



Best Practices in Impact Tracking

The CDFI Fund's Capacity Building Initiative
Building Native CDFIs' Sustainability and Impact II (BNCSI II)



SWEET GRASS
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Module 1 – Course Overview

This three-day workshop – ***Best Practices in Impact Tracking*** – is designed to help Native Community Development Financial Institutions (Native CDFIs) gain a stronger understanding of impact tracking (also referred to as an impact measurement system) to help support organizational sustainability and growth. The workshop is designed to be both informational and interactive in order to maximize participant learning. Trainers will share industry best practices around impact measurement, as well as encourage participants to share their real-life experiences.

Day One of the course will provide an overview of impact measurement systems (IMS), including outlining the steps in the process, what questions to answer, and how to develop impact goals that are realistic and measurable. Case studies from partner Native CDFIs will be shared to highlight best practices and provide inspiration for developing an impact tracking matrix and workplan.

Day Two will build on the first day's efforts of defining goals for each participating Native CDFI. This day's activities will focus on understanding how outcomes, metrics, and tools work together to define an impact matrix. Additional case studies from partner Native CDFIs will be shared.

Day Three will conclude the training by defining the reporting structure of the impact matrix. Topics explored will include defining what reports are needed for which stakeholders, identifying the right data to tell the story, determining how to best analyze data, and using software to your advantage. Final case studies from partner Native CDFIs will be shared.

Utilizing examples from other Native CDFIs, group discussions, peer sharing and feedback, along with interactive worksheet and work plan activities, this course is structured to provide participants with the beginnings of a functioning IMS and the tools to complete and implement that IMS after the workshop. It will provide an opportunity for participants to develop and expand their IMS expertise which will allow them to develop an impact matrix and implement best practices within their own organizations.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the training, participants should be able to:

1. Develop an impact matrix for their work
2. Implement best practices for impact measurement
3. Describe collaborative approaches to data tracking

Module 2 – Impact Measurement 101

Useful Definitions

Before even getting started with the basics of impact measurement defining common terms is necessary. There is a lot of jargon in the world of impact measurement and many use similar terms with different meaning. In order to understand this manual, definitions of commonly used terms are provided with examples and context as needed. These definitions should be referred to while utilizing the resources in this manual.

Data: The information produced by all of the activities/programs of an organization. Data can range from the number of hours an employee works to the number of loans deployed to the racial makeup of an organization's board members. ALL information about an organization and its activities/programs is data in the impact measurement world.

Qualitative Data: Data that can be collected or captured in text form. Useful for determining how and why. Examples include race and a client's answer to the question: "how satisfied are you with your current budget?" Qualitative data can be grouped into categories for analysis (categorical data). These categories can sometimes be given a numerical code (aka nominal data). For example, a scaled question (ex: how strongly does a person agree or disagree on a scale of 1-5 with a statement) is qualitative data that is organized into categories (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree) which can be assigned a numerical code (5-strongly agree, 4-agree, 3-neither agree nor disagree, 2-disagree, 1-strongly disagree).

Quantitative Data: Data that can be collected or captured in number form. Useful for determining what, who, and when. Examples include age and amount of loans closed.

Metrics: The data an organization chooses to measure and track that assesses their performance and ability to meet their impact goals.

Outputs: Direct products of activities/programs. Examples include the number of training attendees, the number of hours provided in technical assistance, the number of loans closed, and the total amount of loans closed. Outputs are a type of metric. This is in contrast to the outcomes of these activities.

Impact Goal: A long-term goal of the change an organization wants to see happen due to their activities/programs.

Impact: Change occurring due to an organization's activities/programs.

Impact Matrix: A roadmap depicting and connecting your impact goals, outcomes, indicators, and metrics.

Impact Measurement System: A system designed to set goals, collect data, and report to how much and what kinds of changes are occurring due to an organization's activities/programs.

Logic Model: A graphic depiction (road map) that presents the shared relationships among the resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact for your CDFI.

Theory of Change: A comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It is focused in particular on mapping out the relationship between a program or change and how these lead to desired goals being achieved.

Impact Measurement System Overview

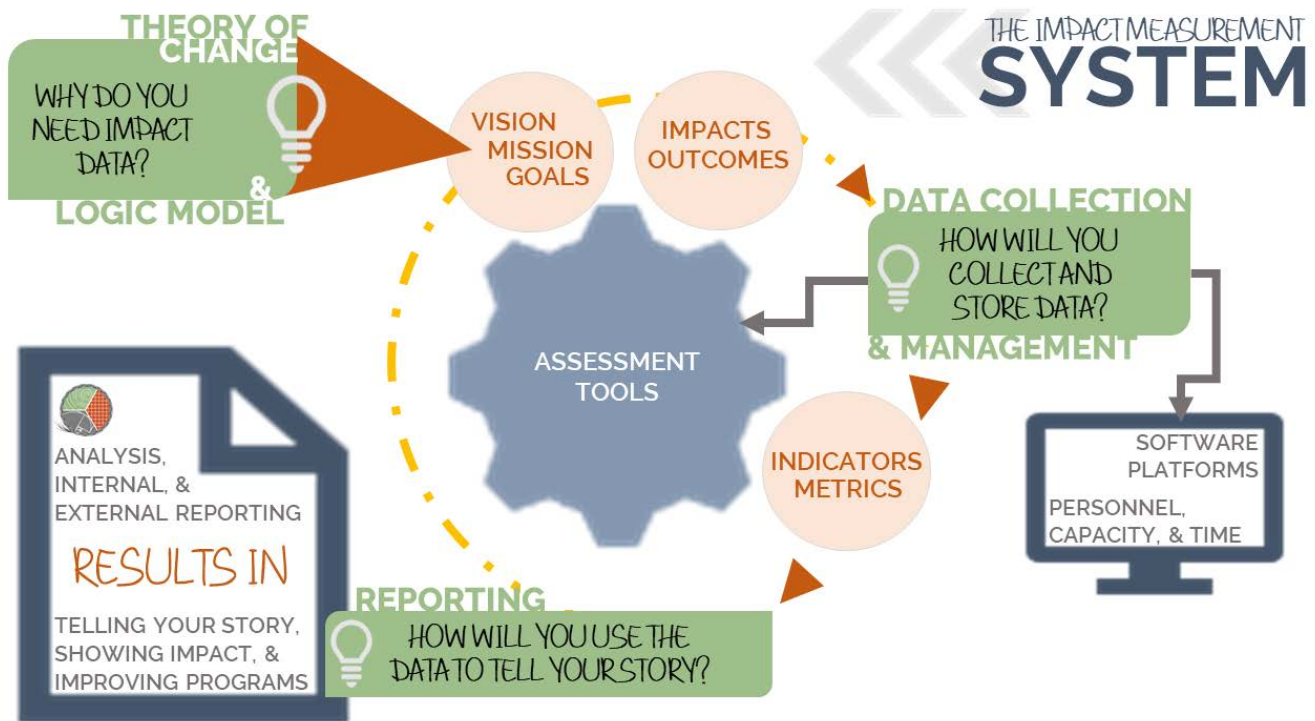
We set the groundwork by explaining an impact measurement system using the guiding questions of:

1. Why do you need impact data?
2. How will you collect and store data?
3. How will you use the data to tell your story?

The graphic on the next page highlights the major components of any impact measurement system. Impact measurement systems start by exploring why impact data is needed, which then helps define what data needs to be collected. Many organizations use tools such as a theory of change, logic model, and/or impact matrix to document their effort in defining the components of an impact measurement system. Most of these documents work first to define impact goals, then to break those goals down into outcomes, which leads to developing indicators from metrics to measure progress towards outcomes, and thus to the impact goals. This process is never linear, always evolving, and necessarily iterative. Modules 4, 5, and 8 detail the processes for defining why and what impact data you need.

After defining why, and what, data is needed the next step is to work on data collection and management (aka. "how will you collect and store data?"). This important aspects of this process include, first, developing tools, utilizing a variety of data collection methods, to collect data from a variety of stakeholders and participants. The next important aspect is choosing software that fits your collection, management, analysis, and reporting needs. Modules 10 and 13 go into detail on these processes.

The final aspect of an impact measurement system is analysis and reporting, or "how will you use the data to tell your story?" During this phase of the development of an impact measurement plan the cyclical process becomes more clear. By defining clear impact goals and outcomes and connecting all data you track and measure back to these outcomes and impact goals, reporting becomes much easier as the road map has been designed. In addition to using this road map, there are considerations for reporting that range from telling stories to different stakeholders, types of data analyses, and communicating effectively. The details of these considerations are discussed in Module 13.



Impact measurement systems (IMS) are not created overnight. The process can take years depending on the size and capacity of the organization. The resources provided here are intended to provide guidance in starting an impact measurement system and in understand the steps involved in the process.

Example Story of Success

A good way to get started in understanding some of the processes of developing an impact measurement system, and the benefits of doing so, is to explore an example. We start with a story of success from a Native CDFI:

About a year ago a client came into our Native CDFI to inquire about our services. We had them complete an inquiry form indicating their interest in a home loan. We had a conversation with this client and helped them complete their loan application. We pulled their credit and found an auto loan with an extremely high interest rate. Our coach worked with the client to help educate them on predatory lending and to work on a budget to help them to save to purchase their home. We also helped them apply for a debt consolidation loan which they used to pay off their high interest auto loan. Nine months later the client had paid off their debt consolidation loan and was able to reapply for the home loan. They are so happy to be living in

their new home on their family's land. This was all due to our help in increasing their financial knowledge and in providing the right loan products for their needs!

Many Native CDFIs have similar stories of success and use them frequently to report their effects to their community and funders. These stories are integral to the impact measurement system. We can use these stories of success to think about the outcomes of our work as well as the impact goals we want to set for our organizations.

If we take a closer look at the story of success above, we can start to see examples of outcomes that the client has experienced due to participating in this CDFI's programs and services. Some examples of outcomes from this story of impact include an:

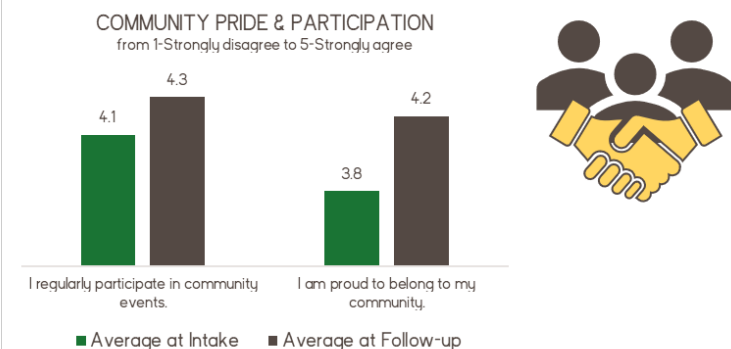
1. Improved debt to income ratio
2. Increase in savings
3. Improved housing situation
4. Increase in knowledge and confidence of budgeting, savings, and predatory lending
5. Increase in pride in their community and home

You can then take these examples and explore them further within the framework of an impact measurement system. If these five examples are our outcomes, we would need to consider what metrics we would need to collect and track data on and when and where we would do that. The table below provides some examples of where and when we might collect the metrics to speak to these outcomes:

Outcome	Where to Collect	When to Collect
Improved DTI ratio	Personal balance sheet	Collected at intake and at yearly follow-up
Increased savings	Personal financial statement	Collected at intake and at yearly follow-up
Improved housing situation	Core program application and personal follow-up	Collected at intake and at yearly follow-up
Increased knowledge and confidence of budgeting, saving, and predatory lending	Core program application, personal follow-up, training pre/post	Collected at intake, at training, and at yearly follow-up
Increased pride in community and home	Core program application and personal follow-up	Collected at intake and at yearly follow-up

The final exercise in this example success story is to think about reporting. If we were able to collect the data to speak to the outcomes in the table above, we could produce some of the following graphics (below) in a report.

COMMUNITY PRIDE & PARTICIPATION



FINANCIAL CAPABILITIES

SAVINGS

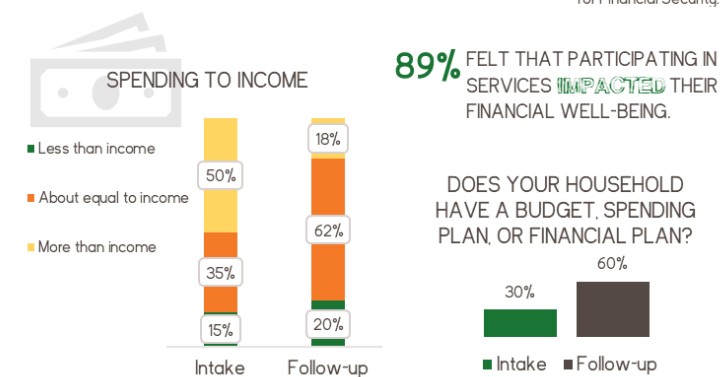
TOTAL AMOUNT SAVED BY ALL CLIENTS INCREASED FROM
\$58,253 AT INTAKE TO
\$92,147 AT FOLLOW-UP



135 SAVINGS ACCOUNTS WERE OPENED OR RETAINED IN THE LAST YEAR. AMOUNT IN SAVINGS INCREASED BY AN AVERAGE OF **\$960**

BUDGETING & SPENDING FINANCIAL CAPABILITIES

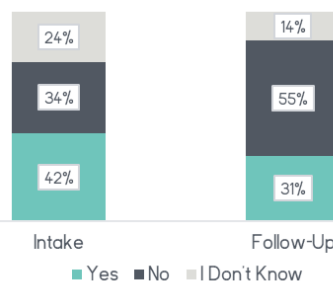
Data can be compared nationally to any organization collecting data using the Financial Capability Scale by the Center for Financial Security.



LOANS & SERVICES

PREDATORY LENDING & SERVICES

UTILIZED PREDATORY LOANS IN THE PAST 5 YEARS



PAWN SHOP, CHECK CASHING SERVICES, MONEY ORDER, AND PAYCHECK ADVANCE USAGE DECREASED

BY **53%** FROM
INTAKE TO FOLLOW-UP

The process of this sample success story shows us how we can go from a story of impact to telling a story about the impact of our organization on all of our clients. You too are able to accomplish this by developing and implementing a complete impact measurement system. The rest of this manual details the steps needed to develop and implement your impact measurement system while also highlighting case studies from partner CDFIs and best practices from the industry.



Module 3 – Scenario and Best Practice #1

Scenario – First American Capital Corporation

First American Capital Corporation (FACC), located outside of Milwaukee, serves Native Americans throughout the state of Wisconsin. In 2015, FACC started their IMS journey. They worked with a consultant to develop a logic model and theory of change based on their mission.

These two documents set the goals and outcomes that FACC wanted to achieve. They also detailed the specific metrics that would need to be tracked in order to determine if those outcomes were being accomplished. These documents, and FACC's associated data collection efforts, have allowed them to continue to receive funding by enabling them to report their impact in a clear and streamlined way. They not only report this information to funders, but also to their clients and other key stakeholders.

Best Practice #1: Identify What You Need and Why

It is critical to determine which outcomes and associated impact goals are important to the organization as the impact measurement system is developed and refined. Collecting data, although essential to developing an impact measurement system, can be time-consuming and difficult, even when an organization uses effective tools and is committed to the process. It is better to collect information and regularly perform evaluations on a few things *well* than to focus on many things *ineffectually*. Tracking and measuring data can be important to your organization for a variety of reasons, including:

- To provide information needed for funding applications and/or funder reporting;
- To determine if your programs and services are successful; and
- To evaluate how well an organization is accomplishing its mission.

Once an organization knows the data it wants to collect (by utilizing the resources in this manual), it can then focus on *how to get that data*. In some cases, organizations can skip lengthy data collection processes by checking if any of the information is publicly available or accessible through partners via data sharing agreements.

While an organization might need to collect the associated outcomes for a variety of reasons, it is critical that the overall impact matrix resonates with your community and the larger goals of your work. This means using culturally sensitive/appropriate measures, language, and data collection processes. Determining what is culturally sensitive/appropriate can be difficult and is specific to each Native CDFI and each specific Tribal culture. We suggest starting with the Native CDFI impact matrix since it was developed by and for Native CDFIs, and then reviewing the matrix within your own organization. We have also seen Native CDFIs utilizing the review and advice of respected cultural leaders in their communities.

Module 4 – Goal Setting

What is an Impact Goal?

As discussed in Module 2, the first step in defining an IMS is to identify your impact goals. An impact goal is a long-term goal of the change an organization wants to see happen due to their activities/programs. Impact goals should help to answer the question: “why do you need impact data?” While answering this question you will recognize the importance of stakeholder groups (such as your board, your funders, your clients, the community, and your staff) and the value of connecting metrics (questions on forms) to your impact goals.

Impact Goals Idea Bank Exercise

Defining impact goals is easier said than done. Defining impact goals can happen in a variety of ways. The process below walks through five different approaches to determining impact goals. By completing the worksheet in **Appendix A**, you will end up with 3-4 impact goals to guide the development of your impact measurement system. A complete idea bank is shown on the next page for reference when completing your own idea bank.

Exercise One: Impacts from a Story of Impact

1. Write down three impact stories about your organization that highlight different impacts or programs/services.
2. Then identify the data points within those stories.
3. Finally, group together the data points into three (or four) categories based on their topics.

Reference the table on the next page.

EXAMPLE - IMPACT GOALS IDEA BANK

IMPACT STORY	DATA POINTS
Two years ago, Shelly and her husband applied for a home mortgage but upon receiving their application and pulling their credit report, we found out that their credit was too low. They got a credit builder loan and took a financial education class. Over the next six months they paid off their credit builder loan and reapplied for a home loan, for which they were now qualified. They are now happily living in their first home on their family's land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and \$ of mortgages • Increase in credit score • # and \$ of credit builder loans • Change in home situation • Increase in knowledge of loan process • Increase knowledge of budgeting and saving
Danny, a 12-year old aspiring entrepreneur in our community, started a matched savings account with us last year. He took a youth financial literacy course and has been making monthly deposits for six months. After six months, his grandma and auntie attended an adult financial literacy class and now the whole family is able to save more by cutting a few expenses and building a budget that fits their family. In the last year, this education we provided allowed this family to support their relative who recently experienced a loss.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth participation in programs • # and \$ of YSA • # of participants in financial literacy training • Increase youth financial wellness • Increase knowledge of financial literacy • Increase in household income • Increase in ability to save • Increase in youth entrepreneurship

We've been working with Red Stripe Construction, a small construction firm, for five years now. They've attended a business planning training and we've provided them with 10 hours of one-on-one TA. They've now come back for an expansion loan to purchase equipment. After receiving the expansion loan, they operated for 3 years and have now applied for an operating capital loan from a mainstream bank. They received that loan and are now able to sponsor local events in their community.

- Increase in business knowledge & sustainability
- # of business plans developed
- # of participants in business training
- Increase in employment
- Increase in business revenue
- # an \$ of business loans

CATEGORY 1	CATEGORY 2	CATEGORY 3
WEALTH CREATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and \$ of mortgages • # and \$ of credit builder loans • Increase knowledge of budgeting and saving 	SUSTAINABILITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in home situation • Increase in knowledge of loan process 	FINANCIAL WELLNESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in credit score • Increase in knowledge of loan process • Youth participation in programs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #and \$ of business loans • Increase in employment • Increase in business revenue • Increase in household income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in business knowledge • # of business plans development • # of participants in business training • Increase in business sustainability • Increase in ability to save 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and \$ of YSA • Increase in youth financial wellness • # of participants in financial literacy training • Increase in youth entrepreneurship
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Exercise Two: In Fifteen Years...

Another option for populating your impact goals is to answer the following question three different times, trying to encompass everything that your organization does: “In fifteen years, what are three big picture changes you’ve made in your community (or in your target market)?” See the completed example below.

EXAMPLE - IMPACT GOALS IDEA BANK
IN FIFTEEN YEARS, WHAT ARE THREE BIG PICTURE CHANGES YOU’VE MADE IN YOUR COMMUNITY (OR IN YOUR TARGET MARKET)?
WE’VE... ...increased wealth
WE’VE... ...supported a thriving native-owned business economy
WE’VE... ...empowered individuals to be self-sufficient

Exercise Three: From Mission

First, write down your mission. Then, break your mission down into 3-4 changes or results that you want to see or promised to your community through your mission. See the completed example below.

EXAMPLE - IMPACT GOALS IDEA BANK	
WRITE DOWN YOUR MISSION. WHAT 3-4 CHANGES/RESULTS DO YOU PROMISE IN YOUR MISSION?	
MISSION: Our mission is to remove the barriers that exist in Indian Country that prohibit the flow of capital and credit. We address the critical needs in native communities related to the growth of family assets and sustainable economic development.	
CHANGE/RESULT Business growth and sustainability in Indian country	CHANGE/RESULT Less reliance on tribal and federal government

CHANGE/RESULT Personal asset creation	CHANGE/RESULT Decrease in use of predatory lending
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Exercise Four: From Programs and Services

List your programs and services. Then answer the question: “if they are successful, what happens for your clients?” See the completed example below.

EXAMPLE - IMPACT GOALS IDEA BANK	
LIST YOUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES. IF THEY ARE SUCCESSFUL, WHAT HAPPENS FOR YOUR CLIENTS?	
OUR PROGRAMS/SERVICES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matched Savings Account • Financial Literacy Training • Credit Builder Loans • Mortgages • Small & Micro Business Loans 	
SUCCESS MEANS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy households – financially, physically, mentally, spiritually • Economic self-sufficiency • Community connectedness • Individual empowerment 	

Exercise Five: From Funders

Consider your funders and what stories, success, and/or outcomes did you promise to your funders in your grant proposals and agreements? See the completed example below.

EXAMPLE - IMPACT GOALS IDEA BANK	
WHAT STORIES, SUCCESS, AND/OR OUTCOMES DID YOU PROMISE YOUR FUNDERS?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in personal bankability • Confidence in financial abilities • Economic growth • Increase in business revenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in # of jobs • Positive changes in client’s financial capabilities

- Increase in owner take-away

- Increase in the number of youth who gain financial skills

The final step of this effort to bring it all together by defining three succinct, yet comprehensive impact goals. A complete impact goals worksheet is shown below for reference when completing your own impact goals worksheet, which you can find in **Appendix B**.

EXAMPLE - IMPACT GOALS WORKSHEET

IMPACT GOAL ONE:

WEALTH CREATION

IMPACT GOAL TWO:

FINANCIAL WELLNESS

IMPACT GOAL THREE:

SUSTAINABILITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Some examples of impact goals commonly used by Native CDFIs are listed below for your reference.

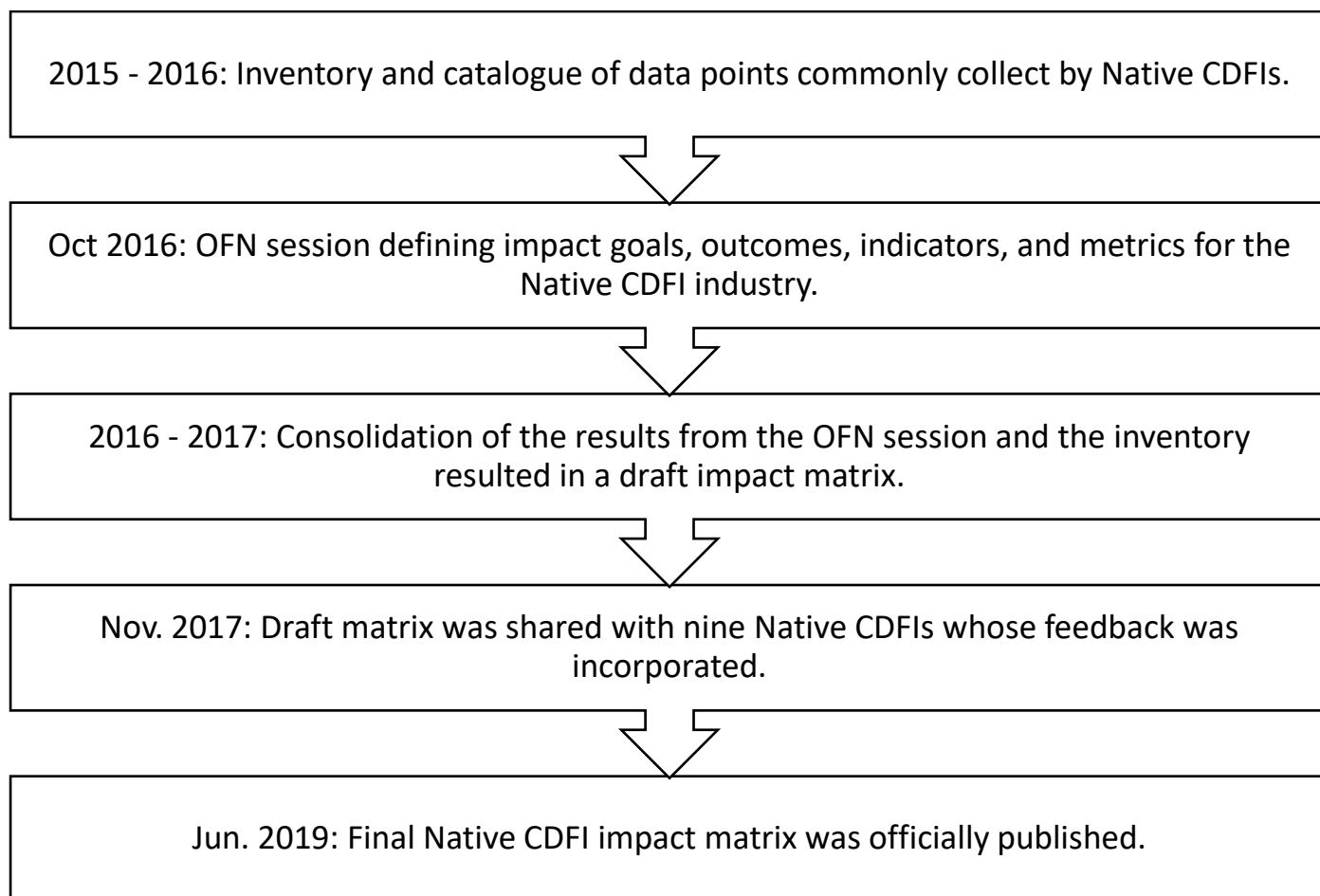
- Wealth creation
- Individual self-sufficiency
- Sovereignty
- Whole person wellness
- Seventh generation transformation
- Economic opportunity
- Financial capacity and assets
- Thriving native-owned business economy
- Homeownership for our families
- Community success

Module 5 – Organizing Your Efforts

One of the key components in developing an impact measurement system is the development of an impact matrix, which details impact goals, outcomes, indicators, metrics, and tools. A resource in developing an impact matrix is the Native CDFI Impact Matrix (see **Appendix C**). The Native CDFI impact matrix was developed for and by Native CDFIs to take some of the leg work out of developing an impact matrix that is individualized to the organization. It should be thought of as a template to be used when developing your individual organization's impact matrix. It is important to first understand how the matrix was made and how to use it before building off of it for organization-specific impact measurement.

The Native CDFI Impact Matrix – How it came to be

There were many steps taken in creating a shared impact matrix for Native CDFIs, but the basic process is outlined below. The key is that the matrix was developed by the industry in a participatory process. The intention of that effort was to develop a tool which would serve as a resource for Native CDFIs in many different arenas, but especially when developing an impact measurement system.



How to Use the Impact Matrix

The impact matrix was designed to be used as a guiding document for the collection, analysis, and reporting of data for Native CDFIs. This matrix was not designed to work in conjunction with or serve as a replacement for similar impact work done by other entities (such as the metrics required or suggested by the CDFI Fund, AERIS, and OFN). Additionally, this matrix is not intended to speak to the requirements of all funders and communities to which Native CDFIs need to report.

There are five impact goals of the impact matrix: wealth creation, individual empowerment and self-sufficiency, sovereignty, whole person wellness, and 7th generation transformation. Under each of these impact goals, there are four columns (refer to the impact matrix table in **Appendix C.**) that break down into more detail as you move from left to right in the table. From the left, each row starts with the outcomes. For each outcome, at least one indicator is described. These indicators specify what needs to be measured in order to prove that the outcome within that impact goal is being affected. After the indicators, additional definitions, as needed, are provided. The final column includes the suggested questions (aka. metrics) and/or tools for collecting the data to support the indicators which connect to the outcomes. The outcomes together then tell a story about each impact goal. All of the impact goals together then tell the compelling story of each individual Native CDFI, and of the Native CDFI industry.

Module 6 – Scenario and Best Practice #2 and #3

Scenario – NiiJii Capital Partners, Inc.

As a smaller shop, NiiJii Capital Partners (NJCP) works closely with each individual client to ensure that their needs are met and that they build a personal relationship. They work closely by providing one-on-one technical assistance throughout the loan process with their clients. During these sessions they are able to address the specific needs and situation of that individual client. This attention helps them in developing a lasting relationship with that client and ensures the success of their clients. This relationship also enables NJCP to continue to engage with and learn from their clients over time. As NJCP implemented their impact measurement efforts they were able to easily integrate these processes into the relationship building process with their clients. They were able to explain the purpose of their efforts and what that means for the client. During their one-on-one sessions they are able to answer any questions the clients have and explain anything they are uncomfortable with.

Best Practice #2: Evaluation as Relationship Building

The Native CDFIs that excel at impact measurement are those that use evaluation as a *tool* to continue building relationships with their clients. This mindset—that all evaluation is an opportunity to both get to know and stay connected with the client—not only provides the best data, but also provides the richest results due to the investment in the life and success of the client. This mindset should be reflected in all areas of data collection. For example, a meaningful client intake process can be a bit lengthy, and clients often need help completing it. However, the CDFI staff member can use this as an opportunity to get to know the client, building a firm foundation for a long-term relationship.

To determine if a service created a long-term effect on a client’s life, organizations must do regular follow-up to capture change over time. Following up with clients can be time-consuming and expensive. However, setting the expectation for follow-up is critical to ensuring client response, as discussed in more detail in Best Practice #7. Most Native CDFIs find doing an annual follow-up at the same time each year to be the easiest way to accomplish this task.

The reasons for conducting annual follow-ups include:

1. Clients can learn to expect, and even look forward to, the annual follow-up;
2. It requires less tracking of individual clients than a “rolling” follow-up process (for example, based on program participation); and
3. It can be scheduled at a convenient time of the year for your staff.

Follow-up can be conducted in a variety of ways, such as emailed surveys or phone calls. In general, most emailed follow-up surveys have low response rates, even when tied to incentives or compliance

requirements. Because of this, if possible, invest in a staff person calling former clients for follow-up, even if it's only a smaller subset of your client base. This will often lead to renewed engagement with the CDFI, as the client gets to share a bit of their life and needs at a more personal level than email communication evokes. The collection method you utilize will depend on the number of clients you need/want to reach, availability of staff to collect data, and the availability of your clients. For example, if you have a large number of clients it may be unreasonable to schedule phone calls with each of them and so you would likely have more success in either sending an email survey or doing phone interviews, along with an email survey, with a select number of clients. Staff availability is also a determining factor in the collection method as you are more likely to be able to conduct phone interviews if your staff have more time. Many organizations utilize an intern to conduct phone interviews which can help offset this issue. Finally, the availability of your clients also plays a role in the data collection method you chose. For example, if your clients are mostly located in remote rural areas and have very little access to the internet an emailed survey wouldn't work as well.

Regardless of the collection method, data should be entered and stored in a system that makes sense for the Native CDFI (instead of sitting on paper forms in paper files), so that it can be used regularly in reporting and information sharing.

Some groups even tie annual follow-up to an in-person event by inviting previous clients to come together in focus groups, interviews, or discussions. This also creates an opportunity to have everyone fill out a follow-up survey while they are gathered together. Bringing clients together in this way can make them feel more comfortable, and they can even bounce ideas off one another.

Best Practice #3: Streamline Existing Processes

Very few Native CDFIs start an impact measurement system with nothing in place. Many times, data has been collected and stored in a variety of computer software programs and file cabinets. In addition, usually a mission statement and goals have often been defined, and/or forms have been created prior to the development of the system. This prior work should be seen as an asset and built upon. Any existing systems should be integrated with new systems as much as possible. Not only should old and new systems be combined, but as many of the new or current system features should be used as possible.

For example, many loan systems, such as DownHome Loan Manager, have loan origination and servicing components. However, DownHome also has integration abilities with QuickBooks, the Small Business Administration, The Opportunity Through Impacts System (OTIS), and the CDFI Fund, to name a few. It also has add-on features for tracking both impact and technical assistance. Many other software programs have similar features, which may help your organization streamline processes into one system.

Another key component of streamlining is always being flexible and responsive to changes and updates in technology. Software features that exist today will change quickly, many times for the better. Native CDFIs should try to be adaptive to these changes and updates in order to most efficiently meet the needs of their clients.

It can be incredibly difficult for staff to change from old systems, as team members gravitate toward dated Excel tables or other remnants of previous processes. Management must be 100% committed to the new processes before any changes can truly take root. Sometimes the simplest changes can have the largest impacts in streamlining processes, such as a supervisor reviewing documents only when they are stored in the correct place.

Module 7 – Stage I Work Plan

The first stage of the work planning process is to conduct a short impact measurement SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat) analysis. This SWOT analysis will then be used to create an action plan in order to ensure that each component of the SWOT is addressed or utilized appropriately. This workplan will provide each Native CDFI with a jumping off point for future work planning. The image below is an example of a completed SWOT analysis for reference and ideas. Use this example to complete your SWOT action plan handout, which you will find in **Appendix D**.

EXAMPLE - SWOT ACTION WORK PLAN				
SWOT TOPIC	WHAT	ACTION STEP	WHO	BY WHEN
STRENGTH	We have a data specialist.	Talk to our data specialist about her experience, what she needs to succeed, and provide her with training and resources.	Mary	Nov. 1
WEAKNESS	We don't collect follow-up data.	Develop a short follow-up data collection tool and corresponding SurveyMonkey survey. Raise money to provide a drawing for participating. Send to loan clients in January via email and snail mail.	Alyssa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nov. 30 – Develop Tool Dec. 10 – Build in Survey Monkey Jan. 5 – Send to Loan Clients
OPPORTUNITY	We know of a funder who is interested in impact measurement.	Reach out to the funder to request information about any grants or funding they provide for developing impact measurement systems. Also request any resources they have about impact measurement generally.	Andrea	Nov. 18
THREAT	Being able to make time for data entry.	Work on developing an office procedure in which all staff participate in a data entry (or other data related activity) every Friday from 9-9:30am. Build on the procedure over time.	Michael, then all staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedures by Nov. 1 Implement by Nov. 15

Module 8 – Defining Outcomes and Indicators for Goals

Once impact goals are developed, the next step of an IMS is to define outcomes and indicators for those impact goals. By working through the exercises in developing impact goals, an organization will have produced a long list of ideas in that process. That list is a good place to start when developing outcomes and indicators.

The “Impact Matrix Worksheet” (**Appendix E**) will be used to help define outcomes and indicators for each of your impact goals. The same essential process for defining outcomes should be followed when defining indicators. Each impact goal should have at least **one** outcome which helps to define, or break down, what that impact goal entails. Most impact goals will have between three and five outcomes in order to sufficiently track how and to what extent that impact goal is being met. Each outcome will also have between 3 and 5 indicators that break down the components of that outcome. For indicators, there are typically many more that you could track, but being as concise as possible is important.

There are several points to keep in mind when selecting the correct indicators, which will then help guide the selection of metrics:

Think about accountability. What can your organization *actually* effect in a client’s journey and what do you *want* to take credit for influencing in the life of a client?

Be sure to speak to industry standards while also highlighting unique approaches or services your organization offers. Using the Native CDFI impact matrix can help make this process easier but don’t be afraid to be creative as unique indicators can help propel the field and entice new funders.

Take the perspective of your clients. Your clients are ultimately going to be providing you with a good deal of the data you need to document your work so respecting their time by only collecting the data that you really need to tell your most impactful story is an important consideration. This is also why your IMS is ever-changing and should be revisited regularly.

Impact Matrix Worksheet Exercise: Outcomes and Indicators

There is not necessarily a right or wrong way to start defining your outcomes and indicators. Some people find it easier to define indicators first while others find it easier to define outcomes first. Just remember, outcomes should break down your impact goals into 3-5 key areas and similarly indicators should break down each outcome into 3-5 key areas. The example on the next page, and the examples in the completed example impact matrix worksheet, will help you to understand how this happens. Please complete these steps for your organization in your impact matrix worksheet handout, which you will find in **Appendix E**.

IMPACT GOAL 3: Sustainability and Self-Sufficiency	
OUTCOMES	INDICATORS
Bankability	Decrease in use of predatory lending
	Increase in number of clients who have checking/savings account(s)
	Increase in knowledge of loan process
Less Reliance on Tribe	Decrease client's household in use of public benefits
Business Growth	Increase in sustainability of borrower business(es)
	Increase in the number of business loans
	Increase in the number of jobs provided by borrower business(es)

Module 9 – Scenario and Best Practice #4 and #5

Scenario – Wisconsin Native Loan Fund

An example of a Native CDFI that has been especially successful at identifying their impact measurement lead is the Wisconsin Native Loan Fund (WINLF), located in northern Wisconsin. WINLF started as a pilot organization for OTIS, and from the beginning, they recognized the importance of establishing one staff member dedicated to OTIS activities. Although they had some turnover in this position, they have always designated a staff member to OTIS, with support from the rest of the staff. Additionally, all WINLF staff are invested in, and understand the importance of, data collection and impact tracking. They communicate this to their clients and funders, and this leads to the success of their system. Overall, WINLF has successfully integrated OTIS into their routine by investing in the training of their staff and by assigning one person to be responsible for OTIS.

Best Practice #4: Create a Culture of Evaluation

One of the ways a Native CDFI can ensure success in their IMS is by creating a culture of evaluation and learning. This starts with leadership. If the leadership of an organization really understands and believes in the power of an IMS, this enthusiasm will flow into the rest of the organization. Organizations do this by integrating data and reporting into their regular, everyday activities.

For example, every time a staff member gives an activity or progress update this update can include progress towards meeting the outcomes applicable to their work. When reporting occurs, each staff member should be responsible for producing their own report and interpreting it as it relates to the organization's impact goals. When success stories are released, they should be accompanied by aggregated data that situates the story within the larger context of the organization's impact goals and outcomes.

When interacting with data, Native CDFIs should monitor and clean data while it is being entered. Data cleaning refers to the practice of examining your raw data to ensure that answers are consistent, spelled correctly, etc. For example, when reporting by state, ensure that all answers are of a similar style. Your reporting will be much easier if you don't have differences in answers like "South Dakota," "south dakota," "SD," or "Sth Dakota." Native CDFIs not only need to monitor and clean data, but they should also analyze and report this data internally on a regular basis. This allows Native CDFIs to better assess whether the data collected is useful and accurate, as well as whether programs and services are fully meeting each Native CDFI's outcomes and impact goals.

Analyzing and reporting data internally on a regular basis also allows Native CDFIs to better communicate their outcomes to all audiences, especially to funders, who are often interested in seeing how the impact measurement system has been used to improve programs and services.

Best Practice #5: Make an Individual Responsible while Ensuring Full Staff Buy-In

While valuable, implementing an IMS is a time-consuming and technology-based process. This means a Native CDFI must be prepared and able to invest significant time up front (at least 20 hours per week for the first three months) to make sure their new IMS is successful. While there will be no greater joy than sitting down to do some grant reporting and simply pushing “print report” once the data is fully integrated in the system, it might be six months to a year before the rewards are obvious to the entire staff.

Data collection and reporting is not a single person’s job. For an IMS to be fully effective, all staff and board members at the Native CDFI need to be supportive of and involved in some aspect of the system. For staff with less data and/or technology experience, there will be additional time and training investments needed to ensure they are comfortable with the new system. Although not all staff will be collecting data or entering it into the system, everyone should be involved in some way, in either the review process, data reporting, working with clients to understand forms, or in communicating results to funders and the community.

However, there does need to be **one** impact measurement lead who thoroughly understands the system and is held accountable for maintaining it. As the old adage goes, “everyone’s job is no one’s job.” If the IMS is based on storage in a database of some kind, this person needs to be passionate and invested in impact data conceptually and analytically.

Module 10 – Defining Metrics and Tools

Metrics

As you continue to develop your impact matrix, the next step is to define metrics and tools. Metrics are most easily understood as the data you choose to measure and track that assess your performance and ability to meet your indicators, outcomes, and impact goals. Practically, metrics are the questions on data collection tools. The data collection tools are typically applications and other forms that your clients complete as part of participating or receiving services from your CDFI. The “Impact Matrix Worksheet” (**Appendix E**) includes metrics and tools. These tools also include internal tracking mechanisms like mileage traveled for training (on a mileage reimbursement form), time spent on grant reports (on an admin time tracking tool), and event attendance by staff (on an event report form).

Outputs, Outcomes, Baseline, and Follow-up

The definition and use of outcomes, outputs, baseline, and follow-up data is important when considering metrics. The simplest way to understand these concepts is that an **output** is a type of metric and is defined as data that is the direct product of an activity or program. Many times, outputs would also be **baseline** metrics, in that they are collected for the first time, thus setting a baseline to compare to. **Outcome** data then is the same metric (an output) collected over time and compared to the same output during a different point in time. In other words, an outcome is the “so what” of an output. **Follow-up** data is a metric collected after the baseline metric and could be collected many times over the course of interaction with a client.

The table on the next page provides an example of the differences between outputs, outcomes, baseline, and follow-up.

METRIC TYPE STORY EXAMPLE

This year we closed 43 credit builder loans totaling \$542,246 which is an increase of 15% from last year. Of our credit builder clients, 63% were women with children under eight, and 98% were Chippewa. Their credit builder loans allowed them to build their credit by an average of 16 points and due to participating in classes, these participants increased their financial confidence and skills by 36% on average.

METRIC	EXPLANATION	BASELINE	FOLLOW-UP	OUTPUT	OUTCOME
43 loans \$542,246 in loans	This loan fund has been in operation for 5 years and has thus collected loan volume information for all of those years. This metric by itself is considered both baseline (in that it will be compared to next year) and follow-up (when compared to previous years). It is an output metric in that it was collected once this year and the way it is presented in this story is not being compared (yet!).	●	●	●	○
15% increase in loan volume	This data is outcome data and is a combination of baseline and follow-up data which are compared to each other (last year's loan volume to this year's) to get the outcome data.	●	●	○	●
63% women with children 98% Chippewa	This data is baseline in that this is the first time this data is collected for the current year's loan clients as well as output as it is not being compared to other years.	●	○	●	○
16 points credit score increase	This data is outcome data and is a combination of baseline and follow-up data which are compared to each other (credit score at baseline compared to credit score after 6 months of paying the credit builder loan) to get the outcome data.	●	●	○	●
36% increase in confidence and skills	This data is outcome data and is a combination of baseline and follow-up data which are compared to each other (training registration confidence and skills compared to confidence and skills at training evaluation) to get the outcome data.	●	●	○	●

Impact Matrix Worksheet Exercise: Metrics

The next step in the process, now that you have defined outcomes and indicators for your impact goals is to define the metrics. The example below should be helpful when defining your own set of metrics. Use the table on the previous pages as well as the metrics bank in **Appendix F** as a guiding resource. Typically, each indicator has one to two metrics which provide the data needed to show change within that indicator.

IMPACT MATRIX WORKSHEET		
IMPACT GOAL 1: Sustainability and Self-Sufficiency		
OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	METRICS
Bankability	Decrease in use of predatory lending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you used any of these financial services in the past year?
	Increase in number of clients who have checking/savings account(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have a checking account? Do you have a savings account?
	Increase in knowledge of loan process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How confident are you in your ability to apply for and receive a loan?
Less Reliance on Tribe and Federal Government	Decrease client's household use of public benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sources and amounts of income
	Increase in the number of borrowers who return for additional services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client service activity tracked through time
Business Growth	Increase in sustainability of borrower business(es)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was your gross annual revenue in the last fiscal year? What was your net annual business profit in the last fiscal year? What stage is your business in?
	Increase in the number of jobs provided by borrower business(es)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of current jobs provided # of projected and actual jobs created
	Increase in the number of business loans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loan Type

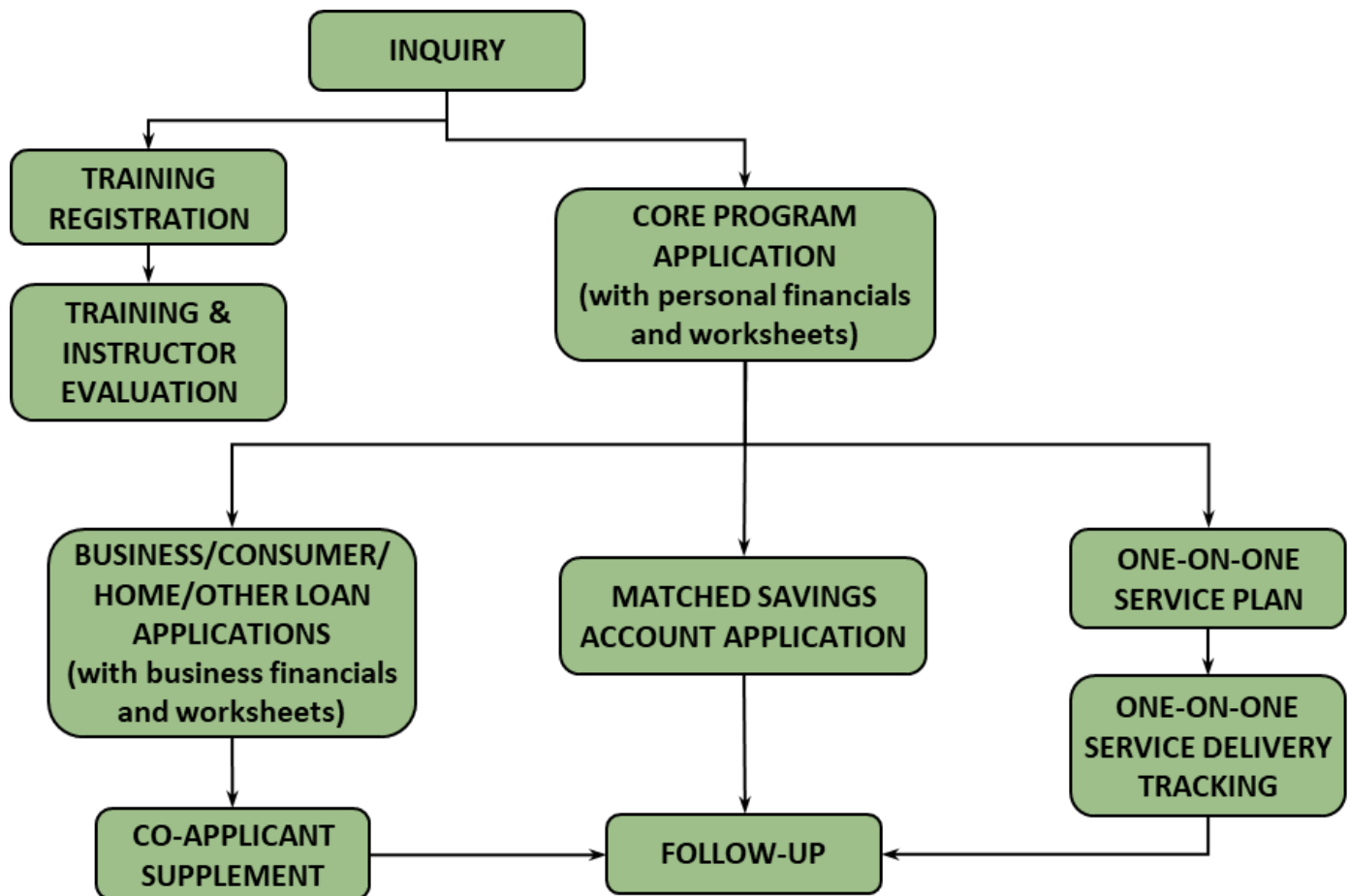
Recommended Tools

Once you have developed an impact matrix which details each metric, indicator, outcome, and impact goal relevant to your organization you need to develop tools to collect and track the data. At this point metrics are collected by asking client's specific questions and tracking specific data about their experience. The table below outlines some of the client data collection tools commonly used by Native CDFIs. The table includes the data collection tool, a description of what it is and when to use it, and what types of metrics it collects. After the table a graphic representation of the tool process is included which depicts a typical client experience in filling out forms, and thus providing you with data.

TOOL	WHAT IT IS AND WHEN TO USE	WHAT IT COLLECTS
Inquiry	The first touch with a client (phone call, e-mail, walk-in).	Contact Information Basic Demographics How have you heard about the CDFI? Programs/Services interested in
Core Program Application	Completed when a client decides to pursue a service/ program. Gathers information to determine if a client is ready for a program/ service. Collects data applicable to any program or loan type.	Additional Demographics Tax Information Household Information Business Information Use of financial products and services Financial, personal, and business well-being information
Business Loan Application	To be completed based on a client's information from the Core Program Application. Aimed at those interested in a business start-up/business expansion/operations loan.	Purpose of loan Business information Owner information
Consumer Loan Application	To be completed based on a client's information from the Core Program Application. Aimed at those interested in a consumer/personal loan.	Purpose of loan References Banking Status
Home Loan Application	To be completed based on a client's information from the Core Program Application. Aimed at those interested in a home loan/home refinance/down payment/etc.	Purpose of loan Homebuyer experience Property address and financial information
Matched Savings Account Application	To be completed based on a client's information from the Core Program Application. Aimed at those interested in a matched savings account.	Employment history and income Ability to save Training Certification

TOOL	WHAT IT IS AND WHEN TO USE	WHAT IT COLLECTS
One-on-One Service Plan	When a client is interested in 1-on-1 TA, they will complete this form to assess the type of training needed and their anticipated goals from training.	Goal(s) of TA/Coaching Type of Engagement Action Plan Topics
One-on-One Service Delivery Tracking	Completed at conclusion of a TA session to track accomplishments/type of training/ goals/etc.	Description of services Goals Progress Next Steps
Training Registration	When a client wishes to take a Training/ Class they will complete this registration form.	Confirm Contact Information Type/Topic of Training Dates/Location of Training
Training & Instructor Evaluation	Used to assess the success of a training and the instructor. To be completed by participants after the conclusion of a training.	Satisfaction with training/trainer/facility Changes to system Knowledge/Skills gained Suggestions
Follow-up	To be completed a year after the completion of a program or service. Used to track growth and change over time. One for personal and one for business.	Combination of metrics from Inquiry, Core Program, and Application.

Recommended Tools in Client Experience Graphic



Impact Matrix Worksheet Exercise: Tools & Notes/Definitions

The final step in the process is to define the tools you will use to collect the data for your metrics. Be sure to set tools for collecting both baseline and follow-up data from your clients. Also consider any financial worksheets or internal tracking mechanisms you might use to collect and track data about the client.

IMPACT MATRIX WORKSHEET

IMPACT GOAL 1: Sustainability and Self-Sufficiency

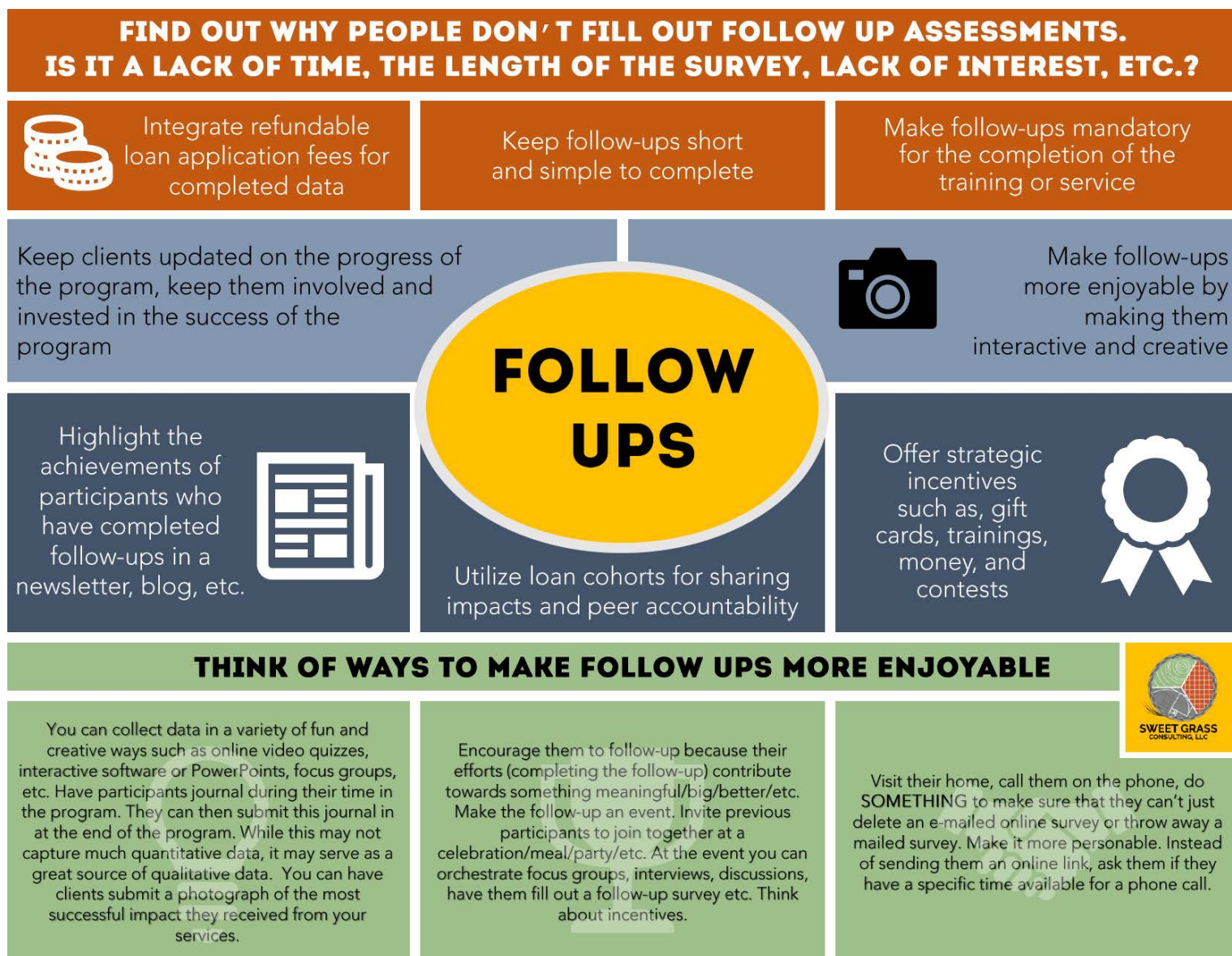
METRICS	TOOLS	NOTES/DEFINITIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you used any of these financial services in the past year? 	Core Program and Follow-Up Form. Credit Report.	Use of predatory services, collected at follow-up and compared to baseline. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predatory lending includes: predatory loans, money orders, check cashing, pawn shops, rent-to-own, and paycheck advances. Predatory loans are defined as: payday loans, car title loans, or loans with abusive terms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have a checking account? Do you have a savings account? 	Core Program and Follow-Up Form. Bank Statements.	Collected at follow-up and compared to baseline.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How confident are you in your ability to apply for and receive a loan? 	Loan Application and Follow-Up Form	Collected at follow-up and compared to baseline.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sources and amounts of income 	Income worksheet with household income annually from all sources	Collected at follow-up and compared to baseline. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of client's total household income including public benefits (e.g. TANF, SNAP/EBT, GA, WIC, LIHEAP, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client service activity tracked through time 	Client service activity tracked through time.	Some examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small business expansion loan after receiving one-on-one technical assistance or a start-up loan. Movement from credit builder loan to a small business loan or homeownership loan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was your gross annual revenue in the last fiscal year? What was your net annual business profit in the last fiscal year? What stage is your business in? 	Core Program and Follow-Up Form	Collected at follow-up and compared to baseline.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of current jobs provided # of projected and actual jobs created 	Loan Application and Follow-Up Form	Collected at follow-up and compared to baseline.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loan Type 	Loan portfolio filtered by loan type	Number of business loans, by type and total, deployed by the Native CDFI in a defined reporting period. Total deployed since Native CDFI inception.

Best Practices of Follow-ups

Following up is the ONLY way to collect outcome data. Following up is also one of the best ways to measure progress towards your outcomes and impact goals. You cannot show an improvement in sustainability and self-sufficiency (impact goal) by impacting client bankability (outcome) by decreasing a client's use of predatory lending (indicator) without collecting data about their use of predatory lending services at baseline and then at follow-up. You must continue to engage with your clients in order to understand the impact that your programs have had on their lives and behaviors. Below are some best practices to consider about follow-up which are also included as **Appendix F**.

- Integrate refundable loan application fees for completed data
- Keep follow-ups short and simple to complete
- Make follow-ups mandatory for the completion of the training or service
- Keep clients updated on the progress of the program, keep them involved and invested in the success of the program
- Make follow-ups more enjoyable by making them interactive and creative
- Highlight the achievements of participants who have completed follow-ups in a newsletter, blog, etc.
- Utilize loan cohorts for sharing impacts and peer accountability
- Offer strategic incentives such as, gift cards, trainings, money, and contests

Below are some of the best practices around follow-up to utilize at your CDFI. This information is also included as a handout in **Appendix G**.



Module 11 – Scenario and Best Practices #6 and #7

Scenario – First Nations Community Financial

First Nations Community Financial (FNCF) uses technology to their advantage to meet clients where they are. They utilize a system that allows them to collect data directly from clients online, but they also offer paper versions for clients who do not have access to the internet or a computer. They also have computers in the office for clients to access, and regardless of the data collection method, FNCF is always available to help their clients throughout the process. Understanding the client, their situation, and their technological ability helps FNCF to pair the client with the correct tool. Each client's situation is different. With a multitude of tools and personalized assistance, FNCF is committed to meeting each client where they are.

Best Practice #6: Meet Clients Where They Are At

Not all clients who come to a Native CDFI for services are at the same place in terms of their comfort with, and access to, technology. Technology is not the only concern as many clients have had varying experiences with other financial institutions and may be nervous about releasing their sensitive information to you. Many clients also question the need to provide you in-depth data and being able to explain the purpose of every question and how it connects back to your impact goals and mission provide clients with a sense of understanding and ownership in the process. In addition, Native CDFIs should meet their clients where they are regarding data collection. This means remaining flexible, as some may prefer to complete forms on paper (either at home or in person), while others may prefer to provide information on fillable PDFs, over the phone, and/or with online forms.

One convenient way to meet client needs is through online applications. Many Native CDFIs are seeing increased internet access in their communities, as well as increased computer and mobile device usage. This increase makes online applications a valuable tool to easily interact with clients.

Many forms have specific and potentially confusing questions that may be difficult for clients to complete on their own. It is important to have staff members available that clients can consult with to alleviate any confusion, whether they are filling out a form online or in person.

Utilizing a variety of ways to collect and receive data will result in more complete data and satisfied clients. This may also mean *physically* meeting clients where they are by incorporating data collection into regular events, such as community gatherings or by visiting clients at home. Regardless of the method, data collection is an investment in maintaining the relationship with a client. The ability to meet a client where they are, ensure they are comfortable, all while collecting important data, is essential to the effective operation of any Native CDFI.

Best Practice #7: Build Client Enthusiasm and Set Expectations

It is critical that clients understand how meaningful the sharing of their personal information is for your organization and community. When you transparently share with your client that your organization needs the data for fundraising or for IMS, it transforms impact measurement into the partnership that it was meant to be. This best practice is particularly important, as animosity around data collection can sometimes exist in Native communities due to a lack of transparency in federal and in mainstream financial institution data collection efforts, and the associated history of purposeful misuse of data.

Clients are much less likely to be offended by personal questions, or irritated at the length of forms, if they know *why* your organization needs this information. This is essential, because full completion of forms is necessary for any impact measurement system to be effective; if the data is not fully and accurately collected, it is difficult to derive useful information, tell a complete story, and make informed decisions.

Also, it is important to set long-term expectations around data collection by making client follow-ups mandatory for receiving services. Refer to the material in Module 10 for more information on follow-ups.

Module 12 – Phase II Work Plan

In order to help ensure that you are able to implement the beginnings of your impact measurement system it is important to complete an action work plan specific to your IMS. The action work plan included in **Appendix H** and exemplified on the next page, covers the timeframe up to a year and addresses each step of an IMS. It also includes references to the best practices included in this manual so that you can make connections between the IMS work and the best practices of impact tracking for Native CDFIs.

During this first session of working on this action work plan, the focus will be on the impact matrix and tools sections. A completed example of these sections is on the next page for reference when completing the action work plan for your Native CDFI, which is included as a handout and as **Appendix H**.

TASK	TIMELINE					WHAT BEST PRACTICES	
EXAMPLE - ACTION WORK PLAN							
	WEEK BY OCTOBER 18, 2019	MONTH BY NOVEMBER 18, 2019	QUARTER BY JANUARY 18, 2020	6 MONTHS BY APRIL 18, 2020	YEAR BY OCTOBER 18, 2020		PEER(S) CAN I REACH OUT TO FOR HELP/ ADVICE?
IMPACT MATRIX WHY DO YOU NEED IMPACT DATA?	What: Share what you did with the rest of the staff	What: Refine impact matrix after looking at all funder reports	What: Work on getting a theory of change and logic model developed	What: Revisit impact matrix with what we've learned from our theory of change and logic model	What: Revisit impact matrix and make any needed updates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identify what you need and why <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The role of relationships in evaluation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create a culture of evaluation and learning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stay flexible and responsive	FACC TLF CPCDC
	Who: All staff	Who: All staff Board	Who: Executive Director	Who: Executive Director Board	Who: Executive Director Board		

EXAMPLE - ACTION WORK PLAN

TASK	TIMELINE					WHAT BEST PRACTICE(S)	WHICH PEER(S) CAN I REACH OUT TO FOR HELP/ADVICE?
	WEEK BY OCTOBER 18, 2019	MONTH BY NOVEMBER 18, 2019	QUARTER BY JANUARY 18, 2020	6 MONTHS BY APRIL 18, 2020	YEAR BY OCTOBER 18, 2020		
TOOLS HOW WILL YOU COLLECT DATA?	What: Gather all tools currently used reports currently needed	What: Perform data harvest Perform gap analysis	What: Draft new tools and/or refine existing tools	What: Finalize tools Train on use of new tools	What: Fully implement streamlined data collection process into new system	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identify what you need and why <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Streamline existing processes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create a culture of evaluation and learning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make an individual responsible while ensuring full staff buy-in <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meet clients where they are at <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Build client enthusiasm and set expectations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Document your process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stay flexible and responsive	NACDC FBCF CTLF
	Who: Office Admin	Who: Office Admin Consultant	Who: Office Admin Executive Director Consultant	Who: All staff	Who: All staff		

Module 13 – Collecting Data, Reporting Data, and Effective Communication with Stakeholders

This module covers information on data collection methods, data analysis techniques, types of databases, software considerations, the types of key stakeholders, and approaches for effective communication based on stakeholder groups. The information provided is meant to provide guidance in continuing to refine your IMS.

Data Collection Methods

In Module 10 some of the tools for data collection with clients were presented. The information below is meant to build on the conversation around tools to provide your CDFI with a wider variety of resources and approaches to data collection. The CDFIs who we have seen use data most successfully employ a multitude of data collection methods regularly. The list below details the types of methods and the call out box on the next page provides some examples of how Native groups have used these methods to support their work.

Participant Observation

A researcher observes a person or group of people to which they do not belong, without altering the behavior of the group, in order to understand more about that group or answer a research question.

- Although traditionally done by an anthropologist, this method can be useful when considering the evaluation of events. You can observe where people congregate, peoples' behaviors toward an event or activity, count the number of participants, and observe foot traffic.

Interview

A qualitative research technique which engages one person at a time asking them questions and recording their perspectives on an idea, program, or situation. There are three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured; all are meant to meet the needs of different populations, types of research efforts, and researchers.

Survey

A method used for collecting data from a pre-defined group of respondents to gain information and insights on various topics of interest.

Focus Group

A form of qualitative research which brings together a small group of people, usually 6-12, to engage in a guided discussion of a series of topics.

- This method is especially useful when planning for a new project or to get feedback from specific groups of community members (e.g. elders, youth, tribal employees, etc.)

Secondary Research

Involves using already existing data. Existing data is summarized and collated to increase the overall effectiveness of research.

- Secondary research includes research material published in research reports and similar documents. These documents can be made available by public libraries, websites, data obtained from already filled in surveys, etc. Some government and non-government agencies also store data to be used for research purposes.
- Secondary research is much more cost-effective than primary research, as it makes use of already existing data, unlike primary research, where data is collected firsthand by organizations or businesses, or can employ a third party to collect data on their behalf.

Data Analysis Techniques

Analyzing data is a required component for reporting data and for effectively communicating to stakeholders. Data analysis, very simply, is how you interpret the data you collect. There are two main considerations when analyzing data. The first is the use of both qualitative and quantitative data. That is the balanced use of stories, quotes, and categorical data (e.g. location, gender, education, employment, etc.) and numbers, amounts, and currencies (also known as quantitative data). Neither is better than the other and they are most powerful when used in combination. The other consideration is conducting

CREATIVE USE OF DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Participant Observation

Cheyenne River Youth Project hosts an annual graffiti jam event and during this event they observe the attendees to get headcounts and observe patterns of movement. This data gives them an idea of the event's impact and what they might need to alter for the next year.

Interview

Each year Four Bands Community Fund conducts phone and in-person interviews with their business loan clients in order to collect follow-up data about their current situation and any feedback they may have for FBCF. They analyze this data in comparison to previous year's interview data.

Survey

Although applications and forms completed as part of the delivery of services would be considered surveys, there are other ways groups are using surveys to support their program. One example is Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation, who does community surveys approximately every five years to better understand their target market as well as their impact in the community. Another example is FBCF, who frequently runs surveys to evaluate specific programs, such as their youth internship program.

Focus Group Events

Focus groups can be used in a unique way to gather information from larger events, similar to this training. When you bring large groups of people together, like the Lower Sioux Indian Community did when planning the construction of their community center, and break them into smaller groups to have discussions and provide feedback, you gain valuable information that can guide future processes and provide evaluation of programs and services.

Secondary Research

Secondary research is commonly incorporated into market studies and other types of similar research to set the stage and explore the current population especially in terms of demographics like age, ethnicity, and income. Though not always accurate, US Census data can provide context. Local data sources can also contribute much needed information without having to directly collect it.

both descriptive and comparison analyses. As with using both qualitative and quantitative data, the use of both descriptive and comparative analysis is typically the best. The paragraphs below go into more depth around the differences and components of descriptive and comparative analysis techniques.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is the type of analysis used the most by Native CDFIs for reporting. This type of analysis simply describes the data that is collected, such as the percentage of clients who live on-reservation, the distribution of clients race and gender, the average credit score of a client, the number of loans closed, and the total amount of loans closed. Another way to think of descriptive analysis is that it displays the answers to the questions you ask of your clients. If you ask clients their satisfaction with your services on a scale of 1-5, descriptive analysis takes the answers to that question and displays it. In this case it would be the number of people who responded to each level. For example, 5 people or 15% responded 1 on the scale. Descriptive analysis includes the following techniques:

Measures of Frequency

Distribution: shows all the possible answers and how often they are answered. For example: 35 people agree, 15 people are neutral, and 4 people disagree.

Proportion/Percent: shows the proportion of those who chose that answer compared to your total sample or population. This results in a percentage. For example, 65% of our total clients are women.

Measures of Central Tendency

Mean/Average: adds the values of all of the data points together and divides that total by the total number of responses. For example, to find your average client credit score you would add together all of the credit scores from all of your clients then divide that total by your total number of clients. This will give you your average credit score for all of your clients.

*Note: the mean, or average, is heavily influenced by “outliers” in your data. If you have large outliers (this happens frequently with income levels) it is more accurate to use the median, which helps to control outliers. See the table on the next page for an example of the difference:

Annual Income Values	Mean/Average	Median
\$7,475	\$75,103 4 out of the 5 income levels fall well below the average of \$75,103 due to the outlier of \$250,124.	\$35,245 40% of the income values fall below and above the median value, which gives you a better sense of what most of your clients' income level would be.
\$28,547		
\$35,245		
\$54,124		
\$250,124		

Median: is the middle value of nominal (number) data. You find the median by arranging your nominal data from smallest to largest and then by finding the middle value between the largest and smallest value. If there is an even number of data points, the median is the average of the two middle values.

Mode: is the most frequently answered option. Mode is typically used in describing categorical data where you want to know which answer response has the highest value. For example, race (most clients are American Indian), gender (most clients are women), interest in services (most clients are interested in a consumer loan).

Comparative Data Analysis

Comparative data analysis takes descriptive analyses to the next level by comparing data over time and across demographics. Comparative analysis is simply comparing a data point, like credit score, across demographic groups (e.g. by age, gender, income, location, ethnicity, tribe, education, and employment status) or across time. For example, by demographic group: is there a difference in credit score between those who live on-reservation versus those who live off-reservation? And for change over time: by how much did credit score increase from the first-time credit was pulled to a year after loan closing? Regardless, comparative data analysis is important for exploring trends in your data and for analyzing your impact on your clients.

Database and Software

The Process

A key aspect of the data collection and reporting process are database and software options. These options can assist in data collection by providing the option of online data collection and surveying, but their main purpose is in the storing and managing of the data you collect. Databases and software are also required in conducting analysis and producing reports, even if you're just using Microsoft Excel and Word. There are, of course, databases and software that can conduct much of the analysis for you and produce reports at the push of a button, but all come with their own limitations and considerations.

Streamlining current systems or adding a new database platform or software can be a daunting task. Although this task is typically ongoing, especially when considering training and refining tools based on new reporting requirements or changes in programming, an initial database implementation process can take anywhere from 6 months to two years.

There are many considerations when starting a new system or revamping a current system. The steps in starting a new system are detailed below. These steps also apply to revamping current systems.

1. Data harvest and inventory

- Identify what data are you currently collecting for all programs.

2. Gap analysis

- Compare the data you collect now to your goal setting documents (e.g. theory of change, logic model, or impact matrix). What's missing? What could you get rid of?

3. Reports assessment

- Consider what reports do you need regularly? Plan to have your system produce those reports, if possible.

4. Building forms/activities in database system

- Ensure that all data collection tools and processes are built or reflected in your database system.

5. Importing/entering existing data

- Bring your database to life with existing data going back to a certain time period. Using your fiscal year is a good start.

6. Training staff/clients

- Train staff in the day-to-day use of the system. Train clients over time to use any features that are applicable to them, like a client portal.

7. Building standard queries and reports

- Now that your tools and data are in the system, build reports and ensure they reflect the reporting assessment in step 3.

8. Training staff in reporting

- Though not usually a daily activity, staff with the right skill set should be trained how to edit or produce reports within the database system.

9. Reverse engineering forms

- As changes are made to the system, ensure that these changes are made on paper copies of data collection tools as well.

10. Continually review and update

- A database system is never complete just as an IMS is never complete. Ensure that your system is reviewed and updated regularly.

Types of Software Systems

For Native CDFIs, there are three core types of software to be aware of and many organizations use a combination of all three types: Microsoft Office/Google Drive products, customer relationship management software, and loan origination/processing software. There is not typically one solution that can fit all needs. You might need to store data in one place, analyze it in another, and report it in a third. Your loan software may do some of what you need but you may need a separate system for tracking more outcomes. The table below lists examples of some software that Native CDFIs commonly use with a little bit of information about each.

Name of Software	Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets
Description	Spreadsheet programs used to create grids of text, numbers and formulas specifying calculations.
Type/Purpose of Software in Relation to an IMS	Useful for data storage and analysis of IMS data. Data can be visualized in the form of charts, tables, and graphs.
Useful for...	Organizations transitioning from paper forms/file cabinets but are not yet ready to move to a dedicated IMS.
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pivot Tables for frequency tabulations • Extensive list of formulas for auto-calculation • Google Sheets offers real-time collaboration • Variety of data visualization options (charts/tables/graphs)
Notes of Concern Regarding IMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steep learning curve for advanced analysis, formulas and charts • May be intimidating for less tech-savvy staff • Not as scalable as dedicated IMS
Website	https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/ or https://gsuite.google.com/products/drive/
Name of Software	Microsoft PowerPoint or Google Slides
Description	Programs used to create custom slides for displaying information for presentations, meetings, etc.
Type/Purpose of Software in Relation to an IMS	Useful for creating presentations and reports and conveying impact to funders, board members, or community members.
Useful for...	Organizations who regularly have to present their impact data.
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customizable slide themes with graphics for creating dynamic infographics
Notes of Concern Regarding IMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited graphic design features
Website	https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/ or https://gsuite.google.com/products/drive/

Name of Software	Microsoft Word or Google Docs
Description	Word-processing programs used primarily for creating documents such as letters, brochures, learning activities, tests, quizzes and assignments.
Type/Purpose of Software in Relation to an IMS	Useful for creating reports from analyzed data.
Useful for...	All organizations.
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft Word is the standard in word-processing software • Microsoft Word has a robust suite of editing options • Google Docs offers real-time collaboration
Notes of Concern Regarding IMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formatting can be cumbersome • Google Docs autosaves which could risk overwriting information
Website	https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/ or https://gsuite.google.com/products/drive/
Name of Software	Salesforce
Description	Premier Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Software with data collection modules focusing on client/customer management, donor management, and campaign tracking.
Type/Purpose of Software in Relation to an IMS	Salesforce offers its software to non-profits for free, including their Non-profit Success Pack, a suite of tools specifically tailored for non-profits.
Useful for...	Organizations looking for a powerful set of impact tracking tools but have a limited budget.
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prebuilt data collection tools for client, donor, event, fundraising, and membership management • Extensively customizable to reflect organizational needs • One-touch reports and dashboards for at-a-glance reporting
Notes of Concern Regarding IMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data entry forms are not user-friendly • User interface can be intimidating for staff unfamiliar with online databases • Initial report set-up requires significant time/training investment • Customization requires training and/or consultant
Website	https://www.salesforce.com/
Name of Software	Outcome Tracker
Description	Online platform for non-profit client management.
Type/Purpose of Software in Relation to an IMS	Enables organizations to easily manage client interactions, issues, and next steps with multiple data collection points.
Useful for...	Organizations needing to track client interactions, next steps, etc.
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customizable to reflect organizational needs • Multiple data entry options, including online forms and customer portals • One-touch query and reports for at-a-glance reporting
Notes of Concern Regarding IMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User interface can be intimidating for staff unfamiliar with online databases • Initial query/report set-up requires significant time/training investment • Customization requires training and/or consultant
Website	https://www1.vistashare.com/outcome-tracker/

Name of Software	The Opportunity Through Impacts System – OTIS
Description	Built on the Outcome Tracker platform, OTIS is an impact tracking system designed specifically for Native CDFIs.
Type/Purpose of Software in Relation to an IMS	Focused on Native CDFI's and tracking their interactions with clients for Loans, TA, and Training.
Useful for...	Native Community Development Financial Institutions who want to scale their IMS.
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporates Native Impact Matrix • Customizable to reflect organizational needs • Multiple data entry options, including online forms and customer portals • One-touch query and reports for at-a-glance reporting • Includes a set of impact tracking forms aimed at Native CDFIs • OTIS data flows into state and national level aggregate analysis
Notes of Concern Regarding IMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User interface can be intimidating for staff unfamiliar with online databases • Initial query/report set-up requires significant time/training investment • Customization requires training and/or consultant
Website	https://www.oweesta.org/otis
Name of Software	CounselorMax
Description	Premier homeownership counseling client management tool.
Type/Purpose of Software in Relation to an IMS	Useful for tracking clients progress from intake through follow-up and counselor impact down the line.
Useful for...	Organizations providing homeownership counseling, TA, or coaching.
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create client action plans (outreach/intake, class scheduling, class tracking, etc.) • Class enrollment, attendance, and certification tracking • HUD Compliant 9902 and Intake form • Custom budget creation • Financial Progress Profile to monitor changes in income, credit, and other impact data
Notes of Concern Regarding IMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific to counseling tracking
Website	https://www.neighborworks.org/Training-Services/Resources-for-Counselors-Educators/CounselorMax

Name of Software	Change Machine
Description	Financial coaching client management tool.
Type/Purpose of Software in Relation to an IMS	Tracks TA sessions, hours, and impact via interactive worksheets.
Useful for...	Organizations providing financial counseling, TA, or coaching.
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive training platform for clients • Custom action plans and scheduling • Social network of coaching professionals • 30 hours of Train the Coach resources
Notes of Concern Regarding IMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific to counseling tracking
Website	https://change-machine.org/
Name of Software	DownHome Loan Manager
Description	Cloud-based loan servicing and loan aimed at community lenders.
Type/Purpose of Software in Relation to an IMS	Comprehensive loan servicing and tracking tools with integration to IMS.
Useful for...	Organizations interested in a full-service loan management, servicing, and data tracking surround non-profit community lending.
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracks payments, interest, principle and fees automatically. • Links to OutcomeTracker and OTIS • Standard loan portfolio performance reports • Add-on modules available including ACH batch processing, credit bureau reporting, CDFI reporting, etc.
Notes of Concern Regarding IMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific to loan servicing
Website	http://downhomesolutions.com/
Name of Software	The Exceptional Assistant (TEA)
Description	Loan management software aimed at providing project and loan management services to non-profit and alternative lending agencies.
Type/Purpose of Software in Relation to an IMS	Features modules on client management, loan servicing, and project management, including outcomes and impact analysis.
Useful for...	Organizations needing a single-source software option for client, loan, and project management.
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEA comes with Client, Loan, Business, and Project modules, including custom report building. • Multiple add-ons available including Credit, Escrow, Participation, Investor, Grant, Electronic Funds Transfer as well as two reporting modules, CDFI/CIIS and EDMIS.
Notes of Concern Regarding IMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited customization • Reporting can be difficult
Website	http://www.commongoals.com/

Name of Software	Portfol
Description	Portfolio management software that includes loan servicing, demographics, TA monitoring, job tracking, financial statement or insurance monitoring, contact management, CIIS, SBA, and EDA reporting.
Type/Purpose of Software in Relation to an IMS	Robust set of loan servicing and data tracking tools for managing loan details, schedules, and demographics.
Useful for...	Organizations interested in rolling their loan servicing and activity tracking into one database.
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track client interaction throughout the life of the loan • Loan-Specific Activities (loan restructuring, amortization, • Database customization • Report generation tools
Notes of Concern Regarding IMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be intimidating for staff unfamiliar with online databases • Outdated user interface
Website	https://www.portfol.com/

Database and Software Considerations

The selection of a database or software (or set of software) is a complicated decision. The table above is a helpful resource but there are other considerations that should be taken into account when starting the conversation about database and software solutions. Although software is an important part of an impact measurement system this manual does not cover every detail and we suggest conducting your own thorough investigation of available resources before choosing a software for your Native CDFI.

Internal Management Considerations

- What do you want your software to accomplish?
- What is your staff capacity to utilize a software program?
- What are your budget, time, and internet limitations?

Platform Feature Considerations

- Configuration / import fees
- Annual subscription / user fees
- Customization and processing ability
- Client portals
- Ease of querying and report design
- Access to training and technical assistance
- Integrations and connections

Stakeholders

Another aspect of collecting data, reporting data, and effective storytelling is identifying your stakeholders and what story you need to tell. Some of the key stakeholder groups and some considerations for each are listed below in order to provide some guidance on how to meet the needs of these groups.

Board

Each board is unique, and this stakeholder group will need to be considered individually as some boards appreciate charts and graphs and a focus on quantitative data, whereas others connect better with case studies and qualitative data. Work with your board to define what they connect with.

Staff/Internal

Staff and internal reports are many times overlooked by Native CDFIs. Requiring staff to produce reports regularly to communicate within the organization is one of the best ways for all staff to be engaged with the reporting processes and with data generally. This is the way data has the power to tell you how your programs are performing and if you are meeting your set goals.

General Public

One of the stakeholder groups that are communicated with regularly is the general public, especially when you consider government levels of communication. Many times, these groups are being communicated to with a tone of education and advocacy. It is important to communicate your impact to these groups regularly. It is also important to acknowledge the many sub-groups within the general public that will likely connect with your story on different levels. Identifying what story you need to tell before pulling data together is important.

Funders

Of course, funder reports make up a large proportion of the reports produced by Native CDFIs. The key in reporting to funders is acknowledging the balance between their reporting requirements and connecting those data points back to your impact goals and outcomes as an organization. Recognizing the balance between types of data and the best data visualizations and analysis to use can take your funder reports to the next level. The reporting work plan included as **Appendix I** is intended to help you organize what each funder is looking for in reports and how to best address those needs.

Effective Communication to Stakeholders

Effective communication is first and foremost reliant on the data that you collect, which is why it is important to start with defining what you need and why by developing impact goals, outcomes, indicators, and metrics. By aligning the data collected with your impact goals and desired outcomes, you can tell a much more complete story. By collecting data systematically and over time, you can incorporate outcomes in addition to outputs which highlights the “how and why” instead of just the “what.”

Once you have the right data, stored in a system that allows you to do analysis, and you have reporting software or abilities, then the next key is to develop reports that communicate your story effectively to multiple stakeholders.

By completing the “Reporting Work Plan” (**Appendix H**) you will inventory what reports you need, who the audience is, what metrics to include, types of analysis to use, and types of data presentation to use. Aside from using this worksheet, there are several points to consider which will make your communication of data, and thus your stories of success, more effective. Some of these points are discussed below.

So What?

One of the ways to ensure that you’re communicating effectively is to always ask the question “so what?” Asking this question will help you go beyond communicating outputs, or just putting numbers on a page, and drive you to answer questions and take the story beyond an individual. Combine your individual narrative stories with group data trends and contextualize your loan portfolio data with long-term outcomes. Continuing to tie your data and reports back to your impact goals will allow you to more easily explain the “so what.”

Explore Your Data

Prioritizing your understanding of the data collected is another way to streamline your communication to stakeholders. There are entire professions dedicated to this work and that should give you a sense of how much you can do with your data and how much there is to understand. Taking some time to try to explore your data in-depth can lead to new and better ways to communicate your story.

For example, we recommend comparing your data across demographics (such as age, gender, geographic location, etc.) in order to better understand the effect of your activities and programs within your target market. Another suggestion is to explore data around a specific program or service or by an impact goal, regardless of any program or service or demographic. Regardless of what you do, exploring your data in more depth is a way to feel more confident in the stories of success that you can tell.

A final suggestion to facilitate this exploration is to assign small reports to be produced that answer a specific question or explore a specific topic. The outcomes you’ve already developed can be especially useful for this. For example, next quarter you could develop a report that explores the effect your organization has had on the ability of your veteran clients to improve their debt to income ratio and therefore become more self-sufficient. If you do reports like this quarterly, or even annually, over time you will have a better understanding of your effect and develop an arsenal of data reports to share with stakeholders.

Be Creative

The final suggestion around effective communication is to be creative. This not only applies to the previous suggestion in exploring data but also in how data is communicated. Using a variety of visualizations for your data can help you engage the right stakeholders. Data reports are becoming more visual and artistic and thus being creative in how data is reported is becoming more important. In response to this shift more software programs are being developed to assist in data visualization that is engaging and clear. Utilize these programs to your advantage and always keep in mind your stakeholders, your data, your impact goals, and mission.

Reporting Work Plan Exercise

Use the “**Reporting Work Plan**” to help you define who your stakeholders are and what reporting aspects would best fit that group. A complete example of the work plan is below. The work plan for you to complete is included as a handout and as **Appendix I**.

EXAMPLE - REPORTING WORK PLAN

REPORT IS FOR:	HOW OFTEN OR WHEN	STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR REPORT	WHAT SOFTWARE IS NEEDED	TYPES OF ANALYSIS OR DATA
BOARD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monthly	Executive Director and Finance Officer	DownHome Loan, OTIS, Excel, Word	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Qualitative/Narrative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quantitative
STAFF/ INTERNAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): Bi-weekly	All Staff	DownHome Loan, OTIS, Excel, Word	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Qualitative/Narrative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quantitative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Descriptive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comparison
GENERAL PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quarterly	Office Administrator Executive Director	OTIS, Excel, PPT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Qualitative/Narrative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quantitative
FUNDER 1: HUD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quarterly	Housing Counselor	OTIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quantitative
FUNDER 2: NORTHWEST AREA FOUNDATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quarterly	Loan Officer	DownHome Loan, OTIS, Excel, PPT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Qualitative/Narrative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quantitative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comparison
FUNDER 3: USDA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quarterly	Loan Officer	DownHome Loan, Excel, Word	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Qualitative/Narrative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quantitative

EXAMPLE – REPORTING WORK PLAN

REPORT IS FOR:	QUESTION(S)/ OUTCOME(S) TO ANSWER/ ADDRESS	PREFERRED DATA VISUALIZATION	RELATES IMPACT GOAL(S)
BOARD	Who is in our pipeline? Where are we at, financially? How many loans closed? Goals for next month?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> #'s and %'s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stories	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3
STAFF/ INTERNAL	Who is in our pipeline? How many trainings did we have? How much TA provided? How many inquiries? How many loans closed?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> #'s and %'s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stories	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3
GENERAL PUBLIC	How many families have been assisted? What impacts have we had on our clients?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charts/Graphs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> #'s and %'s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stories <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pictures	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3
FUNDER 1: HUD	How many counseling sessions? How many hours? How many group sessions? What impacts have counseling and education had on clients served?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> #'s and %'s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stories	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3
FUNDER 2: NORTHWEST AREA FOUNDATION	How many mortgage loans have been closed? How much wealth has been created? What impacts have services had on healthy households?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> #'s and %'s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stories	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3
FUNDER 3: USDA	How many loans have been closed? What population has been served (demographics)? What impacts have services had on housing?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charts/Graphs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> #'s and %'s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stories	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3

Module 14 – Phase III Work Plan

The conclusion of this manual and of the initial planning aspect of your IMS is to complete the action work plan, which is intended to assist in the implementation of your IMS. An example of the completed action work plan is presented on the next page for reference when completing the action work plan for your Native CDFI.

ACTION WORK PLAN					
TASK	TIMELINE				
	WEEK BY OCTOBER 18, 2019	MONTH BY NOVEMBER 18, 2019	QUARTER BY JANUARY 18, 2020	6 MONTHS BY APRIL 18, 2020	YEAR BY OCTOBER 18, 2020
TRACKING SYSTEM HOW WILL YOU STORE DATA?	What: Explore budget to afford a system	What: Research on which funders would be interested in funding a database	What: Find a consultant to help with the transition to a new database system	What: Work plan with staff and consultant for building out new database system	What: Fully implement new system
	Who: Finance Officer	Who: Executive Director Finance Officer	Who: Executive Director	Who: All staff	Who: All staff
	WHAT BEST PRACTICE(S)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify what you need and why <input type="checkbox"/> The role of relationships in evaluation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Streamline existing processes <input type="checkbox"/> Create a culture of evaluation and learning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make an individual responsible while ensuring full staff buy-in <input type="checkbox"/> Meet clients where they are at <input type="checkbox"/> Build client enthusiasm and set expectations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Document your process <input type="checkbox"/> Use your data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stay flexible and responsive				
	WHICH PEER CAN I REACH OUT TO FOR HELP/ADVICE?				
FBCF, CTLF, & NACDC					

TASK	TIMELINE				
	WEEK BY OCTOBER 18, 2019	MONTH BY NOVEMBER 18, 2019	QUARTER BY JANUARY 18, 2020	6 MONTHS BY APRIL 18, 2020	YEAR BY OCTOBER 18, 2020
OUTCOMES HOW WILL YOU USE THE DATA TO TELL YOUR STORY?	What: Make a list of all outcomes and goals regularly discussed/desired by our organization, board, funders, and community	What: All staff participate in strategic goal setting session Align each goal/outcome with our forms and process	What: Utilize WIBA partners to collaborate on WIBA-level outcomes to report	What: Identify which forms align with each report needed	What: Revisit final outcomes and make any needed updates
	Who: All staff	Who: All staff	Who: Executive Director Board	Who: Office Admin	Who: All staff
	WHAT BEST PRACTICE(S)				
	<div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identify what you need and why <input type="checkbox"/> Meet clients where they are at </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> The role of relationships in evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Build client enthusiasm and set expectations </div> <div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Streamline existing processes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Document your process </div> <div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create a culture of evaluation and learning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use your data </div> <div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make an individual responsible while ensuring full staff buy-in <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stay flexible and responsive </div>				
	WHICH PEER CAN I REACH OUT TO FOR HELP/ADVICE?				
	FACC, CNHA, & Oweesta				

TASK	TIMELINE				
	WEEK BY OCTOBER 18, 2019	MONTH BY NOVEMBER 18, 2019	QUARTER BY JANUARY 18, 2020	6 MONTHS BY APRIL 18, 2020	YEAR BY OCTOBER 18, 2020
REPORTING HOW WILL YOU USE THE DATA TO TELL YOUR STORY?	What: Make a list of all reports regularly needed, by who, and at what time	What: All staff participate in Reporting Work Plan session	What: Identify which staff is assigned to developing each report	What: Build reports into system as needed	What: Test reports Finalize reports
	Who: Executive Director	Who: All staff	Who: All staff	Who: Office Admin Consultant	Who: Office Admin Executive Director
	WHAT BEST PRACTICE(S)				
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identify what you need and why <input type="checkbox"/> The role of relationships in evaluation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Streamline existing processes <input type="checkbox"/> Create a culture of evaluation and learning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make an individual responsible while ensuring full staff buy-in <input type="checkbox"/> Meet clients where they are at <input type="checkbox"/> Build client enthusiasm and set expectations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Document your process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use your data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stay flexible and responsive				
	WHICH PEER CAN I REACH OUT TO FOR HELP/ADVICE?				
	CPCDC, Oweesta, and NACDC				

Module 15 – Scenario and Best Practice #8, #9, and #10

Scenario – Wisconsin Indian Business Alliance

This final example discusses collaborative impact measurement using the case of the Wisconsin Indian Business Alliance (WIBA). WIBA is making an effort to collaborate on impact measurement on many fronts. The first is that they all utilize the same impact measurement software, the Opportunity Through Impacts System (OTIS). This software allows all of the WIBA partners to collect the same data and utilize the same reporting system. Additionally, because OTIS is a network software, they are able to pool together their data automatically using OTIS' network features. As part of this effort to utilize the same software, WIBA is also collecting the same impact data so that they are more easily able to communicate shared impacts across the state of Wisconsin. Another way WIBA is collaborating is with staffing and training. They utilize the same staff members to help with data entry and analysis and when trainings (especially due to staff turnover) happen, they all attend the training in order to cut down on time and costs. With more and more collaboratives like WIBA happening across the Native CDFI industry, utilizing collaborative impact measurement approaches is a creative solution to many impact measurement challenges.

Best Practice #8: Document Your Process

As Native CDFIs gain experience with their impact measurement system, certain processes will facilitate efficient intake of the client and collection of data, while other processes will not. The Native CDFI should note which processes work best so that use of an impact measurement system becomes more efficient and flows naturally as time passes. These processes should be shared with all staff so that everyone can operate under the same procedures. Data collection and impact measurement is complicated and detail oriented, so the development of a methodology manual, which includes a clear set of guidelines, steps, frequently asked questions, and procedures is important for the continued success of an impact measurement system.

This methodology manual documents the following, in order:

- 1. Why data is collected in the first place and what it means for an organization.**
 - Answering these questions usually include a theory of change and/or logic model. These documents specifically detail the data an organization wants to collect and shows how that data answers larger questions or informs an organization's impact goals.
- 2. How, when, and why data is collected from clients.**
 - This step details how staff engage with clients around data collection, what forms are used at what time, and what messages are communicated to clients. Relationship building and personalized contact with clients are an important part of this process.
- 3. Details of proposed analysis and reporting.**
 - Standardized reports and analyses should be clearly recorded at this phase so they can be easily reproduced and understood, allowing the staff to interact with the data when needed.

This documentation process results in a methodology manual: a comprehensive, step-by-step guide that allows staff to fully understand the impact measurement system from start to finish. It is an important resource for the continued success of not only the impact measurement system, but also for building the institutional knowledge of the Native CDFI.

Best Practice #9: Use Your Data

Although there are many reasons to implement an IMS, one of the key reasons is to use and understand the data collected. This seems obvious, yet it is one of the most difficult things to do when using a system. After a while, it becomes easy to get into the system and collect data, and it even becomes easy to generate a report. However, action based on data collection is easier said than done.

There may be many ways a Native CDFI can respond to the information they gain from the data they collect. One may be to offer new services or adapt current services to meet the changing needs of clients. For example, over time, a Native CDFI may see a new demand in their community for housing, and they may need to shift their focus from consumer lending to home ownership.

Another way data can be used is to help define new grant opportunities and partnerships. Once a Native CDFI can utilize their data, which is aligned to their mission and impact goals, they have more ability to define their own outcomes in funding relationships. Outcomes that are driven by the Native CDFI, rather than by the funder, result in stronger impacts and partnerships.

If an IMS is used effectively, staff can engage with their programs in a more meaningful way, as it leads to a deeper understanding of how their services are impacting their clients, and it can identify necessary program adjustments.

Finally, using data can result in the refinement of the IMS itself. Native CDFIs are not static organizations, and impact measurement systems are thus responsive to change. This change is typically accommodated with the addition or removal of certain questions as changes in organizational goals or new demands from funders become apparent.

Fully understanding and using the data collected through an impact measurement system not only leads to improved programs and services, but it also allows Native CDFIs to better communicate their data. This benefit allows for increases in the marketing and storytelling capacity of the Native CDFI to funders, who are especially interested in seeing how an impact measurement system has been operationalized to improve programs and services. Dedicating time to understanding and using data is one of the best ways to really see the ultimate benefits of implementing an IMS.

Best Practice #10: Stay Flexible and Responsive

Native CDFIs are very familiar with being flexible, responsive, and adaptive, so it is no surprise that they utilize these characteristics well in impact measurement. Impact measurement is heavily reliant on technology for collecting, storing, and analyzing data. This means that Native CDFIs must be responsive to changes in the technology they have available to them. This is easier said than done, as each change usually requires more staff time, training, and costs. New technology should be adopted, but carefully, and at the right time for the organization. Impact measurement is also sensitive to changes in the funding world as new impact areas become important across the industry. Being knowledgeable about these trends allows Native CDFIs to incorporate changes into their impact measurement system over time. Conversely, changes can also be made to remove data points that aren't effective or are no longer needed. Regardless of the issue, being flexible and responsive is an asset when operating an impact measurement system.

Notes

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Appendices

Appendix A. Impact Goals Idea Bank

Appendix B. Impact Goals Worksheet

Appendix C. Native CDFI Impact Matrix

Appendix D. SWOT Action Work Plan

Appendix E. Impact Matrix Worksheet

Appendix F. Metrics Bank

Appendix G. Follow-ups Infographic

Appendix H. Action Work Plan

Appendix I. Reporting Work Plan

Appendix J. “Best Practices in Impact Tracking for Native Community Development Financial Institutions: Tools Resources, and Case Studies” Report