



Nebraska

Rural Business Programs • Rural Business Development Grant—Native American Funding

GROW 2 Gather

In 2016, Central Plains Foundation, Inc. dba GROW Nebraska (GROW), applied for and received a Native American Rural Business Development Grant from Rural Development. GROW collaborated with the Lakota Hope Ministry and University of Nebraska Extension to work with Oglala Sioux artists in and around Whiteclay, Nebraska and on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

The Pine Ridge Indian Reservation is one of the poorest locations on earth. While the national unemployment level is below eight percent, the unemployment rate on the reservation hovers between 80 percent and 85 percent. Forty-nine percent of the population live below the federal poverty rate. GROW has dubbed their grant Generating Real Opportunities for Wealth: Oglala Sioux Tribe (GROW OST). The objective of the GROW OST was to work with an economic gardening model to help entrepreneurs build their businesses that honor the culture of the participants with longevity in mind. Classes have included pricing products, using social media to market products, using email and learning basic business skills.

GROW found that before they could implement the economic gardening with the Oglala Sioux Artists, they had to develop a strong, positive working relationship first. It has proven to be the most important, success-building activity of the project. The name of this article is GROW 2 Gather. When Lakota People have meetings and ceremonies they are called gatherings. GROW has spent the last year gathering and growing the Oglala Artists. Their work will continue with the grant awarded in FY 2017, which will expand the services provided to the Native American People.



Native American Artists products on display in the Kearney GROW Store.

Obligation Amount:	\$49,700 Grant
Date of Obligation:	\$49,700 NA RBD Grant 7/18/16; \$31,586 NA RBD Grant 7/31/17
Congressional District:	Representative Smith 03, Senators Fischer, Sasse
Partners:	UNL Extension, Lakota Hope Ministry
Demographics:	Sheridan, Dawes, Box Butte Counties in Nebraska and Pine Ridge Indian Reservation (Oglala Lakota County)
Impact:	In January 2017 GROW had 30 ecommerce listings for Lakota products, in September 14, 2017, that number had grown to 129 live listings on Buynebraska.com, Ebay, Amazon and GrowNebraskaNative.com. Artists are selling their products for a being paid a fair price for their work.
