



South Dakota

Community Programs • Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant Program

Taking the Student Experience to the Next Level

Oglala and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribes' members can attend college without driving long distances thanks in part to USDA financing. The funds will enable residents in remote, rural parts of the state to participate in a variety of classes at Oglala Lakota College (OLC).

USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine grant funds of \$491,493 will be used to set up Smart Rooms in nine instructional centers offering courses that focus on math, science, nursing, and foundational studies. This cloud-based learning system will expand access to class sessions and connect mentors and tutors. More than 1,400 students per semester can make progress toward their degrees. Technology utilization will bring instructors and students spread over thousands of square miles face-to-face through a synchronous live video feed. It will provide file sharing and collaboration. This technology will take the student experience to the next level. With the shortage of child care and unreliable transportation, this expansion of educational resources is assisting residents to advance their education and improve their career outlook. This project delivers greater efficiencies for sharing and collaboration, and is a foundation for building progress in two of the economically poorest and isolated areas in America.



Pictured above is a graduation procession being held on the campus at Oglala Lakota College. Picture courtesy of Oglala Lakota College.

“We would like to thank USDA for assisting Oglala Lakota College with the installation of Smart Rooms. We believe this will take learning to a higher level, assist students to earn their degrees more quickly and assist OLC to fulfill our mission to educate students for professional and vocational employment opportunities in Lakota country,” said Thomas Shortbull, South Dakota Hall of Fame member and President of Oglala Lakota College. “The College will graduate well-rounded students grounded in Wolakolkiciyapi; learning Lakota ways of life in the community by teaching Lakota culture and language as part of preparing students to participate in a multicultural world.”

Obligation Amount:	\$491,493 DLT
Date of Obligation:	09/14/2018
Congressional District:	At Large, Senator Thune, Senator Rounds, and Congressman Johnson
Partners:	Oglala Lakota College and USDA Rural Development
Demographics:	Oglala Lakota College is a public tribal community college in Kyle, South Dakota. One thousand four hundred and fifty six (1,456) students enrolled part- and full-time. OLC serves the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, which has a population of about 26,000 and covers 3,468 square miles in southwestern South Dakota.
Impact:	This project delivers greater efficiencies for sharing and collaboration, and is a foundation for building progress in two of the economically poorest and isolated areas in America.
