

## Native Organizations Receive National Community Revitalization Awards, 2006



**Phoenix, AZ** – In April, 2006 three Phoenix, Arizona, Native American nonprofit community-based organizations received the 2006 Community Revitalization Award. Financial institutions and nonprofit community-based organizations were invited to submit innovative examples of comprehensive revitalization projects that had a significant impact in their community. The submissions could be for a program, service, structure or any combination of these elements that demonstrated a unique connection to their location and reflected a holistic approach in the development process.

Phoenix Indian Center (PIC), Native American Connections (NAC) and Native Health (NH) collectively purchased a six-story 85,000 square foot office building in Central Phoenix for over \$7 million. Together, the nonprofits formed an LLC to acquire the office/site, which will operate as a Native American business, cultural and service center.

**Assessed and Incorporated the Needs/View of the Community:** This project has tremendous significance to the urban Native American community in Greater Phoenix, a population which has grown to over 90,000. Currently, the region lacks a “geographic center” for the Native American community – a place where Native people can gather together to share cultural traditions with fellow tribal members or the community at large – and lacks a central location for them to access services. The region’s Native American community identified this as an issue/need over ten years ago – in community focus groups and agencies’ strategic planning sessions, during a series of Urban Native Summits (1998-2000), and at a design charette coordinated by Arizona State University (Sep05). This project is envisioned as the initial step of a larger community initiative to establish a permanent geographic presence for the urban Native American community.

**Promoted Collaboration & Leveraged Financing:** Nonprofits, government entities, intermediaries and financial institutions all participated in this endeavor. Collectively, the three Phoenix-based nonprofits have provided almost 120 years of collective service to the urban Native American community through a set of non-competing programs:

- Phoenix Indian Center (59 years of service): education, workforce development, cultural/language preservation
- Native American Connections (33 years of service): behavioral health, developing/operating affordable, supportive housing
- Native Health (26 years of service): medical/dental services, youth and elder services

Through their co-location, agencies will improve the efficiencies of service delivery with funding partnership opportunities increasing.

Funding to acquire/renovate the office building/site came from the following public and private sources:

- New Market Tax Credits – Provided by City of Phoenix Community Development Improvement Corporation Managed by First National Bank of Arizona (\$6.1 million)
- Phoenix LISC (\$1.2 million)
- Arizona MultiBank (\$500,000)

**Responded to a community/economic development challenge & Improved Community:** The project also has enabled the Phoenix Indian Center and Native Health to address sustainability challenges by allowing them to develop/grow an asset base. Prior to this purchase, these two agencies had leased their sites. Again, this project also is the community’s first step towards meeting the challenge of establishing a permanent Native American geographic center – a place that will be a vibrant tourist destination which, besides services, will include small businesses, artisans/vendors selling their arts, crafts and merchandise, housing opportunities and cultural amenities, and a place to foster Native American growth and leadership opportunities for current and future generations. This unique community development project is being seen as a model for other urban Native American communities nationwide.

For more information on the 2006 Community Revitalization Awards, please go to [www. Frbsf.com](http://www.Frbsf.com) and follow the links to community development then conferences and training.