



## **ONAC 2016 Conference Report**

The Oklahoma Native Assets Coalition (ONAC) held our annual conference on July 12, 2016. We wish to thank First Nations Development Institute (FNDI), with support of the Ford Foundation, for grant funding that assisted us with paying for our conference costs.

The conference was held at the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. We used the catering services of Running Wild Caterer, the current preferred caterer of the Oklahoma History Center. AARP Oklahoma sponsored the conference breakfast. We also received a sponsorship from Choctaw Asset Building. During the conference, we provided a breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack, and reception.

ONAC was pleased with the conference participation. This year, ninety-eight individuals registered to attend and eighty-three individuals attended, including one child of a state representative (last year sixty-eight individuals registered to attend and sixty-three attended, including two children of one of the state representatives). ONAC provided conference folders for all the attendees complete with a participant list, agenda, membership and donation form, coalition profile, PowerPoint handout from the ONAC overview presentation, final report from the first round of ONAC mini grants, news releases about our grants and Children's Savings Account (CSA) partners, a map of grantees and CSA partners in Oklahoma, and an evaluation form.

Throughout the day, we held ten conference sessions. They included an opening welcome by Assistant Chief Lewis Johnson, of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, and information about the work of the coalition over the past year, presented by Christy Finsel; acknowledgement of the ONAC leadership committee and board members as well as FNDI colleagues; an asset building perspective from Vincent G. Logan, Special Trustee of the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians; state legislative updates in relation to tribes, as offered by Representatives Dan Kirby and Seneca Scott; remarks from Lillian Sparks Robinson, Commissioner of the Administration for Native Americans; financial education/financial resilience resources from Shawn Spruce, a consultant working with FNDI, and Mashell Sourjohn of AARP Oklahoma; an on-site special tour of the Oklahoma Historical Society American Indian Collections led by Bill Welge, Matt Reed, and two other staff members of the Oklahoma Historical Society; presentations on flexible savings/family emergency savings by Sarah Sattelmeyer of The Pew Charitable Trusts, Patricia Hart of New America, and local practitioners Michael and Tami Lowery of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma and Dawn Stover of the Native Alliance Against Violence; project updates from ONAC mini grantees Thunder Whitecloud of the Mvskoke Loan Fund, Tina Pollard of Citizen Potawatomi Community Development Corporation, and Ted Moore of the Kaw Nation; ONAC Children's Savings Account partner updates from John Blue, Secretary of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Kara Pasqua Whitworth (Director) and Christina Bowlin (CSA Coordinator) of the Office of Child Support Services, Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, and Cynthia Logsdon Assistant Director of the Citizen Potawatomi Community Development Corporation; and updates from



Sharon Gordon-Ribeiro, Field Office Director-OKC of HUD, Pamela Charles, Sr. Stakeholder Relationship Manager of the IRS, and Cindy Carter Renfro, Native American Liaison of the U.S. Small Business Administration. Each of the speakers spent time preparing their remarks. The conference attendees noted appreciation for the speaker contributions on the conference evaluations.

This year, we had a diverse mixture of participants. Constituents, who had attended earlier ONAC conferences, and who again attended this year, included representatives from the Oklahoma State Service Learning program, Small Business Administration, Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians, FNDI, Muscogee (Creek) Nation and Mvskoke Loan Fund, Chickasaw Nation, Citizen Potawatomi CDC, HUD, Oklahoma Native Caucus, Cherokee Nation Commerce Group, American Indian Institute at The University of Oklahoma, AARP Oklahoma, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, the Buder Center for American Indian Studies at Washington University in Saint Louis, Cherokee Nation Office of Child Support Services, Oklahoma Policy Institute, Osage Financial Resources, Inc., Choctaw Asset Building, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, the Osage Nation, Oklahoma City YWCA, Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work at The University of Oklahoma, The MICA Foundation, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Oklahoma Arts Council, Kaw Nation, Pawnee Nation, and the University of Oklahoma Financial Aid Services. We also had new representation from the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, Potts Family Foundation, Ganart Technologies, Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, Opportunities, Inc., Oklahoma Historical Society, Kickapoo Nation Health Center, Native Alliance Against Violence, Oklahoma Health Care Authority, FlintRock Development, BeLieving In Native Generations, The Pew Charitable Trusts, New America, New York Life Insurance, Oklahoma State Bank, Wyandotte Nation, OU-CPM, Publishing Concepts, LLC, and the Delaware Nation. ONAC was thankful for all those who attended.

We received feedback that the participants enjoyed the conference and learned more about Native asset building in Oklahoma.

In terms of lessons learned, it was helpful to have local asset builders speak as well as to invite those working at a national level (such as from FNDI, The Pew Charitable Trusts, New America, the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians, and the Administration for Native Americans). The 2016 ONAC Conference was considered a success. We appreciate the support from FNDI, and the Ford Foundation, that made this conference possible.