



Rural Development • Community Facility • Tribal College Initiative Grant

Oglala Lakota College Administers Educational Opportunities With Support from USDA

Schools in South Dakota play a vital role in educating and preparing future generations for postsecondary education and careers. An expansion of the educational outcomes for American Indian students across the state focuses on Tribal Colleges. Providing necessary and quality education in South Dakota Tribal Colleges is important to create ladders of opportunities for future generations. Following up on this, USDA Rural Development recently awarded a [Tribal College Initiative Grant](#) to Oglala Lakota College (OLC) in Kyle. OLC matched the \$145,301 grant with the required 5% or \$7,266 for Instructional Center equipment, Piya Wiconi Renovation and Instructional Center renovation.

Prior to submission of the grant, administrators had met with the Center Directors for the 9 Instructional Centers on the Pine Ridge Reservation and asked what they needed to improve the physical condition of their centers and upgrade learning outcomes. Based on Center Director input OLC purchased 35 white boards, 216 stack chairs, 12 office chairs, 75 folding tables, 4 office desks, 7 doors, and 14 TVs. These were to replace outworn or damaged equipment. The TVs were to upgrade access to videos and video conferencing.

“Oglala Lakota College would like to thank USDA for the Community Facilities Tribal College emphasis program,” said Thomas Shortbull, President of Oglala Lakota College. “Over the past 12 years the program has helped us remodel and build Head Start classrooms, make our facilities ADA compliant, and keep up with the ongoing maintenance that over 1,800 students make necessary for our 9 Instructional Centers and our administrative hub at Piya Wiconi. The latest grant has enabled us to upgrade equipment for instruction including white boards and monitors for teleconferencing. We are also replacing worn out flooring in classrooms, leveling floors, and remodeling a student kitchen area.”

OLC operates a decentralized learning model where faculty travels to the Instructional Centers to reduce travel for the students. OLC only has two small student residences and otherwise is a commuter college. The Pine Ridge Reservation is 3,468 square miles and the Instructional Centers are in the 9 key towns. OLC serves over 1,400 students a semester which creates wear and tear on the Centers.

OLC Main Administration, Learning Resource Center, Science Building, Historical Center and Bookstore is housed on the Piya Wiconi Complex outside of Kyle, SD in the center of the Reservation.

The main building was built in 1980 and needs ongoing renovation after 35 years. We have a number of projects and deal with them each year as funding permits. This year we replaced HVAC units in the College Apartment (used for meetings) and Education Department Office which are two levels in one section of the building.

In addition to postsecondary students, OLC serves over 300 GED students a year and operates the Reservation Early Head Start and Head Start Programs at the request of the Oglala Sioux Tribe. The struggle to maintain and upgrade the over 35 buildings is constant. Shortbull added, “We have a small Maintenance Endowment and use the income from this. We also budget Maintenance Funds from our regular budget but the USDA Community Facilities funds are a godsend each year allowing us to allocate more funds for instruction and student support.”

Other recipients receiving funding in 2014 from the USDA Rural Development [Community Facilities Tribal College Initiative grant program](#) include: Sinte Gleska University in Mission received \$120,000 to purchase student buses; and Sisseton Wahpeton College (SWC) in Sisseton received \$125,549 to enhance the SWC facility by providing funding for student housing.

USDA Rural Development is pleased to partner with Tribal Colleges to provide funding needed for infrastructure and equipment. The application deadline for Fiscal Year 2015 funding cycle is May 30th. For additional information, please contact [Doug Roehl](#) at 605-352-1142. Growing the economy by investing in rural communities and increasing opportunities for families is key to our Nation’s future.

Obligation Amount: \$145,301 Tribal College Initiative Grant

Date of Obligation: 08/26/2014

Congressional District: Senators Thune and Rounds ; Representative Noem, SD

Partners: Oglala Lakota College and USDA Rural Development

Demographics: Shannon County

Impact: The program has helped upgrade equipment and upgrade access to videos and video conferencing. OLC serves over 1,400 students. Providing necessary and quality education in South Dakota Tribal Colleges is important to create ladders of opportunities for future