



NEWS RELEASE

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SBA Administrator Announces New Economic Development Plan for Native American Small Business Owners

SBA and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute Enter into Agreement to Provide Business and Development Tools to Tribal Communities

WASHINGTON – Hector V. Barreto, Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration, today announced a new agency initiative to provide the nation's Native American communities with economic development services and small business opportunities for the most disadvantaged tribal areas.

The SBA and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) have entered into an interagency agreement to increase Native American participation in the SBA's entrepreneurial development programs.

"The SBA is committed to building working relationships with tribal communities and the public/private sector that support and spur economic growth for Native Americans," said Barreto. "The development of Native American-owned small businesses is paramount to the lifeblood of tribal communities. SIPI is known for its academic strides at improving the economic and social quality of life in tribal nations."

SIPI will receive \$513,000 to develop and implement a small business development training program for Native American small businesses by customizing the SBA's programs and services to meet the needs of tribal small business communities. The training program will include sessions on how to start and grow a small business. They will be conducted in reservation communities across the country to reach the most isolated tribal areas of Native American small business owners.

"We are extremely pleased to have this opportunity to play a key role in tribal economic and small business development," said SIPI's Board of Regents Chairman Francis Tafoya. "A major goal of the Board of Regents is to support SIPI in establishing quality working relationships with tribal nations. I am particularly pleased with what this opportunity can mean for Southwest tribes and American Indians throughout the country."

SIPI President, Dr. Joseph Martin added: "There are few higher education institutions intended to serve Indian people in the country with brighter prospects than Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute. This opportunity allows SIPI to work closely with tribes in meeting their business and development training needs. This initiative will fit well with a new tribal leadership curriculum we are in the process of developing."

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SIPI, a two-year tribal college providing technical and higher education opportunities to American Indian and Alaskan Native students, is funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of Interior. The fully accredited institute is seen by American Indian and Alaska Native communities throughout the United States as a partner in the efforts of their communities to be economically competitive, culturally enriched and socially cohesive.

The SBA's Office of Native American Affairs coordinates and directs agency-wide programs to promote, expand and enhance small business opportunities and services for Native Americans and tribal governments.

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