



## ONAC Newsletter, July 2016

### ONAC 2016 Conference

On July 12, 2016, ONAC held our 2016 Conference in Oklahoma City at the Oklahoma History Center. Ninety-eight individuals registered to attend and eighty-three were in attendance. This was our most attended conference to date.

ONAC appreciates all those who participated in the conference. Assistant Chief Lewis Johnson, of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, conducted the tribal welcome. We then heard updates from ONAC and remarks from the Oklahoma Native Caucus Co-Chairs (Representatives Dan Kirby and Seneca Scott); Vincent G. Logan, Special Trustee, Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST); Lillian Sparks Robinson, Commissioner, Administration for Native Americans; Shawn Spruce, a consultant working with First Nations Development Institute; and Mashell Sourjohn, Associate State Director of Community Outreach. After lunch, we took a wonderful on-site special tour of the Oklahoma Historical Society American Indian Collections led by Bill Welge, Matt Reed, and two other staff members from the Oklahoma Historical Society. We then heard from several constituents about their family emergency savings account projects (Michael and Tami Lowery of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma and Dawn Stover of the Native Alliance Against Violence), as well as from Sarah Sattelmeyer of The Pew Charitable Trusts, and Patricia Hart of New America. After the afternoon break, three 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) shared updates about their projects. We then had a Children's Savings Account panel where we heard 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 of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, and Cynthia Logsdon Assistant Director of the Citizen Potawatomi Community Development Corporation. We ended the day with 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. ONAC followed the conference sessions with a reception. Thank you to all the speakers who shared their Native asset building expertise.

We appreciate our conference sponsors, AARP Oklahoma and Choctaw Asset Building, as well as First Nations Development Institute, with support of the Ford Foundation, for grant support of this conference. Additionally, we thank Catherine Bryan (First Nations) and Dawn Hix (Choctaw Asset Building) who staffed the registration table; ONAC Board Members (Anna Knight, Terry Mason Moore, Elizabeth Ricketts, Dawn Hix, and Cynthia Logsdon) and Advisory Committee Members (Shay Smith, Ed Shaw, Christy Estes,



and Lahoma Simmons); the Oklahoma Historical Society staff and volunteers; and all the constituents who traveled to participate in the day. We are grateful for your support of the coalition and excited about Native asset-building efforts in Oklahoma!

## **Children's Savings Account Pilot Updates**

The third of our confirmed CSA partners, the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, has opened a total of forty-eight ONAC Children's Savings Accounts for youth enrolled in a financial education program they provided, as well as for children who attend their Early Childhood Learning Center. They held a Family and College Savings Plan Night at their Early Childhood Learning Center on June 3, 2016. During that event, they scheduled storytelling, a Native arts project, supervised playtime, and dinner. At the end of the evening, they provided bounce houses for the children in their gym.

With their strong outreach efforts, their grants office opened Children's Savings Accounts with Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma parents/guardians. ONAC provided children with \$100 for their account, made payable either to the Oklahoma 529 College Savings Plan or MOST-Missouri's 529 College Savings Plan (as their tribal members live in both states given their close location to the Oklahoma and Missouri borders). Additionally, ONAC provided each child with a piggy bank, ONAC generated Native-specific financial education booklet, a certificate celebrating their account, and gardening seeds and gardening directions to promote the idea that we are building multiple culturally-relevant assets, including food cultivation/food sovereignty. Building from ONAC's belief that assets are not only money, at the Family and College Savings Plan Night, the youth were invited to create a piece of artwork that expressed their understandings of assets. With parental permissions, ONAC will use artwork from several of the youth, to create a desk calendar to promote the idea of building assets throughout the year. A big thank you to Chief Glenna J. Wallace who attended and encouraged the parents and children to save for the future; the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma's Grants Department (Tami Lowery and Michael Lowery); the Early Childhood Learning Center Director (Bobbie Ahrens) and staff; Wellness Center Director (Ron Wallace) and staff; Ryan Frieze of the IT Department; and those who volunteered with them to make the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma CSA pilot a great success!

## **ONAC to Speak at the LEAD Conference**

ONAC will speak at the upcoming First Nations Development Institute LEAD Conference to be held September 27-29, 2016, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Ms. Finsel, of ONAC, will provide general Native Children's Savings Account program design information, as well as specifics about the ONAC Children's Savings Account program. Two ONAC CSA partners, the Cherokee Nation Office of Child Support Services and the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, will present information about their partnerships with ONAC to offer CSAs. For more information, or to register, go to <https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/?eventid=1823021>.

## **ONAC Awards One New Mini Grant in July 2016**

ONAC announces that it has awarded an ONAC mini grant to the Housing Authority of the Seminole Nation. This grant was made possible with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.



In January 2016, ONAC released our second request for proposals (RFP) to fund Native asset building projects in Oklahoma. We received excellent applications from tribal governments and tribal programs based in Oklahoma. At the time, ONAC received an application from the Housing Authority of the Seminole Nation but was not able to fund the grant until our second grant installment from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation arrived. ONAC is excited to work with their housing authority as they continue to offer Native asset building projects to their tribal members. If needed, ONAC is available to provide free training and technical assistance to them as they implement their asset-building program. Congratulations to the Housing Authority of the Seminole Nation on this award.

- **The Housing Authority of the Seminole Nation** will assist ten families with starting an Emergency Savings Account, as part of a matched savings account program, to help them to become more self-sufficient and move towards homeownership. This grant will allow the housing authority to develop a core curriculum to help prevent foreclosure and send staff to foreclosure prevention and credit and budgeting training. By June 2017, ten families will have opened emergency savings accounts with the initial deposit money (\$200 per family) provided through this grant (awarded \$3,500).

## **ONAC Welcomes Donations, Sponsorships, Memberships, and Endowment Support**

As part of our efforts to sustain and grow the coalition, ONAC welcomes donations, sponsorships, and memberships. We are also interested in beginning an endowment. For more information, please go to the donate page at [www.oknativeassets.org](http://www.oknativeassets.org) or call Christy Finsel, ONAC Executive Director, at 405-401-7873. ONAC appreciates your support!

## **ONAC Announces New Board Member**

ONAC welcomes a new board member, Cynthia Logsdon. She will join the board as a Board Director. Mrs. Logsdon has a long history of supporting ONAC and providing leadership to the coalition. Most recently, she was a member of the ONAC Advisory Committee. Cindy is the Assistant Director of the Citizen Potawatomi Community Development Corporation in Shawnee, Oklahoma. We are thankful for her service to ONAC!

**Thank you for your asset building efforts and for your support of ONAC!**