



Northern Winds Recovery Center (Small Business Lending)

WHAT WORKS PROJECT 20 IN MONTANA

GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

This project aims to improve the health and wellness by providing culturally appropriate mental health and substance abuse recovery services. Examples include a Native American social skills assessment for adolescent patients, and a “Wellbriety” class—an Alcoholics Anonymous treatment model adapted for Native Americans that emphasizes wellness.

This native-owned business was financed by Montana Idaho Community Development Corporation, a community development financial institution (CDFI), which provides access to capital for businesses who fall outside of traditional bank requirements. In addition to providing loans for community economic development purposes, Montana Idaho CDC supports its borrowers by providing consulting, including bookkeeping, marketing, operational and legal advice, with the goal of bringing them into the financial mainstream as quickly as possible.

POPULATIONS SERVED

The target population for the Northern Winds Recovery Center is the Blackfeet Reservation community, including the reservation area and surrounding counties. The Center serves an estimated 1,500 clients annually.

MAJOR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

Montana Idaho CDC, Child Protective Services, Child & Family Services, Family court, Indian Health Services, Browning Public Schools, the Blackfeet Tribe, and the Southern Piegan Health Center

MAJOR OUTCOMES

- Increased access to mental health and chemical dependency treatment in a community that faces provider shortages (Indian Health Services recently downsized by 60 percent).
- Addressed frequent barriers to receiving clinical care by providing rides to appointments, getting transportation to treatment facilities, and coordinating care with other services.

INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS

Used CDFI financing to support the development of a native-owned business. The business owner could not secure financing from banks or local economic development corporations.

Used data to evaluate impact. Northern Winds Recovery Center is monitoring symptoms and doing basic quality of life evaluations. They are also working with the University of Montana to develop a way to evaluate effectiveness of specific treatments.