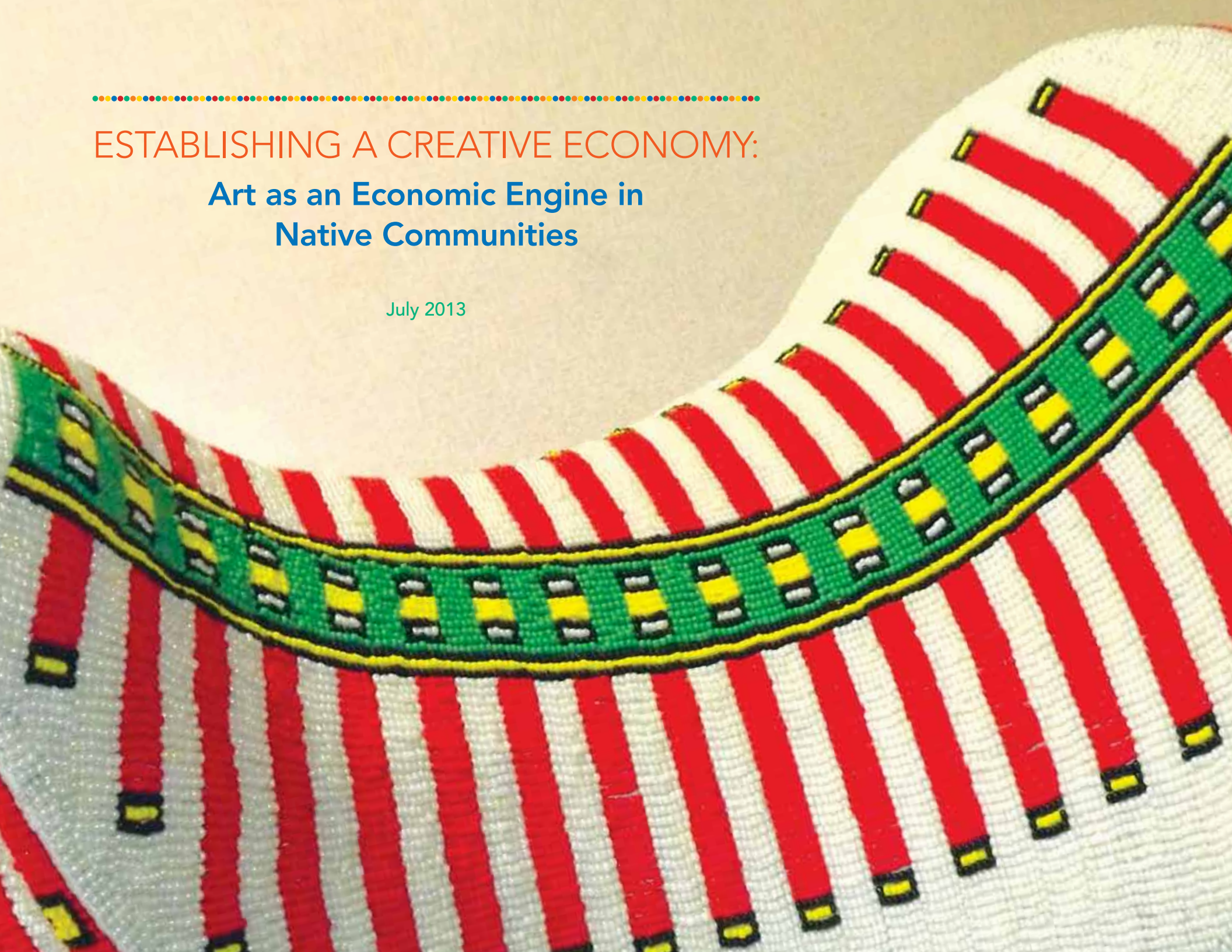




ESTABLISHING A CREATIVE ECONOMY:

**Art as an Economic Engine in  
Native Communities**

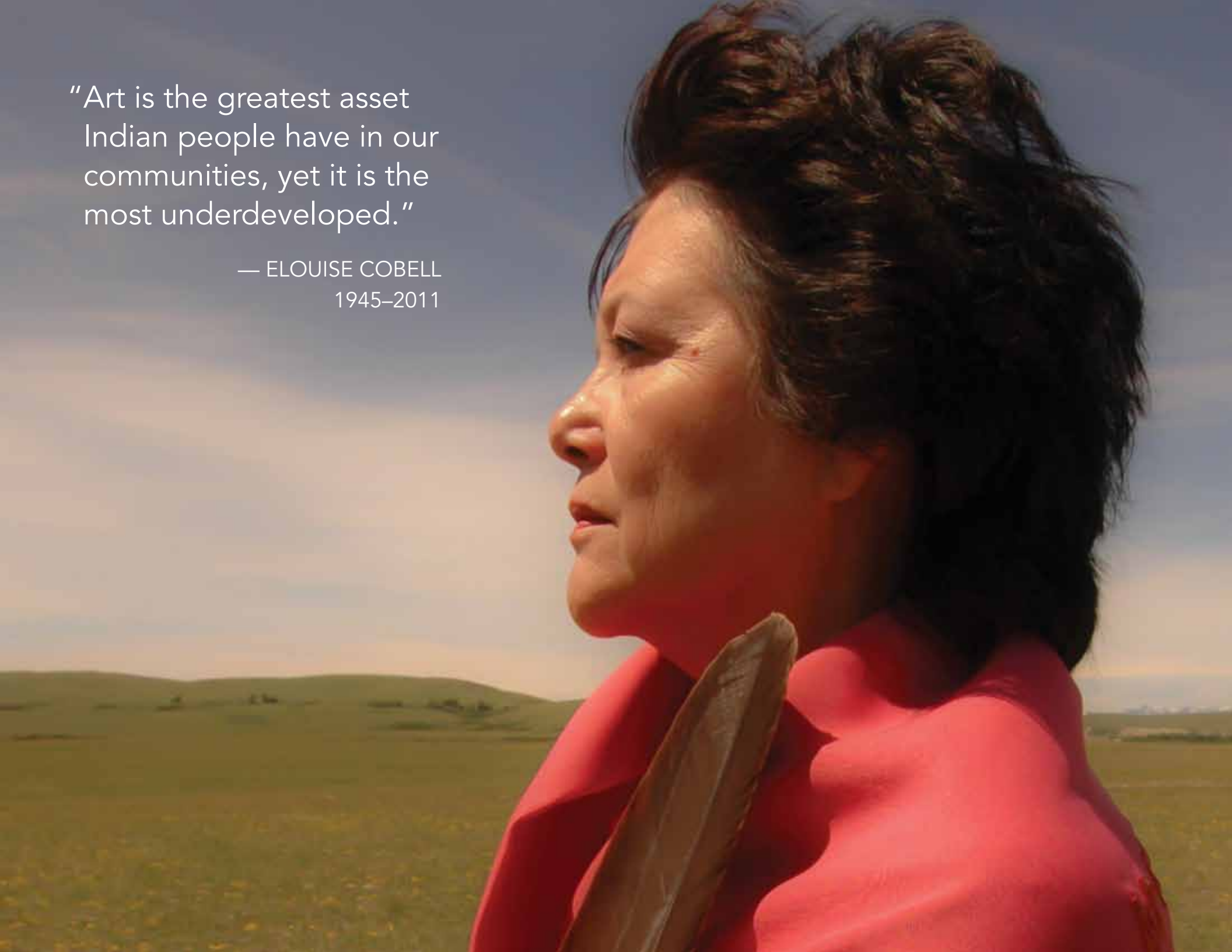
July 2013







“Art is the greatest asset  
Indian people have in our  
communities, yet it is the  
most underdeveloped.”

— ELOUISE COBELL  
1945–2011





The creative production of art and artistic expression are, today, among the most promising ways to expand the market economy in rural and urban Native communities.






Adeline Miller (Pauite/Wasco/Sahaptin), 2004 Community Spirit Award Recipient.  
 Photo by Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie.

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# INTRODUCTION



Native artists continue to be overlooked for the critical role they can play in building economies, generating assets, and constructing effective and culturally appropriate social networks.



For centuries, cultural assets have been tied to the health and well-being of Native peoples. Arts, culture and traditions have been woven into the tapestry of tribal societies and have sustained Native peoples for generations. Language, art and spirituality have endured, resulting in strong family ties, community pride and common purpose. Because of this long tradition of viewing art and culture holistically, modern-day art has not been seen as a commodity among Native peoples, but rather as an ingrained part of Native lifestyles and spiritual beliefs, and as something to be preserved, honored and passed down to the next generations.

However, in our modern context, Native culture and tradition-based knowledge represent an important asset with the potential to increase the economic productivity of tribal communities. The creative production of art and artistic expression are, today, among the most promising ways to expand the market economy in rural and urban Native communities. Quilt-making, beadwork, quillwork and birch-bark basketry are just a few examples of

artistic expression that preserve a way of life, maintain cultural identity and perpetuate traditional spiritual values; at the same time, their creation demonstrates the economic development potential of Native cultural assets. Emerging Native artist entrepreneurs and culture bearers<sup>1</sup> offer a path out of poverty through the very practice and teaching of tradition-based art forms. They represent an undervalued yet critical solution to enhancing community economic development and creating stronger Native nations and families.

First Peoples Fund (FPF) and Artspace<sup>2</sup> know that art is key to sustaining culture at the community level. We have been working in the field of supporting artists for more than 40 years and have seen firsthand the positive impact art has in communities and how it can be used as a strong economic driver in both rural and urban environments. However, even in their own communities, Native artists continue to be overlooked for the critical role they can play in building economies, generating assets, and constructing effective and culturally appropriate social networks. It is

the mission of FPF and Artspace to change the perception of artists in Native and mainstream communities, transforming them from what is often an afterthought in community development strategies to their full expression as prominent economic engines capable of catalyzing true social change.

Through this position paper, we intend to make the case for art as a driver of economy and show successful efforts to embrace the arts as a critical component of creating sustainable and vibrant communities.

LEFT: "Metal Warriors," Jay Labor (Blackfeet), Artist in Business Leadership Fellow. Photo © Ronnie Farley.

1. Culture bearers are individuals who pass on the traditions and lifeways of their people, or who carry ancestral knowledge and lifeways of generations before them. They are considered to be the best source of cultural knowledge for a tribe.

2. Detailed information about Artspace and FPF is included on pages 32 and 34 of this document.

# BACKGROUND ON RESEARCH STUDY

The majority of research data referenced throughout this paper was collected from the *American Indian Creative Economy Market Study Project*, a survey undertaken in 2011 by FPF, Artspace and Dr. Kathleen Pickering Sherman from Colorado State University (CSU). Northwest Area Foundation and Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC) funded the research.

The survey examined the household economics, infrastructural needs and social networks of Native artists, providing a tool to define the role of Native artists within reservation economies in the Great Plains region, evaluate the effectiveness of support programs currently available for Native artists, identify challenges faced by Native artists and opportunities to better support them, and make the case for art as a driver of the economy, not only on Lakota reservations, but in rural and urban Native communities across the country.

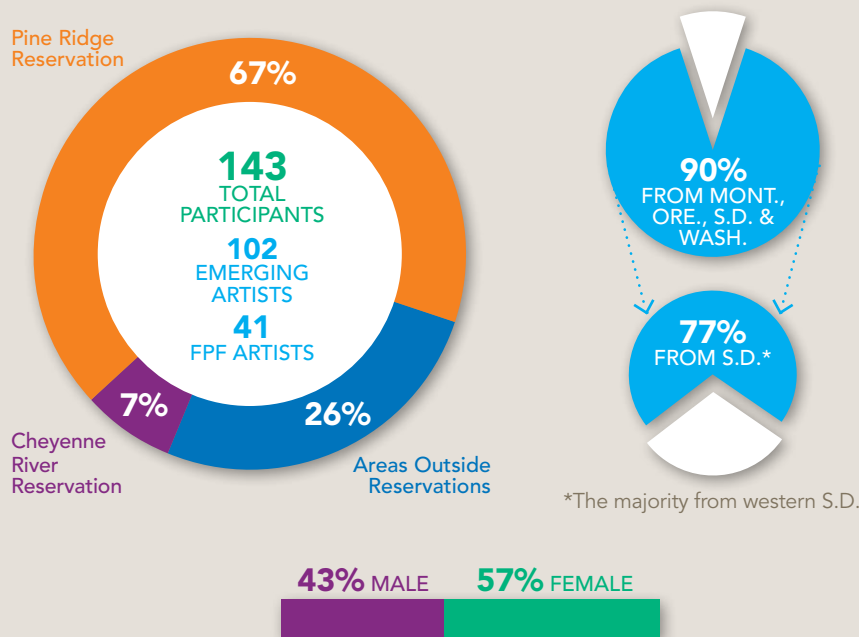
CSU used a standard survey instrument, combining qualitative and quantitative questions, as the basis for interviewing Native emerging artists about their experiences, and conducted the survey in person, by phone and online. A slightly modified

version of the same survey instrument was then used to interview FPF artists.

This project offers the first-of-its-kind evidence regarding the need and potential for growing economies and creating sustainable and vibrant Native communities through art. The contrast between the responses of the emerging artists and the established (FPF) artists highlights the particular

experiential, infrastructural and social networking characteristics that allow Native artists to expand their own economic potential and their personal impact on their reservation communities and economies. The results of the study provide an important glimpse into a vibrant and culturally significant Native arts community with the power to transform reservation economies.

FIGURE 1  
**Survey Participants**



## EMERGING ARTISTS

are actively engaged in the creation of art. The majority (80 percent) spend more than 20 hours per week creating artwork. However, they do not have access to technical training and have difficulty obtaining access to art materials and distribution channels for accessing market opportunities to support their arts.

## FPF ARTISTS

understand business concepts and have 10 or more years of experience in the Indian arts business. Their primary income is through their art. These artists have participated in one or more of FPF's grant programs: Community Spirit Awards, Artists in Business Leadership, and Cultural Capital. Their experience in the programs often leads them to become more established artists.



# NATIVE ARTS ECONOMY TODAY



The vast majority of private enterprise that operates on reservations, and the sector with the greatest potential for dramatic growth, is informal, home-based businesses, many of which are focused on traditional arts.



Native arts have been, and remain, an integral part of the Native culture. Today, an estimated 30 percent of Native peoples are practicing or potential artists. Unfortunately, most live below the poverty level and lack the necessary arts-specific business skills and training to operate successful American Indian art ventures. However, with the right kind of support, the Native arts economy has the potential to expand dramatically, affecting not only the artists themselves, but their communities, as well.

A number of academic studies<sup>3</sup> demonstrate a vibrant, dynamic and culturally embedded household economy that combines market-based sales with barter and trade, self-provisioning, and support to and from extended families. Many emerging Native artists and other culture bearers are involved in the informal sector economy primarily because they lack the resources and comprehensive understanding of the distribution channels and networks for their art forms. The missing links needed, but not readily available, for

most households to transform their market-based activities into greater self-sufficiency for themselves and their families include:

- Access to capital
- Financial education
- Business knowledge
- Increased knowledge of the distribution networks that support artists
- Access to markets
- Professional development training for artists

In South Dakota, the market economies on reservations are marginal and underdeveloped, requiring a creative integration of traditional economic practices and modern global marketing to generate culturally appropriate alternatives for building assets and creating wealth. A very small, though growing, number of privately owned formal businesses operate on these reservations. The vast majority of private enterprise that operates on reservations, and the sector with the greatest potential for dramatic growth, is informal, home-based businesses, many of

which are focused on traditional arts. A better understanding of the role of these artist households in the reservation and regional economy, and the forms of support that might increase their economic impact, will provide guidance for more effective community and economic development practices and will illuminate opportunities for growth. Artist entrepreneurs can offer a path out of poverty through innovative and entrepreneurial thinking, cultural healing, greater economic stability, and strong families and communities.

## Understanding Cultural Assets

To an outsider with limited or no knowledge of modern-day Native American societies, the perception of most reservations in America is that they are desolate places of high poverty, void of any real opportunities for growth or success. However, a deeper look into these communities reveals a vibrant culture and tight-knit “tiospaye” (a Lakota word meaning “extended families”), both of which define Native peoples much more than the poverty that exists at the surface. The beauty of the culture is

3. Sherman, Kathleen. *Lakota Culture, World Economy*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000; Tressa Berman. *Circle of Goods: Women, Work, and Welfare in a Reservation Community*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003; Kathleen Sherman, James Van Lanen, and Richard Sherman. “Practical Environmentalism on the Pine Ridge Reservation: Confronting Structural Constraints to Indigenous Stewardship.” *Human Ecology* 38.4 (2010): 507–520; Richard T. Sherman. *A Study of Traditional and Informal Sector Micro-Enterprise Activity and Its Impact on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation Economy*. Washington, D.C.: Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, 1988.



Kathy Whitman “Elk Woman” (Mandan-Hidatsa-Arikara), FPF alumna and artist mentor, Santa Fe Indian Market, 2012.

present every day and has endured for generations, despite all attempts of assimilation. Lakota people draw strength from their “tiospaye,” a rich heritage that honors their ancestors and the next generations, an inherent respect for all living things, and “mitakuye oyasin” (the Lakota belief that we are all related). Understanding and respecting these cultural assets is critical to any economic development

approach, but most especially efforts designed to build the capacity of Native artists.

### **Cultural Assets as a Path Out of Poverty**

When targeted support is provided to Native artists, increased economic success follows. For support to be effective, it must be:

### **1. CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE**

Art is embedded in Lakota society. When asked whether or not there is an art community on Pine Ridge, several artists suggest a deep connection between art and Lakota culture. According to a respondent from the Pine Ridge Reservation in Kyle, S.D., “The entire reservation is an art community. It is informal – meeting with each other. There are no set dates or times. We exchange ideas, barter. It spreads through word of mouth.” To these artists, creating art is a natural extension of being Lakota. As such, creating art affords great opportunity to grasp a unique and culturally appropriate asset and turn it into a meaningful way to grow the reservation economy. It is a homegrown solution.

### **2. REFLECTIVE OF HOW HOUSEHOLDS ALLOCATE TIME**

Home-based business is a significant component of the Native economy on reservations, and art is the primary home-based business. Art is not merely an activity, but a job for Native artists – those who are struggling and those who have found success. Both groups spend a

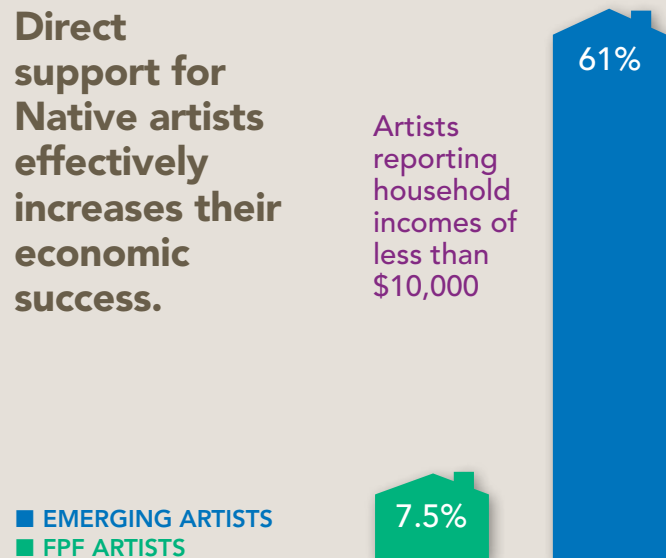
significant amount of time engaged in art activities: creating, marketing, traveling and selling. Despite the fact that selling art on the reservation is highly seasonal, 74 percent of emerging artists and 90 percent of FPF artists sell their work year-round. Art is a significant means of earning a living, and artists are committed to selling their work.

### **3. MINDFUL OF LAKOTA FAMILY STRUCTURE**

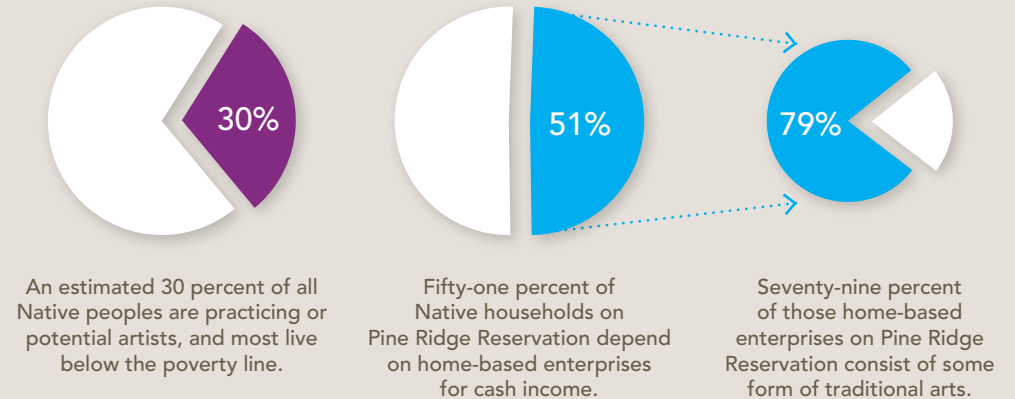
Creating art is a family enterprise. Among all emerging artists surveyed, 26 percent report four or five family members involved in art. One quilter from the Pine Ridge Reservation in Porcupine, S.D., says selling from home is comfortable because “all my supplies and materials are there, as well as my family. We all work together.” Forty-five percent of emerging artists sell from their homes, with individuals contacting them directly to buy their art. Sometimes artist families divide tasks; women create the artwork and men sell it. When asked if they are likely to travel farther (more than 100 miles) to sell their work, men are slightly more inclined to do so than women (35 percent versus 25 percent).

# Native Arts Economy

**FIGURE 2**  
**Direct support for Native artists effectively increases their economic success.**



**FIGURE 3**  
**Art is deeply rooted in Native communities.<sup>4</sup>**



**FIGURE 4**  
**Native artists learn more effectively through informal networks (peer- and family-based training) than through formal networks (institutional training).**



A challenge lies in reaching artists on reservations in a way that combines the benefits of both informal and formal networks. The most likely solution is an arts lab, where artists can obtain access to training, mentoring, materials used in the creation of arts, and physical and electronic marketplaces.

4. Sherman, Kathleen. "Cash and the Social Economy of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, 6/15/01–6/14/08." *National Science Foundation Career Grant Final Report* (2009).

## How Art Can Drive Native Economies

Art and artists can drive Native economies by:

### INCREASING LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY

Training Native artists and supporting and providing them with space, tools and access to resources empowers them to increase their own income while becoming role models, mentors and leaders to individuals and institutions within their communities.

### INCREASING ASSETS AND WEALTH AMONG LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

Statistically, many artists fall within the parameters of low-income households, and this is certainly true for Native artists. However, empowering individual artists and supporting arts organizations

increases their overall income. The entrepreneur training and access to capital available from FPF and Native Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)<sup>5</sup> provide bridges for home-based emerging art enterprises to become fully established artists with economic stability and social networking throughout the Great Plains region.

Moreover, FPF has established partnerships with reservation-based Native CDFIs in the Great Plains region, working with a total of 12 institutions across the country, and also has worked extensively with the First Nations Oweesta Corporation. FPF trains these organizations to help them better understand and work with artists as business clientele.

These partnerships demonstrate a united effort to grow the economies of Native communities by empowering and strengthening the business and

entrepreneurial skills of local artists, especially their tribal culture bearers, as well as building the capacity of financial organizations that work with the artists.

### ALTERING THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF POVERTY

Working methodically to empower individuals by giving them the training, support and opportunity to acknowledge their own artwork within a community and among their peers builds self-worth and confidence. The effect is for these individuals to lead by example and to share with others that they are important and can elevate their personal, social and economic status within a community. The core of addressing underlying causes is through self-awareness, positive self-perception and the willingness to extend a hand to mentor others, thereby becoming an important asset to the community.

### ENHANCING CAPACITY FOR LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

Native arts have helped preserve and sustain the Native American cultural traditions and practices over an incredibly difficult history. If supported with the appropriate tools and programs, Native arts have the potential to provide long-term sustainability of the Native American economic interest.

Native arts are an untapped and undervalued resource that can be used to serve as an economic engine within a community's broader efforts of poverty alleviation among reservation economies.

5. CDFIs are specialized community-based financial institutions that work in underserved markets and communities and provide a wide range of financial products and services including financial education, asset-building programs, loans to start or expand small business, and mortgage financing for first-time homebuyers.



# WHAT RESERVATION-BASED NATIVE ARTISTS NEED

Given the remote and vast landscapes in which most Native artists live and work, access to resources can be a significant hurdle to overcome.

## 1. ACCESS TO MARKETS

### Physical

Artists generally lack access to physical markets to sell their work. Most emerging artists sell door to door where buying power is very limited. An option would be to travel to regional and national markets where they could access buyers able to pay for the real value of art. However, artists must have enough economic stability, including sufficient income, inventory, and access to credit, to effectively reach outside markets. Among emerging artists, 75 percent of women and 61 percent of men want access to physical markets.

How artists sell their work reflects the options they have. Existing within a reservation economy, emerging artists sell items locally at various institutions and to individuals.

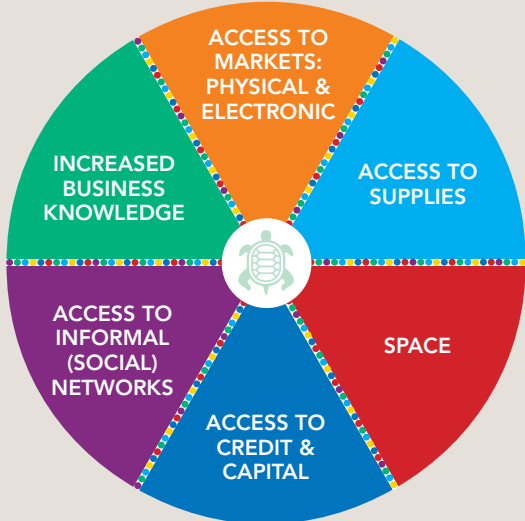
Only half of emerging artists have the resources to travel to sell their work, and the average travel distance is only 24 miles. FPF artists sell much farther from their homes (53 percent sell more than 100 miles away); only 30 percent of emerging artists sell more than 100 miles from their homes. This suggests that increasing revenues can offset some of the access

issues; however, this also means that emerging artists must sell their work in their own neighboring and nearby reservation towns, where families cannot generally afford artwork at market price. Artists who make more money have the personal connections for home and retail sales, and spend less time taking chances selling their art where sales are not guaranteed. The inability for emerging artists to travel to outside buyers is certainly reflected in the prices they can demand for their work. (See Figure 14, page 19.)

Prices for art in the local market are kept low due to competition from other artists and a suppressed

economy where local buyers have little or no discretionary income. Small amounts of money circulate among reservation communities, so artists needing to make a sale must lower their prices. Two emerging artists from the Cheyenne River Reservation in Eagle Butte, S.D., declare that “getting a fair price” is the largest barrier to selling their work. Even established FPF artists mention having a local reservation price and another price for sales in “real” markets. When asked what makes her most comfortable selling her art, an FPF artist from Rosebud, S.D., states, “Sales are close to home. ... My work stays in my community. Determining my price is most difficult. My family,

**FIGURE 5**  
**What Reservation-Based Native Artists Need to Be Successful**



friends or other artists tell me to ask for more, but I have a hard time raising my price even though I believe my art is worth it. I have local and out-of-area prices.”

Lack of physical markets causes competition to become a factor in making sales as an artist; 19 emerging artists directly mention that competition is the major issue when making sales. Competition can also affect issues of pricing. An artist from Pine Ridge explains the most difficult factor for him is “the competition – other artists will drop their prices.” This supports a price structure in local markets that makes artists unable to get the prices they deserve.

Emerging artists are often forced to weigh the opportunity to make a sale far from home against the risk and cost of travel to outside markets. An artist on the Pine Ridge Reservation in Wanblee, S.D., states, “The market is so far away. I can make something like \$125, but it takes \$75 to get there.” Artists from Pine Ridge mention how they became stranded after making the trip to Rapid City, S.D., where they could not make a sale, and thus could not get home. Travel is also affected by having the time and materials to create artwork. A Dupree, S.D., man explains, “I can’t get sufficient inventory to reach markets that would allow me to sell enough to make trips worthwhile.”

Although established FPF artists have greater financial stability, they must still contend with the cost of travel, as an artist from Montana notes: “It is taking a chance going to a show – making back at least your investment – hotels, meals, tables, gas.”

In the northern Plains, selling may be frustrating due to the insufficient infrastructure and lack of a marketplace. An FPF artist from Kyle explains, “South Dakota is sketchy; there is no market for work.” Artists must travel farther to sell their art than they do to get materials. When asked if there are resources available locally to sell or distribute art, 65 percent of artists reply that

they either do not have access to resources to sell their art, or they must travel more than 30 miles to get them. Artists are forced to travel more than two villages away from their homes – an average of 64 miles.

### Electronic

There is a formidable lack of Internet usage and access to electronic markets among artists. Because of this, selling on the Internet is a low priority for all artists, particularly for emerging artists. Only 6 percent of emerging artists sell their work online, although 46 percent of female emerging artists and 63 percent of male emerging artists want access to electronic markets. Given the geographic isolation of most artists, having access to the Internet could provide them with a significant opportunity to gain exposure and increase sales of their artwork.

## 2. ACCESS TO SUPPLIES

Locally sourced supplies are either too expensive or completely unavailable. FPF artists tend to have more capital than emerging artists and can afford to travel longer distances for a greater selection and pricing of supplies. (See Figure 6.) Access to materials is the most consistent problem facing emerging artists.

FIGURE 6

### Average Distance Traveled for Supplies

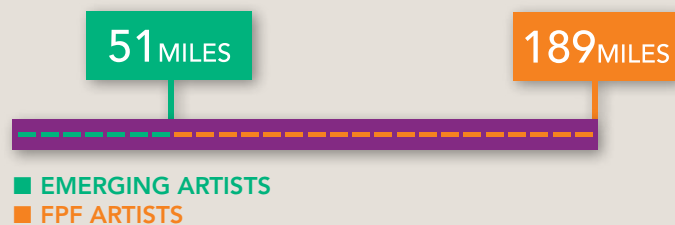


FIGURE 7

### Emerging Artists With Relationship to Bank or Formal Financial Institution



### 3. ACCESS TO CREDIT AND CAPITAL

Northern Plains artists lack access to credit. (See Figure 7.) Of the 19 percent of emerging artists who report ever applying for a loan, 90 percent applied to a Native CDFI. While these Native CDFIs provide critical support, improving access to their programs and resources can improve access to markets for Native artists.

### 4. INCREASED BUSINESS KNOWLEDGE

In general, Native artists have only rudimentary knowledge about business. When artists receive training in basic financial management, Internet use, pricing and marketing, they are better positioned to access the credit and financial resources necessary to create and sell their work.

### 5. ACCESS TO INFORMAL (SOCIAL) NETWORKS

Native artists predominantly rely on informal social networks to enhance their skills, tap into new markets and sales opportunities, and find resources to support their art. Social spaces and informal processes are necessary for artists to come together and learn from one another. What's

more, economic status does not seem to have any bearing on how Native artists operate – they continue to place great importance on social relationships, whether they earn \$10,000 or \$60,000 per year. This is particularly true among emerging artists. According to a woman from the Pine Ridge Reservation in Oglala, S.D., “It’s always been like this. We go to other people to make sales.” Artists use the relationships and local networks available on the reservation. As an elderly woman from Pine Ridge states, “I know people at the hospital and other places in town where I sell my art pieces.”

Other artists speak about the connection they can make with people who are not a part of their usual social networks. A woman from the Pine Ridge Reservation in Kyle, S.D., says that “meeting the person who is buying” is the most comfortable part of making a sale. However, because of the limited financial resources available to most families, social networking gets emerging artists only so far, which underscores the need for also accessing greater business knowledge through informal and formal networks.

Emerging artists are consistent with regard to their use of informal



Lyz Jaakola (Anishinaabe), 2012 Community Spirit Award Honoree. Photo © Ronnie Farley.

FIGURE 8

### Business Knowledge Source: Formal vs. Informal

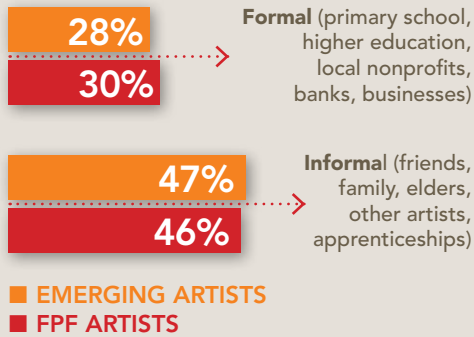


FIGURE 10

### Interacting With Reservation Contacts: Tapping Into Social Networks

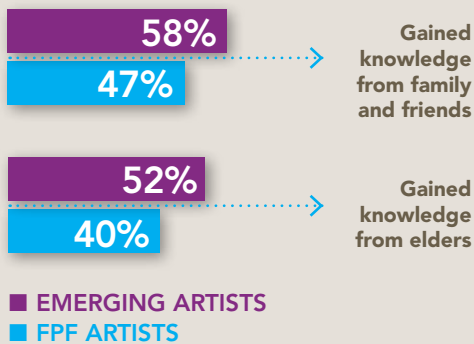


FIGURE 9

### Interacting With Outside Markets: Tapping Into Formal Sources

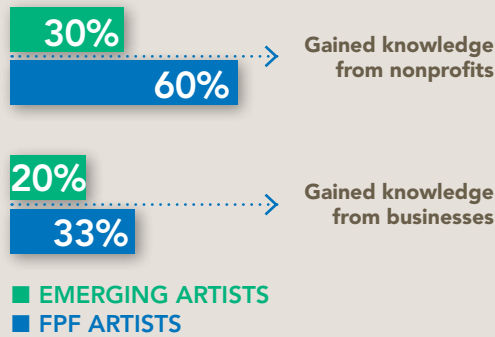
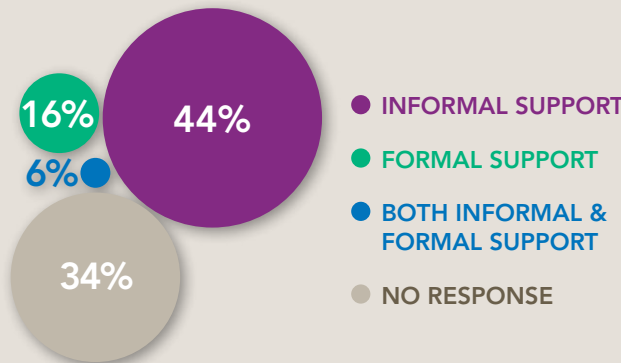


FIGURE 11

### EMERGING ARTISTS: "How Are You Supported as an Artist on Your Reservation?"



networks for passing on knowledge. Of the 47 percent of emerging artists who agree there is an art community on their reservation, 85 percent believe themselves to be a part of it. Emerging artists with this sense of belonging acquire 17 percent more knowledge from informal sources than artists without a sense of belonging. Interestingly, younger artists have much more informal knowledge than older artists. This suggests that the socially embedded system is flourishing. (See Figure 8.)

When it comes to interacting with outside markets, financial stability provides a better foundation. FPF artists, who make more money than emerging artists, can more easily access and gain knowledge from this market. (See Figure 9.)

FPF artists, however, have less informal knowledge. Emerging artists on the reservation, who earn less money, are far more reliant on social relationships than artists who have more capital. (See Figure 10.)

This analysis verifies that FPF programs have been effective at increasing awareness and access to nonprofit and business support, and because FPF programs augment informal networks,



there is decreased reliance on only informal networks. However, the kinds of support emerging artists receive continues to rest firmly in the informal realm. (See Figure 11.)

Emerging artists are twice as likely to receive support from friends, family and the reservation community compared with any other source. Overall, for emerging artists, knowledge is socially obtained through cultural pathways, which suggests a resistance to institutional learning; introducing training and mentoring through informal networks is crucial.

## 6. SPACE

The concept of space, both mobile and fixed, can be viewed not only as a physical location for an art studio, but also as a place where artists can fulfill their other needs. (See Figure 5 , page 11.) Artists need space to create, obtain information, connect with other artists, obtain feedback, access markets and discover opportunities. Space could include:

- Group meeting space/classroom (for trainings)
- Group studio space (for collaborations and mentoring/technical assistance)

- Individual studios/carrels (for mentors)
- Small trading post (for access to art supplies)
- Computer lab with Wi-Fi (for access to electronic markets)
- Gallery (for access to physical markets)

Artists want space to create their art. Eighty-six percent of artists work on their art at home, even though this environment can be crowded, with less-than-ideal conditions and distractions from family.

When it comes to shared studio space, research suggests that FPF artists do not need the same kind of interaction with other artists to obtain the materials and mentoring they need to *create* their art, but they enjoy the interaction while *selling* it. (See Figure 12.) This is consistent with the idea that FPF artists are more established than emerging artists, and generally do not need to rely on informal social relationships in the same way when creating their art.

Among emerging artists with an annual income of more than \$25,000, none has his or her own studio space. However, they feel it is the most important factor to help them in the

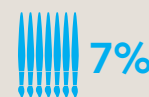
creation of their art. Among FPF artists, 50 percent place studio space as the most important factor in creating art. Interestingly, within the total sample of emerging artists (not just those making in excess of \$25,000), studio space is second in importance behind access to materials and resources. This highlights the divide between artists who are more established and artists who are less established due to issues of access: The former are at a level where they can think about studio space; the latter must deal with more basic needs. Studio space might be an important second step for helping emerging artists – like a gateway to cross over to a small-business level.

One significant challenge that exists on the Pine Ridge Reservation is its large size: It is roughly the size of Connecticut. Within the reservation, there are nine major geographic districts that have distinct communities and population centers. Given these considerations, it would be difficult for a single space in a fixed location to serve the entire reservation. One consideration is the development of a fixed-location arts lab supplemented by a smaller mobile arts lab that could provide service throughout the reservation.

FIGURE 12

## Interacting With Other Artists

Male artists who want space to interact with other artists when **creating**



■ EMERGING ARTISTS  
■ FPF ARTISTS

Male artists who want space to interact with other artists when **selling**



■ EMERGING ARTISTS  
■ FPF ARTISTS



"Two Prayers for the People," Lauren Good Day Giago (Arikara/Hidatsa/Blackfoot/Plains Cree), Artist in Business Leadership Fellow.

# FIRST PEOPLES FUND PROGRAMS

With the enhancements FPF can provide, emerging artists increase their capacity to move their own families out of poverty and move their local economies forward.

**Potential for Economic Growth**  
 Emerging artists have tremendous potential for contributing to broad-based community and economic development on their reservations through their own conceptions of healing, cultural revitalization and intergenerational mentoring. They are already working long hours steadily on their art, and with the enhancements FPF can provide, they increase their capacity to move their own families out of poverty and move their local economies forward.

FPF has outlined three stages of entrepreneurial development. This enables FPF to ascertain where each artist is as a business owner and helps FPF provide the appropriate level

of services to foster their growth. (See Figure 13.)

There are three areas where increased efforts, such as those offered by combining FPF’s Stages of Entrepreneurial Development model with Native CDFI success coaching, have the potential to significantly contribute to broad economic growth, at both individual and reservation-wide levels:

**1. HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

Improving the market value of artwork sold by emerging artists would have considerable impact on reservation communities.

The contrast between the earning potential of the two artist groups is substantial in economic terms. (See Figure 14, page 19.) If an emerging artist could sell just one item at the same average price as an FPF artist, it would increase his or her individual annual sales by \$1,750. For the 61 percent of emerging artists who earn less than \$10,000 per year, this would be an improvement of nearly 20 percent. Considering the number of emerging artists living on Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Reservations, this improved income from artwork per person could have substantial positive effect on the overall reservation economies.

FIGURE 13

## Stages of Entrepreneurial Development





## 2. NATIVE CDFIs AND ACCESS TO CREDIT AND CAPITAL

The importance of synergies between FPF and Native CDFIs is also reinforced in the *American Indian Creative Economy Market Study Project* results. While FPF has expertise in providing entrepreneurial training tailored to Native artists, Native CDFIs have direct access to emerging artists who need this specialized approach. Native CDFIs also have the ability to provide affordable capital for business development and growth. By actively integrating Native CDFIs into the flow of FPF programs, tailored and targeted services can be provided to support emerging artists as they develop into small-business entrepreneurs with the capacity to engage in FPF's entrepreneurial programs. Coupling the capital access provided by Native CDFIs with the tremendous economic potential of Native artists in the region will have an extensive and intensive impact on the reservation economies in western South Dakota and beyond.

## 3. TOURISM

One area that may provide a meaningful avenue for economic

growth is tourism. When asked what role tourism activities have on supporting and promoting Indian artists, 74 percent of emerging artists and 63 percent of FPF artists state that tourism has either a good or huge economic impact. The most frequent reason artists give for feeling tourism is beneficial is that it increases demand for their work. An increase in demand is correlated to fair pricing, more buyers and less competition among artists. One FPF artist declares that tourism is "HUGE! It isn't people on reservations that support artists; for the most part, it is non-Natives that buy art."

In terms of support, tourism may be beneficial in part because of the extreme ubiquity of art in reservation communities. Supply and demand is well understood on Pine Ridge Reservation, which is greatly affected by seasonality. A Pine Ridge woman says, "Peak season means more people, which means more money." Important, however, is the fact that 74 percent of emerging artists sell year-round. These full-time artists have more to gain and more to lose from tourism than do artists who sell seasonally only. Of the 25 percent of artists who sell during the spring and summer months only, nearly three-

quarters receive less than half of their income from art-related activities, suggesting that they may employ other strategies for earning income the rest of the year. Because a large number of artists are engaged in full-time sales and most mention the economic benefits of tourism, there is a strong case for developing tourism in reservation areas. Some artists feel overwhelmingly that tourism creates their market. An artist from the Pine Ridge Reservation in Pine Ridge, S.D., declares that tourism is the “biggest deal of all. Tourists help us survive; without them we wouldn’t survive.”

Many artists like tourism because it helps spread awareness of their art and Lakota culture to places beyond the reservation. An FPF artist explains, “It could be huge. It is our opportunity to celebrate who we are with our voice coming through the art we create. Our voice is real.” Other artists mention that tourism helps market their art.

These positive impacts of tourism offered by artists suggest that it may be a culturally appropriate avenue for economic growth among Native artists. Additionally, these ideas fit well into the

FPF mission of increasing awareness of Native culture, arts and programs that educate artists on the importance of marketing and entrepreneurship.

A comparison of the economic impact of tourism with artist annual income provides impressive evidence for tourism as an art economic engine. In a study about tourism on Pine Ridge in 2010 and 2011, Dr. Kathleen Sherman and Andrea Akers of CSU’s anthropology department found that their 2011 sample had 84 percent first-time visitors, up from the previous year. Tourists also enjoy their

experiences enough to return several times, some more than seven. A trend toward requesting information on the Internet about Pine Ridge and its attractions is developing; 8 percent more tourists in 2011 did so than in 2010. The biggest reason tourists are attracted to Pine Ridge is the culture and history, and in 2011 they spent an average of \$172 on souvenirs.<sup>6</sup>

Tourism is on the rise in South Dakota and tourists are spending money. If Native artists are poised to tap into tourism, there is a great possibility for economic benefit. (See Figure 15.)

6. Pine Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce Tourism Initiative Report, 2011.

FIGURE 14

### Artwork Prices

AVERAGE COST OF ITEM SOLD



MOST EXPENSIVE ITEM SOLD



FIGURE 15

### Percentage of Tourists Who Said They Would Recommend the Reservation to Friends as a Place to Visit



### Impact of FPF's Programs and Services

FPF's programs and services have an impact on the professional development of Native artists and help emerging artists move through the stages of entrepreneurial development, the most influential period of their development. (See Figure 13, page 17.)

### INCREASING BUSINESS KNOWLEDGE

FPF is in a good position to address Native artists' predominantly low business knowledge, both appropriately and meaningfully. The FPF Native Artist Professional Development Training curriculum

focuses on several areas pertinent to successful business development: improving basic financial skills, pricing, use of the Internet and marketing.

Access to markets is a pervasive problem for all the artists in this study. However, FPF artists are much better at selling from home than emerging artists; 65 percent of FPF artists declare they sell most of their art from home. An FPF artist from Fort Berthold Reservation in N.D., currently residing in Phoenix, says, "Selling from my home gives me more freedom in every way. I like my home and my studio. It is easy on my mind and body to have people come to me." It is possible FPF artists have

this ability because their names are more established with buyers.

Fifty-three percent of FPF artists also are comfortable interacting with retail shops; only 34 percent of emerging artists are. FPF appears to prepare artists well for these types of interactions. An FPF artist states, "It's most comfortable for me [at an art show] because the buyer is coming to me for my art and I don't have to be a salesperson. I don't have to try and sell my artwork, because the buyer already has made a decision to purchase my work."

As shown in Figure 16, FPF artists have a significantly greater presence on the Internet than do emerging artists. FPF artists are given more marketing options and feel more comfortable about them than do emerging artists.

percent more formal knowledge than do emerging artists. This suggests that FPF artists have the opportunity to combine informal methods and their education so they can be successful in formal markets.

FPF's structure reflects the importance to artists of informal transmission of knowledge through its Community Spirit Awards and Cultural Capital programs. FPF reinforces the values of generosity, respect, integrity, fortitude, wisdom, strength and humility. By the end of their fellowship periods, 55 percent of FPF artists say their understanding of generosity changed; 87 percent are willing to share documentation about their art with others.

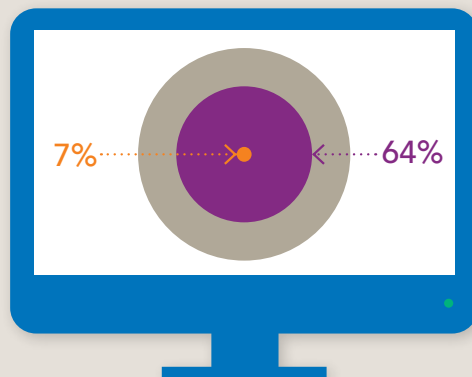
A compelling reason for informal support of artists is that, on the reservation, artists operate in an art world that is perceived to be informal. Out of the 47 percent of the emerging artists who think there is an art community on their reservation, 48 percent define it as informal, 13 percent define it as formal, and 8 percent define it as both.

Where artists meet is also indicative of the informal social support systems they use in operating their businesses.

FIGURE 16  
**Artists With Websites**

- EMERGING ARTISTS
- FPF ARTISTS

Twenty-three percent of FPF artists sell their art via the Internet, and 28 percent find it comfortable.



### EXPANDING FORMAL NETWORKS AND SUPPORTING INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS

Although FPF artists show the same frequency as emerging artists for acquiring knowledge through informal networks, they do not have to rely on informal networks to run their art businesses. FPF artists have 30

Artists say they interact with or meet other artists most often “at home,” “at local events and powwows” and “around town.” At home, artists may strategize about what items are selling, or share inside information about galleries or shops that are buying Native art. The fact that many artists interact at local cultural events supports the idea that art itself is embedded in Lakota society, and that artists are constantly reconnecting what they do with who they are.

Artists who see one another around town suggest a practical reason for supporting the existing informal networks of the reservation: They are selling their work. Artists mention Big Bat’s convenience store on Pine Ridge Reservation, Red Cloud Heritage Center on Pine Ridge, the

Cultural Center in Eagle Butte on the Cheyenne River Reservation, church groups like Remember, “the shade” at Wounded Knee on Pine Ridge, markets, tourist sites and trading posts as places where they can interact with each other and sell their work locally.

The structure of FPF programs like Artists in Business Leadership and Cultural Capital have the ability to tap into the existing informal institutions where artists interact in ways most meaningful to them. They are concerned with transmitting knowledge through the appropriate channels that ultimately allow an artist to make informed decisions, as well as the important cultural connection Native art has in local communities. Eighteen emerging artists offer that

they would be interested in FPF programs because it would allow them to help their communities. As an artist on Pine Ridge Reservation in Wanblee, S.D., expresses, “I would do anything to help the community.” The connection between culture and art is important to Native artists.

**CULTIVATING MENTORS AND ESTABLISHING FORMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

While there are a number of initial entry points, once Native artists become part of the FPF family, they experience holistic support from the programs of FPF. The *American Indian Creative Economy Market Study Project* demonstrates the effectiveness of FPF’s train-the-trainer model for Native CDFI personnel

working with Native artists, thereby making the case for increased outreach and training for these nontraditional financial institutions serving Native communities.

**EXPANDING MARKETS AND VISIBILITY**

Greater visibility and direct access to buyers helps reduce the difficulty of marketing art. Some artists describe selling as very difficult. FPF’s programs teach artists how to access markets and increase the visibility of their art off the reservation.





"Three Sisters," Valentina LaPier (Blackfeet), Artist in Business Leadership Fellow.



## Increasing Economic Stability

The impact FPF can have on economic growth is powerful; helping artists succeed has an enormous economic impact. Of the FPF artist sample, only 7.5 percent have an annual income of less than \$10,000. FPF artists enrolled in the Artists in Business Leadership program (“fellows”) have been able to increase their individual annual revenues by nearly 38 percent, from \$19,575 to \$26,982. At the time they were selected, five of the 22 fellows had an annual income of less than \$10,000, and only one had an income above \$50,000. At the end of their participation with FPF, three had an income below \$10,000, and three increased to more than \$50,000.

FPF artists have much better economic stability than emerging artists, dampening the issues of access to materials, markets and other resources. FPF artists are able to travel farther to get what they need; on average, they travel 138 miles more than emerging artists to get materials for creating artwork, and 97 miles farther to make a sale. This enhances their economic returns from the art they sell. FPF artists can travel farther without the same risk

of spending more on the trip than they make in sales. They can demand higher prices and take more risks because of their greater financial stability. When asked what barriers they face in marketing or distributing art, only 12 percent of FPF artists mention travel and/or transportation barriers, which is nearly two-thirds less than the 33 percent of emerging artists who identify transportation as a problem.



Roger Broer and a visitor at the 2011 Red Cloud Indian Art Show. Photo provided by The Heritage Center at Red Cloud Indian School.

# PARTNERS' ROLES IN SUPPORTING THE ARTS ECONOMY

Although FPF has made a significant contribution to helping artists through myriad programs and funding, it will take a concerted, coordinated effort from additional nonprofits, foundations and federal agencies to truly make inroads, buoy the Native arts economy and pave the way for Native youths to carry on the traditions.

By uniting in their efforts, establishing public and private partnerships, and putting forth a streamlined and consistent message to help inform policy and educate tribal leaders and other stakeholders regarding the value of art in building sustainable communities, Native arts leaders and committed organizations have the opportunity to change the public perception of Native art from a purely individual aesthetic expression to a critical economic driver. Their coordinated efforts may also increase the amount of funding available for artists and programs that will provide them with the tools, space, access to capital, training and technical assistance to move them from emerging entrepreneurs to established professional culture bearers capable of making a living through their work. When fully supported, these professional culture bearers have the capacity to significantly grow the creative economy throughout their communities.

Over the past decade, FPF has forged a new path for Native artists and culture bearers to be recognized not only for their creativity, but also for their potential in bringing economic and social

well-being to their communities by working to establish cross-sector partnerships with local, regional and national networks of Native artists, community-based organizations, art networks and foundations that support the arts. While much remains to be done, it is important to highlight the efforts and accomplishments of these partners, and how they have recognized the importance of arts and culture to the economic growth and cultural life of their communities with the goal of expanding the network and attracting greater resources to this work.

## Nonprofit Partners

Native CDFIs are a catalyst for long-term, systemic change in Native communities. Beginning in 2005, FPF recognized the synergy between the critical role these institutions play in building Native economies and the unique business and entrepreneurial needs of tribally based artists. To better work with these institutions, FPF established its Community Arts Initiative (CAI) to address several issues:

- The undervaluing of Native artists as a significant contributor to increasing economic development in Native communities through their art.

- Artists' lack of business and entrepreneurial skills, which they need to help them turn their art into successful business ventures for themselves and their communities.
- The lack of understanding by community development institutions – who are best equipped to provide business-focused training, technical assistance and capital to artists – about the national Native arts economy and distribution networks that support artist entrepreneurs.
- The lack of leadership and organizational qualities among community cultural institutions that are best equipped to provide services to artists, as well as spaces for them to produce their work.

FPF's CAI addresses all these issues by offering a sustainable and replicable model for Native communities across the country. The model invests in both the human capital, including artists and community practitioners, as well as the institutions that offer a foundation for lasting change. An important part of the CAI is the Native Artist Professional Development Training curriculum, which is specific to what Native artists need to navigate this industry and become successful

entrepreneurs. More than just an entrepreneurial development program, this is a values-based curriculum that views the business of art and artistic expression through an artist's lens. FPF provides this training to local artists in targeted regions across the country to help them build their entrepreneurial skills and capacity. Additionally, in an effort to ensure this program is widely available to artists in as many communities as possible, FPF conducts certified train-the-trainer programming to Native CDFIs and other community-based organizations that serve artists to increase the number of trainers available to teach the program at the local level.

These efforts benefit artists, the organizations that serve them and the community as a whole by instituting programming, creating a cadre of trainers and technical assistance providers, strengthening community-based organizations to provide asset-building services and access to capital, increasing the entrepreneurial and business development skills of emerging and established artists resulting in greater job and business creation, and increasing regional partnership opportunities supporting Native arts among stakeholders.

FPF has partnered with 16 Native CDFIs and other community-based organizations to implement the CAI model and has seen a significant increase in the quality of assistance provided to artists. The partner organizations are beginning to embrace art as an economic driver and have implemented programming to meet the needs of this unique market. In time, this will hopefully lead to an increase in the number of artists seeking capital to start a business.

Several of the more innovative partnerships include:

1. **Four Bands Community Fund**, a Native CDFI serving the Cheyenne River Reservation, estimates that 30 percent of its clientele are artists. It recognized a lack of capacity among its staff to effectively meet the needs of these clients and to reach out to other artists on the reservation. Over the past two years it has been working to increase the skills of its staff through participation in FPF's Native Artist Professional Development Training program (train the trainer, coaching and technical assistance). It now has several staff and local artists



Beverly Moran (Standing Rock Sioux),  
Artist in Business Leadership Fellow.



Nellie Two Bulls (Oglala) with Shahela Pourier Eyre (left), 2006 Community Spirit Award Honoree. Photo by Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie.

certified to teach the curriculum in their communities and has the ability to provide tailored technical assistance to its artist clientele. In addition, Four Bands is looking at developing space in which artists can work.

**2. The Lakota Funds (TLF)**, a Native CDFI serving the Pine Ridge Reservation, also has been working with FPF over the past two years through the Native Artist Professional Development Training program to increase the capacity of its staff to meet the needs of reservation-based artists.

TLF, too, is exploring the idea of fixed and mobile space<sup>7</sup> to provide a place for its clients to work. Since implementing the concepts learned from FPF, TLF has seen a rise in the number of artists seeking their services.

Over the past decade, several Native communities recognized the role art can play in their economic development efforts and have created spaces and other community facilities and programming dedicated to empowering artists.

**3. Cherokee Nation** in Oklahoma is a prime example of these efforts. The tribe, along with the Cherokee Nation Economic Development Trust Authority (a Native CDFI) and other partners, has seized an opportunity for growth in the tourism industry with the introduction of the Cherokee Arts Incubator. This project stimulates significant community and economic development by giving Cherokee artisans the opportunity to receive comprehensive entrepreneurial training, business development and ongoing technical assistance,

and space to start businesses. Cherokee communities benefit from this partnership, since the incubator provides an outlet for artists from all areas of the tribe's jurisdictional boundaries to sell their art. Tourists are immersed in Cherokee culture and are provided a venue to purchase a piece of the heritage that is uniquely Cherokee. The arts center also provides global marketing opportunities by providing access to an e-commerce website.<sup>8</sup>

**4. Northwoods Nijji Enterprise Community (NNEC)**<sup>9</sup> in Wisconsin, a partnership between several tribes, launched its Woodland Indian Arts Initiative in 2008 to better meet the needs of Native artists. Through this initiative, NNEC has built the Woodland Indian Art Center, which has laid the foundation for NNEC to develop future capacity-building programs for Native arts and cultural initiatives. The Woodland Indian Art Center is working to develop a self-sustaining, culturally appropriate incubator for Native artists and provide them with entrepreneurial support and space to exhibit and sell artwork and

7. The concept of art space for working artists is a critical part of successful programming for working artists and is explored in depth on page 15 in this paper.

8. Cherokee Nation Economic Development Trust Authority working papers.

9. NNEC is a partnership between the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin and the Sokaogon Chippewa Community of Mole Lake.

increase their economic self-sufficiency. It also is leveraging the artistic and cultural assets of the community to create partnerships and opportunities that will generate significant economic growth. FPF is working with a collaborative of Native CDFIs, including NNEC and led by LaPointe Financial CDFI, an emerging Native CDFI in Odanah, Wis., that launched a new product under its microloan program to serve Native artists in the Lake Superior region. The loan is offered to borrowers who complete FPF's Native Artist Professional Development Training program.

**5. Four Directions Community Development Corporation (Four Directions)<sup>10</sup> and Maine Indian Basket Weavers Alliance (MIBA)** are undertaking similar efforts in Maine. Four Directions is a Native CDFI and is leading these efforts through its Wabanaki Entrepreneurship Initiative (WEI), while MIBA is a key partner committed to preserving and extending the art of basket making within Maine's Native American community. Four Directions launched WEI in 2009 to assist Native entrepreneurs

with developing opportunities in three primary economic sectors: handmade artisan products, agriculture and cultural tourism. Since that time, it has provided training, coaching, technical assistance and access to capital to more than 100 Native entrepreneurs.<sup>11</sup>

Four Directions also is developing the Wabanaki Cultural Tourism Center, a world-class training center with a mission to assist Maine tribes in creating tourism and hospitality infrastructures within their communities. The center will provide training to entrepreneurs in areas such as business development, hospitality and culinary arts, which will assist Native people with starting sustainable and successful businesses. Also, because Native artisans are an important component of any cultural tourism effort, Native artists and craftspeople who make baskets and create works of art in various mediums such as wood, beads, drawing, photography, jewelry, etc., will have outlets for their work as well as a place to hone their business development skills.<sup>12</sup>



Ledger Art, Donald F. Montileaux (Oglala), Artist in Business Leadership Fellow. Photo courtesy of the Red Cloud Heritage Center, 2011 Red Cloud Indian Art Show.

MIBA is a 20-year-old Native American arts service organization representing 200 artisans from the Aroostook Band of Micmacs, the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, the Passamaquoddy Tribe and the Penobscot Nation. Since its founding in 1992, MIBA has enabled a new generation of ash

and sweetgrass basketry artists to thrive. Through MIBA's work, the average age of basket makers has fallen from 63 to 40 and the number of artists has increased from 55 to 200 statewide. Prior to MIBA's inception, this ancient traditional basketry art form was being kept alive by a handful of

10. Four Directions and MIBA serve the four tribes in Maine including the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Micmac and Maliseet, known collectively as Wabanaki, or "people of the dawn."

11. Four Directions working papers and [www.fourdirections.org](http://www.fourdirections.org).

12. Ibid.

elders; now, however, an entirely new generation of basket makers is committed to its preservation.<sup>13</sup> FPF and MIBA are taking the lead in this region to strengthen the arts economy through FPF's Native Arts Professional Development Training program.

Four Directions and MIBA are also partnering on creating artist-focused entrepreneurial programming that will help establish a vibrant handmade artisan economy through investment in cultural development, artisan recruitment, accumulation of social capital, business support and access to markets for Wabanaki handmade products. The Wabanaki have a rich cultural tradition working in basketry, beadwork and a host of handmade artisan items. For nearly 100 years, the Wabanaki have marketed these artisan works to create economic opportunity for its members. Four Directions and MIBA have received training and technical assistance through FPF's Native Artist Professional Development Training program and are working to implement the model to address the needs of their artists.

The efforts of the sampling of Native CDFIs and artist-serving organizations indicate a strong awakening of the role that art can play in developing sustainable communities and demonstrate a commitment to empowering artists to recognize their value, not only as the culture and tradition bearers in their communities, but also as economic drivers who can help lead their people out of poverty.

Other nonprofit organizations and academic institutions such as the Global Center for Cultural Entrepreneurship in Santa Fe, N.M., and the Hauser Center at Harvard University are also examining and researching the role that art can play in building sustainable and vibrant communities. FPF and Artspace's work and research in Native communities can inform these efforts and can become part of the larger national dialogue on how to integrate art and culture as part of an economic development framework in rural and urban communities everywhere.

### Federal Agencies

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are currently working together to examine the role that art plays in

building sustainable communities and how it contributes to strong economic development models. Further research and discussions with these and other federal agencies will yield significant opportunities for interagency collaborations and public and private partnerships focused on the intersection of art and strong Native communities, thereby ensuring that art becomes part of local efforts to create sustainable and inclusive communities. Both FPF and Artspace have worked closely with the NEA leadership and served on its national panels for Our Town, NEA's grant program supporting creative placemaking.

### Foundation Partners

Over the past few years, several foundations have expanded their funding and support of programs and organizations that work to increase the capacity of artists to make a living through their work. For example, Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC), a collaborative effort of several national foundations including the Ford Foundation, Kresge Foundation, Paul G. Allen Foundation, Nathan Cummings Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, MetLife Foundation, Surdna Foundation and

The Rockefeller Foundation, as well as the NEA, worked to significantly improve the conditions for artists working in all disciplines. LINC provided funding to FPF to assist in efforts to expand the role of arts in Native economies and to conduct outreach to attract additional support. Both Artspace and FPF played leadership roles in these funding initiatives for nearly a decade. LINC, a 10-year initiative, recently came to a close. In anticipation of this, a new foundation – ArtPlace – was launched in 2011 to fill the void. This organization is a collaborative of national and regional foundations, the NEA, and national banks. Since its launch, ArtPlace has awarded nearly \$27 million nationally.

Other significant funders of this work include the Open Society Foundations, the McKnight Foundation, the Bush Foundation and HRK Foundation, which provide FPF with critical operating resources to implement programming and expand outreach. The impact of this funding over the past decade has been the development of programming specifically for Native artists, including grants and fellowships, and the first-ever values-based artist entrepreneurship development

13. MIBA working papers.

curriculum, which includes a comprehensive train-the-trainer curriculum and technical assistance component in collaboration with Native CDFIs. FPF has been able to assist close to 200 artists and has dispersed \$800,000 through the Community Spirit Awards and the Artists in Business Leadership and Cultural Capital capacity-building programs. This has served to empower artists not only to believe in themselves and the value of their work, but also to give back to their communities by teaching youths and other community members the importance of preserving their traditions.



"Buffalo Rose," Alaina Buffalo Spirit  
(Northern Cheyenne), Artist in  
Business Leadership Fellow.





# CONCLUSION

With an increase in targeted support and recognition from foundations, federal agencies, tribes and other stakeholders, Native artists have the ability to increase their own earnings potential while becoming significant drivers of the economies of their communities.

Native art is a viable industry with the potential to make a real and lasting difference in Native communities across the country. Support programs exist to provide the opportunity for Native art to improve the economic lives of Native artists and reduce poverty. The challenge is increasing awareness and access to resources. Given the emerging national dialogue and research regarding the intersection of art and sustainable communities, FPF, Artspace and other nonprofits, foundations and federal agencies have the ability to contribute the Native voice to the discussion, which will help inform these ongoing efforts and will benefit artist communities in rural and urban areas alike.



"A Closer Look at Gall," Gerald Cournoyer (Oglala),  
Artist in Business Leadership Fellow.

# PROJECT SUPPORTERS



**Artspace, headquartered in Minneapolis with offices in Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York, Seattle and Washington, D.C., strives to create, foster and preserve affordable space for artists and arts organizations.** Over the last three decades, Artspace has led an accelerating national movement of arts-driven community transformation. While embracing the value the arts bring to individual lives, Artspace has championed the once-radical idea that artists living on the edge of poverty and chronically underfunded arts organizations can leverage fundamental social change. A generation later, leaders across disciplines are recognizing that the arts can advance public agendas from job creation and transit-oriented development to cultural and historic preservation. But there is often a gap between “can” and “how.” The arts can build social equity, but how is this achieved, especially in our most destabilized, marginalized communities?

Artspace has the hard-earned expertise necessary to create

sustainable, affordable spaces for the arts that catalyze change. Artspace has brought its expertise to more than 300 cultural facility planning efforts from coast to coast. Of these projects, 32 have been developed, owned and operated by Artspace itself, a unique portfolio representing a nearly half-billion dollar investment in America’s arts infrastructure. Driven by a robust, diverse pipeline of future projects, Artspace’s portfolio will double over the next decade.

Through third-party research, Artspace knows that its projects transform communities. Internally, Artspace creates affordable, appropriate space that allows individual artists and arts organizations to be more artistically productive and increase their revenue. Externally, Artspace fosters the safety and livability of neighborhoods without gentrification-led displacement. Artspace animates deteriorated historic structures and underutilized spaces, bringing them back onto the tax rolls and boosting area property values. Artspace helps anchor arts districts, expands access

to the arts, and attracts artists, businesses and organizations to the area.

Most importantly, Artspace projects are sustainable. Artspace’s earliest projects are now 20 years old, and they continue to meet the needs of their resident artists and arts organizations while adding vitality to their neighborhoods without depending upon ongoing annual fundraising.

Translating “needs” to “space” is a core competency of Artspace.

**artspace.org**

*Thank you to Artspace’s **Greg Handberg** and **Naomi Chu** for their contributions to this report.*



**Dr. Kathleen Pickering Sherman is chair of the department of anthropology at CSU.** She teaches courses on Indians of North America, development in Indian country, economic anthropology, cultures and the global system, Indians today, and comparative legal systems.

She earned a bachelor's from the College of William and Mary, a master's and doctorate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a Juris Doctor from New York University School of Law. Dr. Sherman's research interests focus on political economy and the effects of globalization, the socially embedded nature of the economy, and the role of local institutions in the construction of the world system, both currently and throughout history.

Her research on the Pine Ridge, Cheyenne River and Rosebud Indian Reservations in South Dakota involves issues of economic development, time allocation, social network analysis, Native entrepreneurship, access to credit and welfare reform. She worked as a

legal services attorney in Pine Ridge and is interested in comparative legal systems, alternative dispute resolution and the economic effects of legal structures. She has published three books: *Lakota Culture*, *World Economy*, and *Welfare Reform in Persistent Rural Poverty*, along with articles in numerous journals and magazines.

She is the president of the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology, and is the associate director of educational programs for the School for Global Environmental Sustainability.

**[anthropology.colostate.edu](http://anthropology.colostate.edu)**

*Thank you to **Patrick Dorian**, Dr. Pickering Sherman's graduate student, for his contributions to this report.*



**FPF, located in Rapid City, S.D., was founded in 1995.** Its mission is to honor and support the Collective Spirit<sup>14</sup> – that which manifests a self-awareness and sense of responsibility to sustain the cultural fabric of a community – of First Peoples artists and culture bearers. FPF’s programs include:

#### **Fellowship Programs**

Since 2000, these programs have awarded more than 200 grants totaling \$1.03 million. FPF also paid \$260,000 in artist fees and honorariums to 342 artists.

- **Community Spirit Awards**  
National fellowship awards for established artists who have demonstrated substantial contributions to their communities through their careers as artists. Honors American Indian artists who exemplify their traditional cultural values and way of life through the sharing of their creative talents and skills with others in their communities.
- **Cultural Capital**  
An opportunity for artists to further cultural work in their respective communities. Invests grants in FPF’s network of community

artists to conduct specific cultural projects. Grants fund public works as diverse as commemorating histories of tribal events, collective building of tradition-based art, protection and preservation of ancestral knowledge, and practices that support younger generations.

- **Artist in Business Leadership**  
Recognizes tribal artists for the critical role they play in strengthening their communities’ economies. Provides self-directed, independent professional development training along with working capital funds to support artists’ marketing strategies.

#### **Art Marketing and Professional Development Training, Success Coach Training, Technical Assistance Services**

Community-based partnerships with Native CDFIs whose client base is up to one-third artists. FPF’s artist alumni serve as success coaches and trainers to the Native CDFI partners. FPF offers fee-for-service workshops to state arts councils, nonprofit arts service organizations, Native CDFIs and tribal institutions.

Since 2008, FPF has partnered with 15 Native CDFIs and conducted 14

train-the-trainer sessions, certifying 28 artist and business success coaches. FPF conducted 85 Native Artist Professional Development Training workshops, serving 540 artists from 26 Native communities.

#### **Our Nation’s Spaces**

Provides opportunities for Native artists to create and showcase their work outside of predominantly Native arts spaces and into the network of Ford Foundation’s Diverse Arts Spaces (DAS) grantees. Strengthens and develops the relationships among DAS organizations, the communities they represent, and Native artists and culture bearers.

Since 2012, FPF has awarded \$100,000 to seven Ford Foundation DAS organizations through this program.

**firstpeoplesfund.org**

*Thank you to FPF’s **Jody Sarkozy Banoczy** and **Lori Pourier** for their contributions to this report.*

14. Collective Spirit is a registered trademark of First Peoples Fund. © 2007. All rights reserved.

# LINC



Launched in 2003, **Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC)** was a 10-year philanthropic experiment in using information, money and strategic partnerships to effect change in the support system for artists in the United States. FPF was supported, in part, by LINC as part of its Creative Communities program, funded by the Kresge Foundation and Ford Foundation.

At its core, LINC operated on the belief that providing artists with a system of professional support – including the resources, authority and information necessary to pursue creative work without jeopardizing basic living conditions – would enable them to make greater and more meaningful contributions to society.

LINC's scope was national, but took a place-based approach that encouraged organizations to focus on their practice while leveraging strategic community partnerships and local expertise. LINC consistently provided three primary activities across all of its national programs:

- **Grantmaking**  
Direct investments in specific local activities and projects.
- **Research**  
National investments to provide context for case-making.
- **Learning community**  
Opportunities for practitioners to share knowledge.

LINC's sunset activity included an assessment of the 10-year arc of its program work, research and findings. Components of this multimedia project are archived on LINC's website.

**[lincnet.net](http://lincnet.net)**



### Prosperity is possible for all.

This fundamental belief lies at the core of the Northwest Area Foundation's mission – to support organizations working to reduce poverty and build sustainable prosperity. Everything the Foundation does is rooted in this conviction; its spirit animates the Foundation's strategies and informs the Foundation's thinking as it reaches out to partners with similar goals.

The Northwest Area Foundation believes people should have the opportunity to thrive, to build the future they want for themselves and their families. It also understands a major challenge facing Native American communities is developing a robust economy where there are currently few, if any, local businesses. It is why the Foundation has funded projects aimed at creating and supporting Native-owned businesses that would capture dollars and contribute to strong local Native economies.

As "Establishing a Creative Economy: Art as an Economic Engine in Native Communities" explains, the Native arts economy is an essential part of this picture. The report estimates that 30 percent of all Native peoples are

practicing or potential artists – and that most live below the poverty line. To those at the Foundation, that sounds like a remarkable opportunity.

The Foundation views Native American communities as places of great potential, tradition, innovation and achievement. The Foundation supports opportunities for Native-owned, Native-led growth and restoration, and hopes other funders also will invest in Indian Country.

The Foundation's work in urban, rural and Native American reservation communities is motivated by a vision for the Northwest area. The Foundation sees a region:

- Known for its highly skilled, well-educated population, its living-wage jobs and its healthy, vibrant communities.
- Characterized by thriving local economies within thriving ecosystems.
- Whose strong public institutions, business community and nonprofit sector collaborate to address pressing needs and help build pathways to prosperity for all residents.

- Whose people are organized and empowered to lift their voices and actively shape the civic, social, political and economic life of their communities.
- Whose rich culture of engagement and opportunity ultimately make it a prized place to visit, to invest in, and to live, and where all residents have a fair chance to live free of poverty.

Established in 1934, the Northwest Area Foundation serves Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon, and the 75 Native nations that share the same geography.

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