



Grant Writing 101

Best Practices & Common Mistakes

AN INVEST NATIVE INITIATIVE

The Wells Fargo logo, consisting of a red square with the words "WELLS" and "FARGO" stacked vertically in white, uppercase, sans-serif font.

WELLS
FARGO

February 2024

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTIONS
2. WHAT IS INVEST NATIVE?
3. YOUR GRANT PORTFOLIO
4. FINDING & READING NOFOS
5. GRANT NARRATIVE
6. STORYTELLING WITH DATA
7. SNEAK PEEK AT NEXT WEEK



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We Are On Native Land

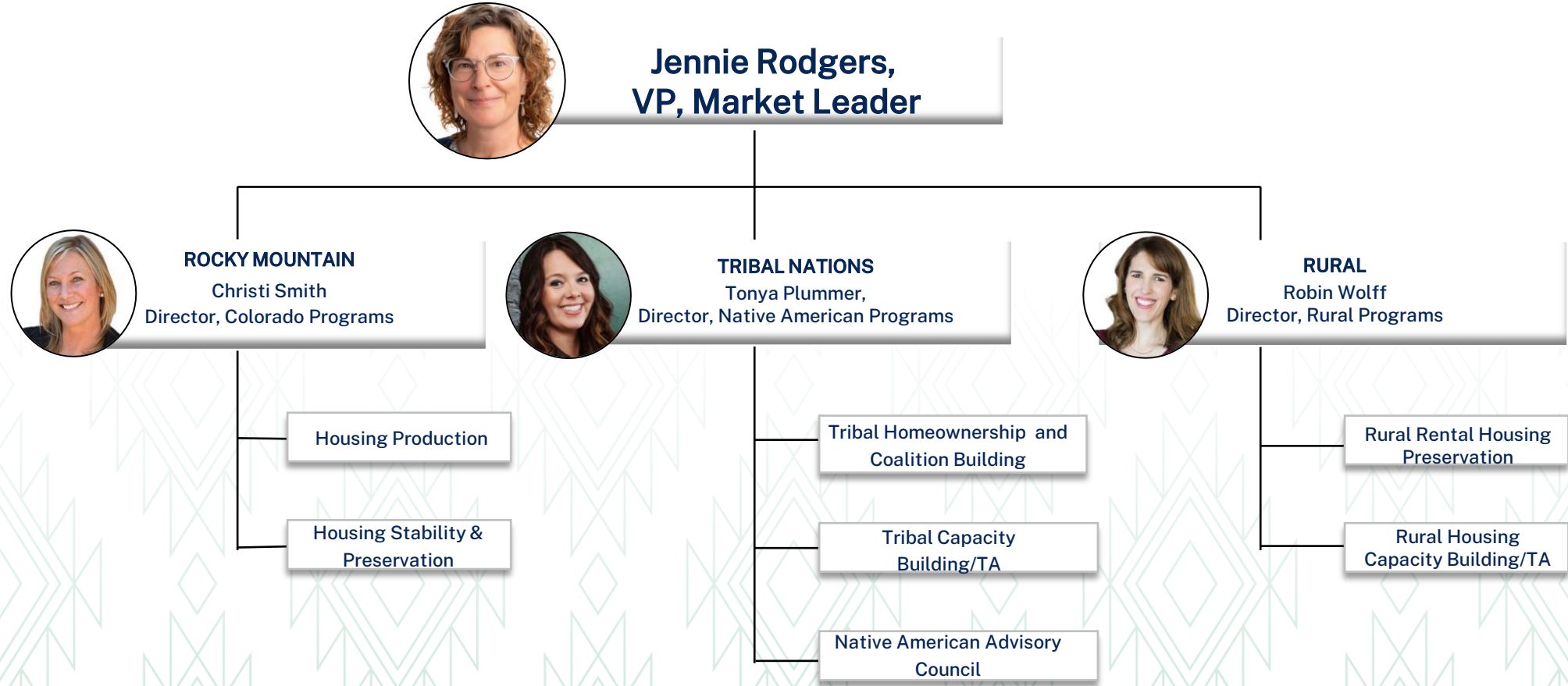




After winning an award, do you complete your grants management and financial compliance through an outside contractor or with in-house staff?

Throw your answer in the chat!

Rocky Mountain, Tribal Nations and Rural Markets





Tribal Nations Team

Enterprise Community Partners



Tonya Plummer
Director

tplummer@enterprisecommunity.org



Morgan Dean
Program Director

mdean@enterprisecommunity.org



Jeremiah Powless
Program Officer

jpowless@enterprisecommunity.org



Evelyn Immonen
Program Officer

eimmonen@enterprisecommunity.org



Tribal Nations Team



Katie Biggs

DIRECTOR
Resource Development



Emily Nosse-Leirer

DIRECTOR
Rural & Native American Policy



Sarah Torsell

DIRECTOR
Senior Grants Specialist

Grants Management for Rural & Tribal
Nations Teams



SUPPORTING NATIVE COMMUNITIES
INVEST NATIVE

Invest Native

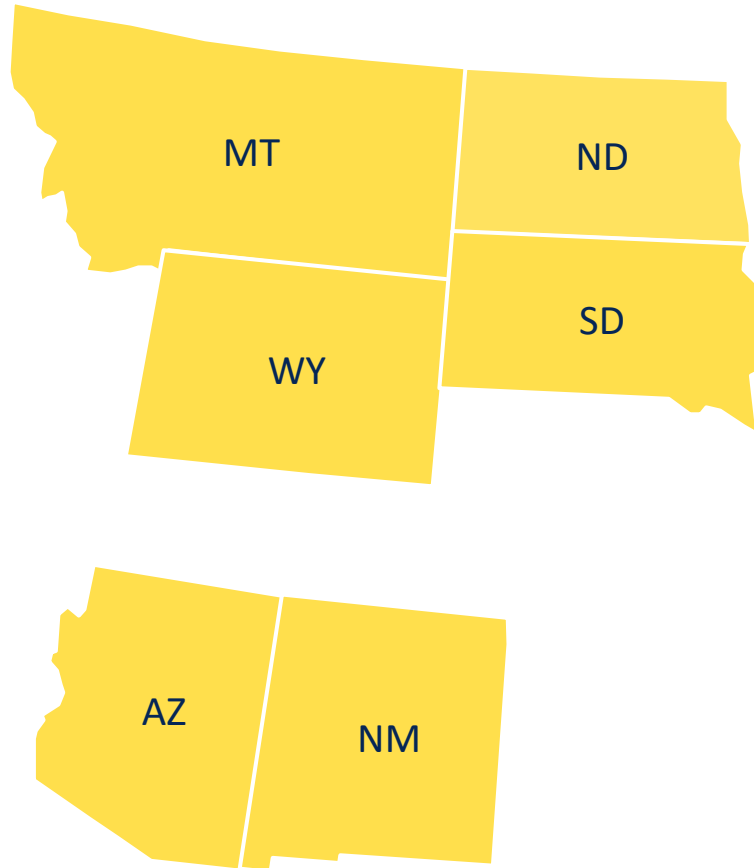


Invest Native is a \$20 million philanthropic effort to support Native-led nonprofit organizations and the communities they serve in New Mexico, Arizona, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

Funding priorities include housing access and affordability, small business growth, financial health, and sustainability and climate resiliency.



Invest Native: A multi-year philanthropic initiative in six states



- The Dakotas, Mountain Plains and Southwest Regions are home to many key Native-Led nonprofit organizations
- Regions include six of the 10 states with highest percentage of Native Americans
- Directly addresses concerns raised in listening sessions with Native leaders
- Leverages momentum and organic work of existing Native coalitions
- Will inform future support of Native efforts in other territories

Intentional Capital



**Fearless
Philanthropy**



**Strong
Relationships**

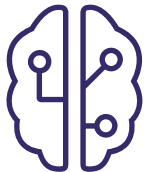
Lasting Results

What do we want to accomplish?

In the second year, Invest Native will:



Create positive outcomes for families, small businesses, and communities including more single and multifamily housing construction, access to capital for small businesses and consumers, and financial health programs



Strengthen infrastructure for Native-led organizations by funding projects that improve their technology and systems so groups can be more efficient in assisting families and small businesses



Invest in asset-building tools, peer-to-peer learning and training, and research that sheds light on the distinctive needs of Native communities and prepares staff to utilize best practices in their work

Statement of Strength



Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian communities are often located in some of the most rural and remote locations in the country.

They face a unique set of challenges have begun to implement unique solutions.

These organizations, when well resourced, can serve as engines of economic mobility.

Invest Native supports the strength of these Native-led, Native serving solutions.

Invest Native Pillars

Eligible Focus Areas



Housing Access & Affordability

Focus is to strive to foster interventions and innovative solutions that increase access to affordable, sustainable, and wealth-generating housing for vulnerable populations and communities. Emphasis will be on driving innovation, opening doors to access & affordability, keeping people housed.



Small Business Growth

Focus is to primarily support initiatives that accelerate growth opportunities for established small businesses to help them scale. Investments center on key drivers of growth: Capital, Network, and Knowledge



Financial Health

Focus is to invest in foundational structures and transformative solutions that address systemic inequities, build financial security, and advance wealth and legacy creation among historically marginalized communities. Emphasis is on Opening Pathways to Economic Advancement by increasing financial inclusion and access, driving wealth building and transfer, empowering youth/young adults with financial capability, and discovering & implementing innovative solutions.



Sustainability & Climate Resilience

Focus is to support sustainability initiatives that drive an equity-focused transition to a low-carbon economy. Emphasis is to support equitable local/state implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)/Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) and enabling national platforms; foster investable climate resiliency activities in vulnerable communities.

How will these funds be invested?

Native-led Coalitions

- South Dakota Native Homeownership Coalition
- Mountain / Plains Regional Native CDFI Coalition
- Tribal Homeownership Coalition of the Southwest
- Montana Native Homeownership Coalition

Individual Organizations

- Individual Native-led and Native-serving 501(c)(3)s
- Native Community Development Financial Institutions
- Tribally Designated Housing Entities

CHECK POINT




YOUR GRANT PORTFOLIO

Your Grant Portfolio

What documents do you need on hand for grant writing?

- In general, a grant writer keeps some or more of the following documents on hand to make grant writing easier:
 - Mission & Vision Statements
 - Strategic Plan
 - Needs Assessments, Surveys, Letters of Support
 - Staff Information – org charts, resumes, etc.
 - Statement of Organizational Capacity – how do we know your organization can administer this funding?
 - Financials, 990, Up-to-Date Expenses & Audits
 - Project Specific:
 - Project Description & Intended Outcomes
 - Project Budget & Estimates



Join us on **March 20**
to learn more about what
type of financial documents
TDHEs and other
organizations *without* 990s
can submit for compliance
for the Invest Native
opportunity with the
Wells Fargo Foundation!



FINDING & READING NOFOS

Finding Notifications of Funding Opportunities

Be prepared to type your responses in the chat!

- What portals do you use to find grants?
 - Benefit of a paid subscription?
 - Newsletters? Webinars?
- Personal Relationships
- Where else have you found grant information useful to you?



To become more involved with the Wells Fargo Foundation, please reach out to your Community Relations Leads:

Cristina Castro-Matukewicz
cristina.v.castro-matukewicz@wellsfargo.com
Senior Vice President, Community Relations
South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska

Katie Rollyson
katie.m.rollyson@wellsfargo.com
Senior Specialist
Montana, Wyoming, Alaska, Hawaii

Lauren Hornett
lauren.hornett@wellsfargo.com
VP, Lead Community Impact Specialist
New Mexico, Idaho

Katie Campana
kathryn.campana@wellsfargo.com
Lead Specialist
Arizona



Reading NOFOs

Notice of Funding Opportunities

- Never be afraid to reach out to the grant maker with questions
 - Look for office hours and attend webinars – grant makers pay attention to who shows up!
- Read entire NOFO through at least once before starting the application process.
 - Print it out – highlight and write on it!
- Refer back to the NOFO frequently.
 - Sometimes it's advantageous to pick out language from the NOFO, and reuse it (ACCURATELY) in your application.
- Reading the Invest Native NOFO:
 - Confirm eligibility
 - Native-led/Native-serving
 - TDHE, Native CDFI, or 501c3
 - Confirm Funding Theme Alignment
 - Housing
 - Small Business
 - Financial
 - Climate Sustainability
 - Confirm Project Type
 - Capacity Building
 - Programming

CHECK POINT



GRANT NARRATIVE

Common Mistakes

Found in previous rounds of Invest Native & other funding opportunities

- Not enough background information & verbose writing at the expense of detail. Last year:
 - Community Voice & Need lacked high degree of detail; please answer all parts of question.
 - Relevant staff - don't focus heavily on executive leadership, and not discuss the staff executing the project
 - Lots of general advocacy to invest in Native-led orgs in your field, but why your organization & project?
- Give a good sense of how and why the money will be spent
- Many applicants assumed that all reviewers are familiar with project and organization – instead assume that reviewers have no knowledge of your work
- Some projects lacked clarity in grant narrative, which made it seem like the project lacked direction; when discussing multiple activity streams, provide an explanation of the connection to the funding requested.
- Is the project even feasible?
 - Need more concrete, realistic action steps instead of hypothetical.
 - If working on a very fast timeline or a larger scale, explain orgs capacity to execute
 - Deliverables & outcomes should be realistic in term of performance
 - Successes should be related to your ability to get this done
- Narrative needs to relate to budget – talking about housing development in narrative, but providing a budget for unrelated expenses is unlikely to receive funding
- Take extra time to re-read and make cohesive; if copy and pasting from other applications, take time to specialize your content to the Invest Native goals and language.

What's a best practice?

What could be improved?

Letter of Interest: Project Description (Housing Access & Affordability)

The cost of housing for college students is too high, creating barriers to access for youth who are first-generation college students, grew up with lower income households, or must leave the reservation to receive a quality education. In Casper, WY - the nearby metropolitan area to our services - average student rent for a shared space is approximately \$750/month. Our "Modernizing the Mobile Home" project will transform donated vans and campers into adequate housing for Tribal youth to utilize during the school year. With Wells Fargo funding, we hope to purchase a lot nearby several local universities so that Tribal youth will have a safe place to park their Modern Mobiles, as well as develop some communal spaces such as a kitchen, small laundry, and covered gathering space. Our organization is leveraging a forgivable infrastructure loan from the local municipality for water utility access, we will charge \$50-\$100/month in rent to cover ongoing maintenance costs, and we are partnering with the Hardware Store Foundation to cover rehab costs of the donated vans and campers (\$10,000/camper). With this one lot, we hope to house 8 Tribal youth and their Modern Mobiles; with the success of this project, we are eager to develop additional lots for this purpose. [207 words]



Practice Grant

Organization – Mo's Modern Mobiles

Mandatory Grant Narrative: Community Voice & Need

We collect a lot of data from different sources, and we try to do it as frequently as we can because we value the opinions of our community members. Community members are very involved with planning for new programs as including their perspective is one of our greatest priorities. Our most recent data is showing that our community needs more housing, both on- and off-reservation, and we made sure to get as many community members as possible to give us their guidance, making sure the community's voice always guides our programming. This project will help Tribal youth with affordable housing – we made sure to include this demographic in planning.

Questions to Guide Improvement:

1. What type of data was collected and from what sources? How frequent is frequent? What specific roles do community members play in planning? What type of housing is needed? How can you connect the dots further between the need and what the project will support?
2. Where is there unnecessary detail? What type of details would be useful to add?
3. Did you get a good sense of what actual need is being filled by this project? Why or why not?

CHECK POINT



STORYTELLING WITH DATA

Where do we get our data for grant writing?

Quantitative & Qualitative

- Census Data
 - Challenges on Tribal Lands
- State & Regional Reports & Plans
- Tribal government/organization Needs Assessments
- Service data from your organization and if relevant, partner organizations
- Surveys collected by your organization
 - Entry & Exit Surveys
 - Subject Specific Surveys
 - WARNING: Survey Fatigue
- Anecdotal Evidence
 - Make sure your data is relevant to your ask
 - Providing detailed information about your homelessness programming and then asking for funds to build single-family homeownership units might confuse some reviewers.
 - Don't allow a slip in scope because you don't have the correct data
 - If you don't have a lot of data to support your current ask, share one or two sentences about how you'll collect data to measure success and future needs.
 - This is a great opportunity to use surveys and anecdotal evidence!

Resources to Help with Surveys & Assessments:

[Visioning | Native Housing Developers Guide \(enterprisecommunity.org\)](https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/visioning-native-housing-developers-guide)

[Assessing Tribal Members' Needs | Enhancing and Implementing Homeownership Programs in Native Communities \(enterprisecommunity.org\)](https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/assessing-tribal-members-needs-enhancing-and-implementing-homeownership-programs-in-native-communities)

What is storytelling in grant writing?

And how do we make sure it is still data-driven?

- Storytelling with Data can be a tricky balance.
 - Limited emotional adjectives
 - No unrelated data
 - Avoiding generalized information about your type of work
- Rely on the experiences of your community to tell the story.

For example, on a small business project...

National studies show that micro-financing for small business creates life-changing outcomes; a survey of finance recipients completed by the New York Times shows that a majority of participants were able to grow their business by at least 10%.

...is a less strong statement than...

A recent community survey indicated that 45 out of 60 small business owners on reservation could benefit from micro-financing opportunities. Anecdotal evidence from these community members show that the most common uses of micro-financing would be building improvements, replacing old equipment and end-of-life physical assets, and investing in inventory with the intention of growing sales. These business owners estimated that micro-financing of \$10k would grow their net profits by 2-3% within the first year.



CHECK POINT



SNEAK PEAK

Grant Writing 201

Demystify your budgets and timelines!

- To help applicants and reviewers, the Invest Native team has developed **Budget & Timeline templates** that **MUST** be submitted with a Full Application.
- Join us on **February 21** to review our template.
 - We'll provide an overview of its function and parts.
 - Wells Fargo and Enterprise staff will be able to answer any questions you may have.
- This template was designed to be usable with other grant opportunities. While we're focusing on Invest Native, non-eligible organizations are welcome to attend and learn how to use this free tool.





SAVE-THE-DATE

National Tribal Housing Ecosystem Summit

August 27-29, 2024

Boise, Idaho

National Tribal Housing Ecosystem Summit

.....
**Uniting Voices
Across Tribal
Community**
.....

**AUGUST 27-29, 2024
BOISE CENTRE
BOISE, IDAHO**

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FINISH LINE

Thank You

