefore the efforts often failed.

On behalf of Oweesta and the expanding group of Native communities we serve, I would like this Committee to know that the Fund's approach in working with the Native community is exemplary. Yes, there are ways to make improvements, but overall the innovative work of the CDFI Fund has been one of the federal

government's most successful programs for alleviating poverty in Native communities. In my response to Question number 7, I will recommend a few ideas to improve upon the good work currently being done by the CDFI Fund.

Question 2: Could you explain the exact nature of the economic activities in which your institution has been engaged through the CDFI Fund?

Oweesta and the CDFI Fund work in partnership to support economic development in local Native communities.

Oweesta is a CDFI intermediary—this means we do not directly fund a business or home buyer. Instead, we use funds provided to us from a range of sources, especially the CDFI Fund, to stimulate economic activities in Native communities across the country. We provide training and technical assistance and investments that increase the number of certified Native CDFIs, strengthen the operational capacity of existing Native CDFIs, and guide Native CDFIs in the creation of important financial education and asset-building programs for their communities. Oweesta has received over \$2 million through the CDFI Fund's NACA program. These funds have enabled us to develop our own organizational capacity and provide much-needed services to support Native communities in their efforts to build local economies.

In addition, we have been a contractor for the CDFI Fund's Expanding Native Opportunity training and technical assistance initiative. Oweesta has witnessed first-hand the positive impact that this training and technical assistance is having in building the financial infrastructure necessary for economic development in Native communities. Under contract with the CDFI Fund, Oweesta has launched several Expanding Native Opportunity initiatives that support the creation of lending institutions, the establishment of financial education and asset building programs, and the development of enterprise and entrepreneurship systems in Native communities. In 2003, we partnered with CDFI-industry organization Opportunity Finance Network and the CDFI Fund to start the Native Communities Financing Initiative (NCFI), a multi-part training program originally designed to help Native communities develop and expand Native CDFIs. In 2005, we began delivering the Native IDA Initiative (NIDAI), a training and technical assistance program designed to help Native organizations start, implement, and sustain matched savings accounts called individual development accounts (IDAs). In 2007, we launched the Native Financial Skills and Entrepreneurship Initiative (NFSEI) to enable Native CDFIs and tribal entities to establish financial skills training programs in their communities, and to enhance the enterprise and entrepreneurship development systems in other Native communities. As of today we continue to work with the CDFI Fund on Native CDFI development, financial skills program development, and strengthening enterprise and entrepreneurship systems in Native communities. Unfortunately, the important work of IDA program development in Native communities has been halted.

This significant monetary investment by the CDFI Fund and the creation of the Expanding Native Opportunity initiatives fueled the growth of the Native economic development field. Award of these federal contracts has allowed Oweesta to reach a much broader audience at a more frequent rate, ultimately changing more individual Native lives.

Question 3: What specific economic or neighborhood impact can you point to that has resulted from the CDFI Fund investment?

CDFI Fund investments in Native communities have expanded Native CDFIs, which in turn offer innovative products and services to expand small businesses and jobs, support home ownership and other credit building opportunities, and create locally driven economic development.

As noted earlier, Oweesta is a CDFI intermediary. Therefore I will focus first on achievements that CDFI Fund investments have made possible for Oweesta and the work it conducts as a national Native CDFI intermediary organization. I will then provide several examples of how the CDFI Fund has supported innovative products and services offered by Native CDFIs at the local level—products and services that result in new small businesses and jobs, home ownership and other credit building opportunities, and locally driven economic development.

Examples of Oweesta's Achievements:

1. Community Development Financial Institution Development throughout Indian Country – As noted earlier, Oweesta has worked closely with the CDFI Fund to support the expansion of Native CDFIs throughout the United States—starting with two in 1999 and expanding to 55 by early 2010. We believe that without Oweesta's involvement, prompted by support from the CDFI Fund, the rapid expansion of Native CDFIs as illustrated in an attachment to this testimony would not have happened. These Native CDFIs are enabling Native people to build stronger, more self-sufficient communities and nations. Native CDFIs help to develop local economies by creating entrepreneurs and businesses, increasing homeownership, and empowering community members to reach their financial goals. Native CDFIs provide locally-based access to capital and the necessary capacity building services to bring permanent and positive change to Native economies.
2. Financial Education & Asset Building – In addition to supporting the expansion of Native CDFIs, Oweesta has provided training to stimulate ongoing financial education programs in Native communities. These programs enable communities to teach people how to manage their assets, save towards financial goals, take advantage of resources, and avoid predatory lenders. They also use volunteer income tax assistance (VITA sites) to take advantage of the earned income tax credit (EITC) available to low-income households to create and build assets. To date, 630 Native organizations have completed Oweesta's financial education instructor training program, 227 have completed IDA training, and more than 450 have participated in an Earned Income Tax Credit training program or other asset-building training activity.
3. Enterprise & Entrepreneurship Development – Creating strong and effective enterprise and entrepreneurship systems in Native communities is essential to building a healthy, thriving economy. By establishing, expanding, and improving local systems and infrastructure, Native communities create an environment that supports tribal enterprise and private entrepreneurship, allowing businesses and the private sector to flourish. Since establishing the Enterprise & Entrepreneurship Development Department in 2008 Oweesta has provided enterprise and entrepreneurship training to more than 25 tribes and organizations.

Examples of Innovative Products and Services Offered by Native CDFIs in their Local Communities:

1. Culturally appropriate business development and financial education classes such as Building Native Communities and Indianpreneurship – Native CDFIs are using innovative training programs to teach business and financial planning. The historical lack of financial institutions and non-government dependent economic development has created a gap in traditional business and financial skills. Culturally relevant curriculum is providing the information in a way that retains traditional Native values.
2. Small Businesses loans using the Bureau of Indian Affairs loan guarantee and insurance programs to minimize the risk in loan portfolios – In the last two years, Native CDFI leadership has worked with the Bureau of Indian Affairs' economic development programs to recognize Native CDFIs as "preferred lenders." This has made their loans eligible for loan guarantees, which has opened new doors to credit for small business owners and has allowed local CDFIs to leverage their loan capital dollars, thereby stretching them further.
3. Credit builder training and loans – Local Native CDFIs are offering loan products that help borrowers learn about, build, and repair their credit history in order to access affordable financing for housing and/or small business ownership. These institutions teach their clients that a credit rating is an asset, and they create an opportunity for tribal members with poor or no credit histories to build that asset as a foundation to more tangible assets such as businesses or homes.
4. Youth entrepreneur internships – This innovative service provides an earned income opportunity for youth to work for local businesses and save money for asset-producing goals, including college or technical training. Students complete financial education training and college preparatory activities while participating in an Individual Development Account (IDA) program.
5. Alternative refund anticipation loans – Native CDFIs are working in partnership with IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites to help tribal members complete their federal income tax returns and, in many cases, access their Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) that would otherwise go unclaimed. Native CDFIs can provide low- or no-interest loans to customers in order to avoid high-cost "refund anticipation loans," or RALs. Native CDFIs combine financial skills training and tax preparation services to keep tribal members from giving away a portion of their well-deserved tax refund for the easy lure of quick access to cash.
6. Educating Tribal leadership – Native CDFIs are using financial skills training to build the capacity of elected Tribal leadership to provide direct lending to Tribal Districts for home renovations, which in turn has lowered default rates in the Tribe's loan portfolio and expanded their markets.

Questions 4, 5, & 6:

- **How has the economic downturn affected your entity's activities?**
- **Has it affected the demand for your institution's services, your liquidity, your balance sheet?**
- **How have you had to manage your portfolio in light of these circumstances?**

Due to the economic downturn Native CDFIs have experienced an increase in competition for state and federal funds, a loss of private revenue from individuals and corporations, and the need to do more with less.

The Native communities in the attached map and list (showing certified and emerging Native CDFIs) have had double digit unemployment rates and struggles with poverty long before the recent economic downturn. Many of these communities are concentrated in rural areas and have never had access to capital and financial services. When the recession hit the rest of the nation, the Native CDFIs serving these communities found greater competition for federal and state resources to promote economic development. Established Native CDFIs experienced a decline in the returns they were making on their investments. All Native CDFIs experienced a decline in support from corporate and individual contributors that had been supporting their work. Since Native CDFIs rely heavily on private donations to leverage any federal grants they may receive, this downturn in support from private contributors greatly diminished many Native CDFIs' loan pools. Additionally, Native CDFIs have found it necessary to make adjustments to support loan customers who are struggling. They have had to find ways to do more with less.

With less private money trickling into the economy, Native CDFIs are having difficulty securing adequate non-federal "match money" to leverage capital from the CDFI Fund. Fortunately, in the FY 2009 NACA funding round Congress recognized the difficulties being faced by Native CDFIs in securing matching non-federal funds for their NACA grants, and quickly responded by changing the grant match requirements. This action was incredibly important for Native CDFIs. It both protected the liquidity of established institutions, and it enabled new Native CDFIs to become certified and attract loan capital - money that has quickly been deployed to businesses and home buyers in very impoverished communities. Waiving the grant match requirement on NACA funds continues to be an important strategy that enables more Native CDFIs to serve more people and communities, as I'll note in my response to your final question.

In December 2009 the CDFI Fund announced that once again it had experienced a sharp increase in applications for its NACA program. CDFI Fund Director Donna Gambrell stated that the \$23.7 million requested from Native CDFIs was the most funding ever requested in the history of the program. She additionally stated that the 61 NACA applications received by the CDFI Fund represented a 27 percent increase from the number of applications received in the FY 2009 application round that occurred before the Recovery Act. The amount requested represented a 30 percent increase over FY 2009. Director Gambrell also said that the NACA program is vital for reaching and helping our nation's most distressed Native communities, helping them start to move toward economic recovery and economic self-sufficiency. Oweesta, local Native CDFIs, and the leaders of the distressed Native communities that we serve could not agree more.

Questions 7: What could be done to help you serve more people and communities in your area, in the short term and the long term, including any legislative changes to the CDFI statute?

Several key improvements could be made to make the CDFI Fund programs even stronger in Native communities, including:

- (1) Make the Native Initiatives program within the CDFI Fund permanent;**
- (2) Provide funding to support the Native IDA Initiative;**
- (3) Update the Native American Lending Study;**
- (4) Make Native CDFIs preferred lenders for federal loan guarantee programs;**
- (5) Support youth financial skills training; and**
- (6) Focus on capacity building of certified Native CDFIs.**

Discussed below are five strategies that Oweesta believes would enable the CDFI Fund to serve more people in low-income and underserved communities throughout Indian Country.

1. Give the Native Initiatives permanent language in the CDFI Fund’s authorizing statute – This year for the first time ever, in the President’s budget the CDFI Fund’s Native Initiatives was included as a specific line item and saw a 20 percent increase in funding available for Native CDFI development. The outlook in the President’s 2011 budget is promising as well. It was only a few short years ago that the Native Initiatives was at risk of being removed from appropriations language altogether, threatening the momentum that was being developed on the ground. President should be commended for his support of the Native Initiatives, but in order to ensure future success, we would like to see the Native Initiatives be given a permanent place in the Fund’s authorizing statute.
2. Provide funding to support the Native IDA Initiative – One program that realized amazing success in Indian Country was the CDFI Fund’s Native Individual Development Account Initiative (NIDAI). During the four years it was in operation, the program successfully provided training and technical assistance to over 200 community leaders, who in turned developed nearly twenty Native IDA programs within their communities. Participants in local IDA programs can use their IDA funds to start or expand a business, buy a home, or obtain post secondary education. This program gave tribal members an otherwise non-existent source of equity to get off to a good start in life. Unfortunately the NIDAI program was halted in 2009 due to funding shortages. Because of its proven record of success, we would recommend that Congress appropriate funds to re-initiate the NIDAI program in Indian Country.
3. Update the Native American Lending Study – It has been ten years since the CDFI Fund conducted its groundbreaking Native American Lending Study. Much has happened since 1999. Congressional leaders, the CDFI Fund, Oweesta, and the many Native CDFIs throughout the United States would greatly benefit from having a current look at the issues impacting access to capital and financial services in Native communities.
4. Provide Training and Technical Assistance to Mature Certified Native CDFIs – It has been incredibly valuable for the CDFI Fund to focus on the start up of Native CDFIs, enabling these organizations to be built around “best practices” for CDFIs and achieve CDFI certification. However, now that there are 55 certified Native CDFIs, with 60 more in the pipeline, it is critical that Oweesta and the CDFI Fund develop a new strategy to provide training and technical assistance targeted at the needs of more mature, certified Native CDFIs. We must help these financial institutions build the whole host of skills needed to achieve their potential and ensure their long-term stability and sustainability.

5. Increase access to funding from other federal agencies and designate Native CDFIs, including CDFI loan funds and not solely CDFI banks, as preferred lenders for loan guarantees offered by all federal agencies – The CDFI Fund should hold interagency meetings with other federal programs, including the US Small Business Administration, US Department of Agriculture, US Department of Interior’s Bureau of Indian Affairs, and US Department of Housing and Urban Development to identify ways to increase access to funding that would support Native CDFI services and lending. One outcome of these meetings that would be instrumental in helping Native CDFIs serve more people and communities would be for federal agencies to designate Native CDFI loan funds as “preferred lenders” for their current loan guarantee programs. Native CDFIs are doing what mainstream lenders perceive as “high-risk lending” in low-capacity communities, and they need to maintain and grow their lending capital. If these institutions could avail themselves of the current loan guarantee programs available in some federal agencies, it would help ensure their long-term success and sustainability.

6. Support youth financial literacy and entrepreneurship education – Unless we plant the seeds of financial education and entrepreneurship among youth, economic development progress will remain difficult. As youth become adults, they must serve as a catalyst for economic development that is driven by private business ownership. Young people who can think and operate as entrepreneurs are more likely to be responsive to new economic trends and opportunities. When youth know that they can generate jobs in their local communities, they are more likely to remain in these communities as adults. Native CDFIs that have been investing in youth have learned that educational efforts must begin at the very earliest grades and be integrated into already-existing classes. Youth can read about entrepreneurs and solve story problems focused on the “real” cost of items they purchase on credit. The CDFI Fund should work with other federal agencies to support this critical, forward-thinking work.

I would like to finish my response to this question by saying that this year Oweesta is celebrating ten years of investing in Native opportunity—and so is Four Bands Community Fund on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. I am proud to be a part of both organizations and the larger network of other Native CDFIs that promote economic development in Native communities. The Native CDFI community cannot celebrate this milestone without recognizing the critical support we have received from the CDFI Fund—through both funding and expertise. We have been able to use the funds to leverage significant resources from other private and corporate donors and investors. We have taken the expertise we have acquired and deployed it in local Native communities.

Having recently served as the Executive Director of Four Bands Community Fund, I would like to share a story of the significant role that the CDFI Fund has played in allowing Four Bands to help families on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation to escape poverty. To date, Four Bands Community Fund has:

- trained nearly 2,000 people in personal financial skills and entrepreneurship, including many youth;
- distributed over \$1,500,000 in micro, small business, and credit building loans;
- committed \$230,000 in match savings for Individual Development Accounts;
- supported over 70 new and existing businesses resulting in the creation of 150 jobs;
- built or rehabilitated 30 storefronts;
- conducted a reservation-wide “buy local” campaign; and
- worked with the Cheyenne River Sioux tribal government to make policy improvements to support private business and personal financial skills development among tribal members.

Conclusion

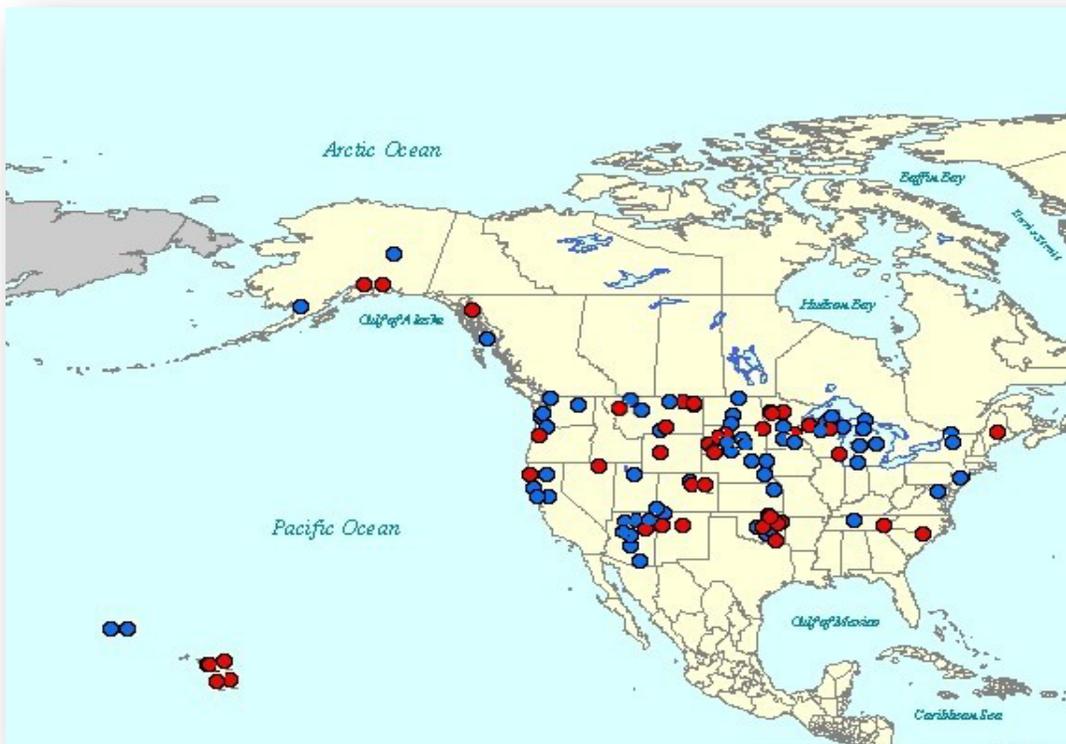
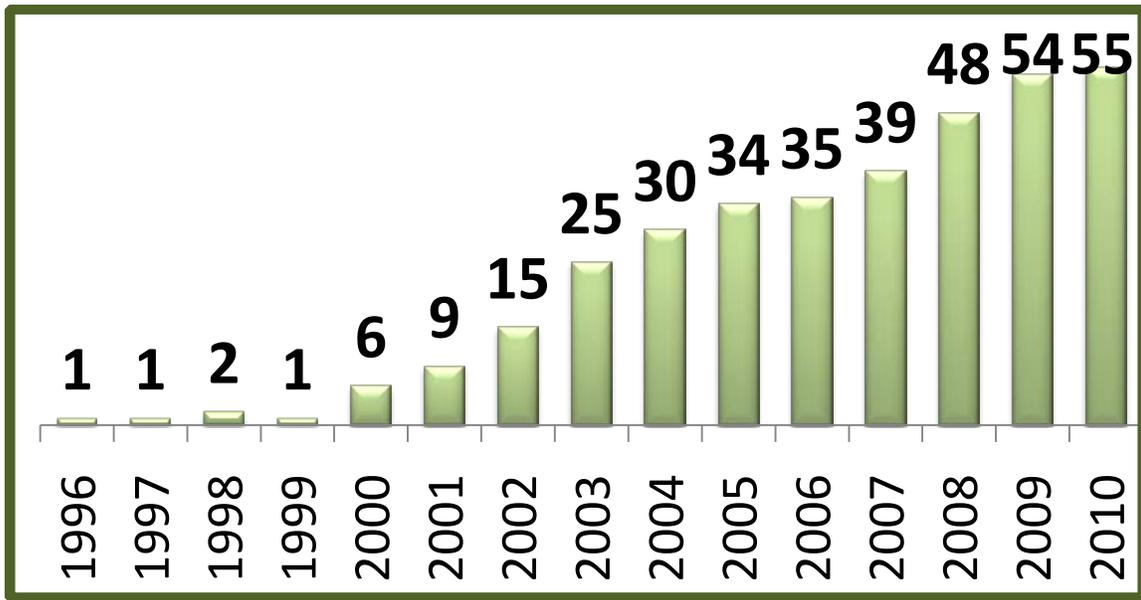
I will conclude my testimony by saying that Native communities have come a long way since the beginning of the CDFI Fund's Native Initiatives. Our tribal members have completed thousands of hours of training and are creating hundreds of jobs across Indian Country as first-time business owners. They are building wealth as first generation homeowners. As a result of financial education and credit building efforts, Tribal members are learning about credit, avoiding predatory and payday lenders, and taking measures to rebuild their credit histories. Native CDFIs are investing in tribal economies in a manner that empowers people and alleviates the hopelessness and despair that is much too common in our high poverty areas.

On behalf of our Native Communities and Oweesta,

Wopila Tanka – Our greatest thanks!

Tanya Fiddler
Vice President of Programs and Operations
First Nations Oweesta Corporation

Attachment: Growth of Native Community Development Financial Institutions



Note: red dots = certified Native CDFIs; blue dots = working to become certified

Names and Location of the 55 Certified Native CDFIs as of January 2010 According to CDFI Institution Type

Includes 41 Loan Funds, 7 Credit Unions, 5 Banks or Thrifts,
1 Depository Institution Holding, and 1 Institution Type Not Identified

Loan Fund (41)

Adair County Indian Credit Association
Stilwell, OK

Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians
Dallas, OR

Alaska Growth Capital BIDCO
Anchorage, AK

American Indian Economic Development
St. Paul, MN

Arizona Tribal CDFI
Phoenix, AZ

Cherokee Nation Economic Development
Tahlequah, OK

Chickasaw Nation Community Development
Ada, OK

Choctaw Home Finance Corporation
Hugo, OK

Citizen Potawatomi Community
Shawnee, OK

Community Development Financial
Sells, AZ

Cook Inlet Lending Center
Anchorage, AK

Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement
Honolulu, HI

First American Capital Corporation
West Allis, WI

First Nations Oweesta Corporation
Rapid City, SD

Four Bands Community Fund
Eagle Butte, SD

Four Directions Development Corporation
Orono, ME

Haa Yakaawu Financial Institution
Juneau, AK

Hoopa Development Fund
Hoopa, CA

Hopi Credit Association
Keams Canyon, AZ

Karuk Community Loan Fund
Happy Camp, CA

**Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Housing and
Community Development Corporation**
Baraga, MI

Lakota Fund
Kyle, SD

Lokahi Pacific
Wailuku, HI

Lower Brule Community Development
Lower Brule, SD

Lumbee Revitalization & Community
Pembroke, NC

Lummi Community Development Financial
Bellingham, WA

Mazaska Owecaso Otipi Financial
Pine Ridge, SD

Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Finance
Cass Lake

Montana Homeownership Network
Great Falls, MT

Native American Development Corporation
Billings, MT

Native Community Finance
Laguna, NM

Navajo Partnership for Housing
Gallup, NM

NiiJii Capital Partners
Keshena, WI

Northern Shores Loan Fund
Harbor Springs, MI

Rural Alaska Investment and Finance
Anchorage, AK

Salt River Financial Services Institution
Scottsdale, AZ

Sovereign Leasing & Financing
Ronan, MT

Sequoyah Fund
Cherokee, NC

White Earth Investment Initiative
Ogema, MN

Wind River Development Fund
Fort Washakie, WY

Yurok Alliance for Northern California
Crescent City, CA

Credit Union (7)

Choctaw Federal Credit Union
Choctaw, MS

First Hawaiian Homes Federal Credit Union
Hoolehua, HI

Kulia Ohana Federal Credit Union
Wailuku, HI

Lac Courte Oreilles Federal Credit Union
Hayward, WI

Molokai Community Federal Credit Union
Kaunakakai, HI

Sisseton Co-op Federal Credit Union
Sisseton, SD

Wolf Point Federal Credit Union
Wolf Point, MT

Bank or Thrift (5)

Bank of Cherokee County
Tahlequah, OK

Community Development Bank, FSB
Ogema, MN

First National Bank
Davis, OK

Fort Gibson State Bank
Fort Gibson, OK

Native American Bank, N.A.
Denver, CO

Depository Institution Holding (1)

Native American Bancorporation, Co.
Denver, CO

Institution Type Not Provided (1)

Osage Financial Resources
Pawhuska, OK

TANYA FIDDLER
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CAREER SUMMARY

I have over 12 years of professional experience working within nonprofit organizations. I served as the first loan and technical assistance officer for a newly incorporated Native CDFI and assumed the executive director position within a year. I built this organization from a start up organization to the recipient of First Nation Oweesta Corporation's 2008 Circle of Honor Award for demonstrating outstanding leadership as a Native CDFI. Four Bands now has approximately 16 active sources of financial support, provides loans and technical assistance to 100 small businesses, operates an individual development account program for youth and adults, and conducts a comprehensive youth entrepreneurship and financial literacy program. Our latest innovation is the development of a curriculum that allows teachers to integrate entrepreneurship and financial literacy into grades K-12. My solid background in nonprofit management and capacity building is reinforced by expertise gained through earlier staff positions including a housing specialist, community organizer, and project coordinator. I also have 5 years of experience working for private-sector businesses, including a Native-owned, certified Buy-Indian government reseller.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Interdisciplinary Sciences, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology (1994)

- ◆ Focus: Industrial Studies, including 6 hours of graduate level courses in Management Science
- ◆ Graduated with Cum Laude honors

AWARDS

- ◆ Bureau of Indian Affairs 2008 Entrepreneur Advocate of the Year
- ◆ Small Business Administration 2007 Minority Small Business Champion for South Dakota and Region VIII—area that includes Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, and North and South Dakota
- ◆ First Nations Oweesta Corporation 2007 Visionary Leader Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Community Development Financial Institution Field

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

FOUR BANDS COMMUNITY FUND, Eagle Butte, SD

September 2001 – present

Executive Director: 2002 – present

Loan and Technical Assistance Officer: 2001 – 2002

- ◆ Do extensive relationship building with current and prospective funders. Organize and conduct regular funder briefings. Raised over \$7.5 million since 2002 and expect to raise an additional \$2 million by the end of 2010. Have received two appropriations from Senator Johnson.
- ◆ Prepare three-year budgets and manage the financial affairs of the organization in a manner that ensures successful annual audits and a full year of funding available before the year starts.
- ◆ Work closely with members of the board of directors and serve on the executive committee. Support regular board and staff development activities.
- ◆ Maintain current strategic plans and individual staff work plans and hold staff and myself accountable for measuring and reporting outcomes, meeting deadlines, and achieving the objectives and activities detailed in our strategic plan and grant proposals.
- ◆ Plan and develop future projects in alignment with organization's mission. Currently focused on a youth entrepreneurship and financial literacy initiative and a consumer credit building program.
- ◆ Performed loan and technical assistance officer duties in my former positions. Duties included assisting customers in completing loan applications, preparing loan documents, then providing extensive technical assistance.

OTI KAGA, Eagle Butte, SD

September 1997 – September 2001

Housing Technician and Specialist

- ◆ Assisted applicants with loan packaging for USDA Rural Development programs
- ◆ Provided credit counseling, budgeting, and homeowner education
- ◆ Acted as a liaison and advocate to facilitate loan and grant closings
- ◆ Performed loan revolving loan funds
- ◆ Serviced loans using software and spreadsheet programs
- ◆ Ensured compliance with grants, tax credit regulations, and federal laws governing housing

TETON COALITION, Rapid City, SD

October 2000 – September 2002

Community Organizer and Project Coordinator

- ◆ Did community organizing for credit education reform
- ◆ Taught and promoted personal financial management and consumer credit using the Credit When Credit Is Due curriculum
- ◆ Created collaborative initiatives with other community leaders to promote program objectives

NATIVE AMERICAN COMPUTERS, Rapid City, SD

October 1995 – June 1996

Computer Account Sales and Purchasing Representative

- ◆ Established and maintained computer division databases and procedures
- ◆ Complied with government contracting policy and procedures
- ◆ Developed computer application formats for interoffice use and efficiency
- ◆ Provided customer service to vendors and sales representatives
- ◆ Responded to customer inquiries for pricing and product specifications
- ◆ Prepared written and oral bids

MAGNETIC PERIPHERALS, Rapid City, SD

June 1983 – March 1987

Production Operator

- ◆ Performed a range of production-related tasks

OTHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Speaker: Am a frequent speaker and workshop facilitator at regional and national conferences on issues related to small business development, IDA programs, and nonprofit leadership.

Networker: Have developed a strong network of experts in the CDFI field through regular attendance at state, regional, and national housing, community and economic development, and CDFI conferences.

Training and Certifications: Completed the National Development Council for Economic Development's Financial Professional Certification program in 2008. Also have certifications from training completed in homebuyer education, credit counseling, self-directed teams, grant writing, and loan packaging.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

- Co-chair, Native CDFI Network
- Co-founder and current board member, South Dakota Indian Business Alliance
- Current board member, South Dakota Rural Enterprise
- Current board president, Tribal Ventures, an enterprise of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe
- Co-founder and past board member, Cheyenne River Chamber of Commerce
- Past board member, Association for Enterprise Opportunity
- Past board member, Okiciyapi Tipi-Habitat for Humanity

Enrolled Member of Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe (Enrollment #CRU-13121)

References available upon request

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Financial Services

“TRUTH IN TESTIMONY” DISCLOSURE FORM

Clause 2(g) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives and the Rules of the Committee on Financial Services require the disclosure of the following information. A copy of this form should be attached to your written testimony.

1. Name: Tanya Fiddler	2. Organization or organizations you are representing: First Nations Oweesta Corporation
3. Business Address and telephone number: 910 5th Street, Suite 101 Rapid City, SD 57701-3722 (605) 342-3770	
4. Have <u>you</u> received any Federal grants or contracts (including any subgrants and subcontracts) since October 1, 2006, related to the subject on which you have been invited to testify? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	5. Have any of the <u>organizations you are representing</u> received any Federal grants or contracts (including any subgrants and subcontracts) since October 1, 2006, related to the subject on which you have been invited to testify? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
6. If you answered “yes” to either item 4 or 5, please list the source and amount of each grant or contract, and indicate whether the recipient of such grant was you or the organization(s) you are representing. You may list additional grants or contracts on additional sheets. See Attachment	
7. Signature: 	

Please attach a copy of this form to your written testimony.

First Nations Oweesta Corporation
 Grant Revenue
 July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009

Date	CFDA No.	Description	Total Award
Federal Grants Unrestricted - 41010			
12/31/2009	21.020	CDFI Fund:NACA 2006 - \$500,000 FA / \$122,000 TA	122,000.00
12/31/2009	21.020	CDFI Fund:NACA 2007 - Technical Assistance	149,912.00
12/31/2009	21.020	CDFI Fund:NACA 2008 - \$490,000 Lending / \$147,000 TA	637,000.00
12/31/2009	<i>no #. see att</i>	Enterprise Foundation - 2008: \$100,000 (2 Yr)	101,376.00
12/31/2009		CDFI Fund:NACA 2009 - \$730,000 Operationsg / \$143,000 TA	873,000.00
		Total - Federal Grants - Unrestricted	<u>1,883,288.00</u>
Federal Grants Temp Restricted - 41030			
12/31/2009	21.020	Abt Associates, Inc. - CDFI Research Grant	60,000.00
12/31/2009	21.020	CDFI Fund:NACA 2006 - \$500,000 FA / \$122,000 TA	500,000.00
12/31/2009	16.595	Department of Justice - CCDO - OJP 2008: \$100,000	100,000.00
12/31/2009	16.595	Department of Justice - CCDO/NAHRO - Weed & Seed 2008: \$40,000	40,000.00
12/31/2009	84.215B	National Council on Economic Education	25,000.00
12/31/2009	21.003	IRS - VITA Grant Program	33,000.00
		Total - Federal Grants - Temp Restricted	<u>758,000.00</u>
		Total - Grant Revenue - Federal	<u>2,641,288.00</u>
Federal Contracts - 5XXXX			
2006 - 2008	Contracts	BPA (subcontract through OFN)	1,300,000.00
2009	NAIHC Pathways	Prime Contractor	145,929.00
2009	Contracts	BPA - Prime contractor	1,146,646.00
2010	Contracts	BPA - Prime contractor (Base Period - Year 1)	1,008,116.00
			<u>3,600,691.00</u>