

# **American Indian Business Leaders**

## **Chapter Startup Information**



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**[www.aibl.org](http://www.aibl.org)**

# Introduction

The American Indian Business Leaders (AIBL) is a student-based organization designed to promote and support the American Indian business student and/or entrepreneur. Future trends dictate a rising need for educated American Indian people to assist with tribal economic development planning and strategic implementation. AIBL's primary focus is to use its student foundation to assist tribal economic growth and stability through an emphasis in maintaining culturally appropriate American Indian business development.

## Mission Statement

The mission of AIBL is to increase the representation of American Indians and Alaska Natives in business and entrepreneurial ventures through education and leadership development opportunities.

## Founding Principles

AIBL's spirit of success stems from four guiding principles: *Education, Leadership, Experience, and Culture.*

## Overview

AIBL is the only American Indian non-profit organization solely dedicated to empowering business students in the United States. Our programs are designed to engage students in activities that stimulate, enhance, and expand educational experiences beyond traditional academic methods. All students are encouraged to participate in AIBL regardless of race, academic major, or career objectives.

## History

AIBL was organized in January 1994 and was recognized as a 501(c)(3) in 1995 on the University of Montana's campus in Missoula as a result of founder, and first Executive Director, Michelle Henderson's (Assiniboine) master thesis. The original idea evolved from concern expressed by many tribal leaders that recognized a critical need for educated, experienced members to assist with tribal economic development efforts.

## Vision Statement

AIBL's vision over the next decade is to become the pre-eminent national non-profit organization serving American Indians and Alaska Natives by providing business and entrepreneurship education, leadership development training, and the necessary support to help young men and women who aspire to pursue studies and careers in business, entrepreneurship, or related disciplines.

## PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

**AIBL's Student Chapters:** AIBL student chapters are designed to provide peer support, leadership training, career and college guidance, and business networking. Student chapters provide an “extended-family” support system to help students facilitate the transition of being away from home while attending school. Student chapters are categorized as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Description</u>
Pre-College	K-12 Grades
Tribal College	AIHEC Members
University	Any academic institutions who are not members of AIHEC

**Scholarships (when available):** The AIBL Scholarship fund has been established to enhance AIBL's commitment to education and the mission of promoting future business leaders who will utilize their education and experience to ultimately assist in improving tribal economic environments. This fund enables us to provide educational money to deserving AIBL members to assist in the costs of attending an institution of higher education. It is also an opportunity for the national AIBL Program to honor students for their dedication to academics and the commitment to the mission of AIBL.

**National Leadership Conference:** The annual conference provides presentations, panel discussions, and workshops that focus on contemporary themes surrounding Indian business and Tribal economic development issues. Provides students with leadership training, concentrating on such areas as Learning to Lead; Effective Team Leadership; Teambuilding Techniques; Effective Decision Making; Goal Setting; Conflict Resolution; Managing by American Indian Cultural Values; Building Self-Esteem/Self-Worth; etc. All conference activities include a component that addresses the American Indian cultural value system.

**National Business Plan Competition:** AIBL sponsors a National AIBL Business Competition to facilitate entrepreneurship and provide our membership with the opportunity to acquire experience in planning and running an actual business venture. AIBL Chapters are encouraged to run chapter businesses.

**National Chapter of the Year Competition:** Chapters from across the United States compete for Chapter of the Year honors, at the National AIBL Conference. This competition is designed to allow chapters to showcase their leadership styles and accomplishments throughout the year. Chapters will be judged on current & past events/activities, community service projects, chapter run small business, group dynamics, collaboration with other AIBL Chapters, unique activities or projects, participation in national conference online fundraising and presentation skills.

# ORGANIZING A NEW CHAPTER

*"A man should rely on  
his own resources; the one who  
trains himself is ready for any emergency."*

*Omaha Oral Tradition*

## AIBL STUDENT CHAPTERS

Student chapters facilitate the overall goals and objectives of the AIBL program. AIBL chapters are designed to create an environment that will support and promote the American Indian business student and/or entrepreneur who will help improve tribal economic environments through designing culturally appropriate businesses.

AIBL's goal is to stimulate American Indians' interest in pursuing a business education to assist in the area of tribal economic development. AIBL's chapter objectives are designed to encourage student interest through educational, community service and social activities.

Chapter activities emphasize education as a tool to facilitate personal and professional growth for students through mentoring programs, leadership training, conference participation, and employment opportunities.

Community service projects are designed to create a larger sense of community involvement and giving. Chapter members are encouraged to participate in civic service events to gain experience, exposure and a sense of "giving back" to the community.

The chapter's social activities accentuate teamwork and create strong, lasting friendships based on a personal and professional foundation of parallel goals and dreams. AIBL strives to provide an "extended family" support system that will reap long-term personal and professional benefits for the student member.

The educational, service and social activities of chapters provide opportunities for the members to facilitate the ideals, aspirations and purpose that the parent organization promotes---to assist in creating an overall better social, economic and cultural environment for American Indians.

## **BENEFITS OF CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP**

AIBL members have an opportunity to secure unique benefits by organizing a student chapter or becoming members of a chapter. Some of the benefits are listed below:

- 1. Membership in a nationally recognized professional American Indian organization.** Membership in a professional organization that caters specifically to American Indians and demonstrates a student's commitment to the highest ideals of the business profession. Each new chapter receives an AIBL membership plaque commemorating its existence.
- 2. Strength through numbers.** More can be accomplished by working in a group motivated by a common interest than by working individually. AIBL chapters have a unique opportunity to contribute to campus, high school, grade school and community events through chapter activities.
- 3. Personal strength through chapter membership.** Through peer support groups, networking and chapter activities, AIBL members become part of a broad network of American Indian students and professionals. This network can help individual members with the challenge of completing a degree by offering academic, social and emotional support.
- 4. Leadership training and experience opportunities.** Through holding an executive officer position or committee chairperson positions, AIBL members receive invaluable leadership experience. Executive officers are invited to attend a one-week leadership seminar designed to help students develop the leadership skills they need to motivate and provide direction to the rest of their chapter.
- 5. National conference participation.** Each chapter member is eligible for the student rate to attend the national conference.
- 6. Scholarship resources.** AIBL student members are eligible for AIBL Scholarships when they are available.
- 7. Fund-raising.** Chapters raise substantial funds through chapter activities and through corporate sponsors, local businesses and tribal solicitation. These fund-raising activities will facilitate the educational aspect of AIBL through the fund allocation and accounting process.
- 8. Recognition of achievement.** A distinguished chapter award will be given annually to the chapter that has distinguished itself in the promotion of AIBL principles and ideals.
- 9. Access to discount AIBL merchandise.** AIBL's merchandise includes jackets, caps, sweatshirts, t-shirts, book bags, jewelry, stationary and posters depicting AIBL's logo in some shape or form.

## STUDENT CHAPTER FORMATION

*"We do not want riches, but we want to train our children right  
Riches would do us no good.  
We could not take them with us to the other world.  
We do not want riches, we want peace and love."*

*Red Cloud  
Oglala Lakota, 1870*

Student chapters can be organized at any K-8, high school, tribal college, community college, junior college, technical institute, and university. Chapters will be formed under the standard *Code for Governing of Student Chapters* (page 10). General procedures for application include:

1. A letter of application will be submitted to AIBL's board of directors (a sample letter is on page 18).
2. A completed *AIBL Application for the Establishment of a Student Chapter*. This application will be submitted to the AIBL board of directors for approval.
3. Each AIBL chapter is encouraged to have at least four members. All chapters must be organized under the National AIBL Program.
4. Any full-time or part-time student Indian/non-Indian may be a member of AIBL.
5. A chapter must have an advisor. The chapter advisor does not have to be an American Indian, but must be aware of and possess some compassion and sensitivity toward Indian people, students and the American Indian traditional culture. The advisor will be a friend, a strong supporter and someone in whom students can confide. Chapter advisors are not expected to assume leadership of the student group, but they are encouraged to work closely with the members in a supportive manner while showing trust in the executive officers by allowing them latitude to use their own judgment and function on their own.
6. The student chapter is encouraged to be recognized as a school-affiliated organization. School affiliation provides access to school facilities and services (such as meeting rooms and video equipment) as well as eligibility for school funding.
7. All required forms can be found on the AIBL website ([www.aibl.org](http://www.aibl.org))