



AIANTA
American Indian Alaska Native
Tourism Association

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American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association Awarded Funding for Groundbreaking Tribal Heritage Project at Grand Canyon

*Grand Canyon Desert View Watchtower and Visitor Area Intertribal Interpretive
project made possible by \$500,000 ArtPlace America Grant*

Albuquerque, New Mexico (July 16, 2015) -This week, the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA), and partners, were awarded one of 38 grants from ArtPlace America to further position arts and culture as a core sector of creative community placemaking. AIANTA will use the \$500,000 grant (ArtPlace America's maximum award) for a groundbreaking project at the Grand Canyon National Park Desert View Watchtower and Visitor Area.

AIANTA, in collaboration with the Grand Canyon National Park and the park's Inter-tribal Advisory Council, will use the ArtPlace grant to fund the repurposing of the park's Desert View Visitor Area into an inter-tribal cultural heritage place.

With this repurposing, the Desert View Visitor Area, inside the park's eastern entrance, will become a place for the tribes to call their own and for visitors to learn about the Canyon from tribal perspectives.

Committed partners involved in this one of a kind project include the Grand Canyon National Park, the Inter tribal Advisory Council (ItAC) (including Hopi, Navajo, Zuni, Havasupai, Hualapai, Yavapai-Apache and the five bands of Southern Paiute, represented by Kaibab Paiute), AIANTA, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Grand Canyon Association (GCA) and the American Express Foundation.

"We share Desert View as a symbol to bond the peoples of yesterday, today and tomorrow. The Watchtower serves as a connection to embrace the heartbeats of our peoples and visitors far and wide with the heartbeat of the canyon...We are still here," said the ItAC in a statement on the project.

Desert View facilities available to the tribes include the famous Watchtower (designed by Mary Colter in 1933 "to introduce the depths of Native culture to the traveler"), the Visitor Center (which will be transitioned to a tribal information center and point of departure for tours to tribal communities), some housing, vast parking areas, pathways, the view point itself, and the legendary landscape.

"This grant from ArtPlace America presents a legacy opportunity for all partners involved in the Desert View project," said Sammye Meadows, AIANTA's Grand Canyon Desert View Project Coordinator. "Through this new tribal interpretive center, the Grand Canyon's first people will be brought home again. Visitors entering the park from the



east will be introduced to the Canyon by descendants of its original human residents: artists, elders, teachers, families, their arts, languages, foods. Desert View will again be a window to the Canyon through American Indian eyes,” she continued.

ArtPlace America (ArtPlace) is a ten-year collaboration of foundations, banks, and federal agencies that exists to position art and culture as a core sector of comprehensive community planning and development in order to help strengthen the social, physical, and economic fabric of communities.

This week, ArtPlace America announced 38 grants to creative placemaking projects in communities of all sizes across 26 states. In these projects, artists and arts organizations will play an explicit and central role in helping to strengthen their communities’ social, physical, and/or economic fabrics.

With this week’s announcement, ArtPlace’s National Grants Program has funded 227 creative placemaking projects in 152 communities of all sizes, totaling \$66.8 million worth of investments across 43 states and the District of Columbia.

ArtPlace received nearly 1,300 applications for this year’s grant cycle, from which 90 finalists were selected. Of the 38 grantees announced today, 50% of them are first-time ArtPlace applicants; and 97% are first-time grantees.

ArtPlace continues to invest in rural America: with 29% of the grantees working in communities with populations less than 50,000.

A full list of the 38 grants announced is available [here](#).

About AIANTA:

The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) is a 501(c)(3) national nonprofit association of American Indian tribes, tribal tourism, cultural and private sector representatives, representatives from the tourism industry, Federal, State and local governments, colleges and universities, and friends that was incorporated in 2002 to advance Indian Country tourism. The association is made up of representatives from six regions: Alaska, Eastern, Midwest, Pacific, Plains and the Southwest. AIANTA’s mission is to define, introduce, grow and sustain American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian tourism that honors and preserves tribal traditions and values.

The purpose of the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association is to provide our constituents with the voice and tools needed to advance tourism while helping tribes, tribal organizations and tribal members create infrastructure and capacity through technical assistance, training and educational resources. AIANTA serves as the liaison among Indian Country, governmental, educational and private entities for the development, growth, and sustenance of Indian Country tourism. By developing and implementing programs and facilitating economic development opportunities, the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association helps tribes build for their future while sustaining and strengthening their cultural legacy.

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