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Executive Summary

This planning grant will be used to develop an AmeriCorps program which will engage AmeriCorps members of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe to serve as tutors/teachers/presenters/ facilitators in tribal communities located on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota.

Members will address the needs of tribal members resulting in improved literacy in critical life skill areas. Program activities will primarily be in the areas of education and life skill literacy in order to increase the number of persons seeking and attaining a General Equivalency Diploma (GED), and who are able to manage their financial resources, no matter how limited, and who are also able to manage and improve their health and wellness.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

Program Design

The Rosebud Sioux Reservation covers 5,000 square miles in south central South Dakota. It is the home of the Sicangu Lakota, or Rosebud Sioux, a tribal group of the western Teton Dakota. Sinte Gleska University (SGU), a tribally-controlled institution of higher education, is located on the Rosebud in the tribal community of Antelope, bordering the town of Mission.

The Rosebud Sioux Tribe chartered Sinte Gleska University in December 1970, with the first classes starting Feb.2, 1971. SGU is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Higher Learning Commission to offer baccalaureate and associate degrees, Master's Degree in Elementary Education and Master of Arts/Human Services's Community Counseling.

The University provides higher education and other learning opportunities for the Sicangu Nation and surrounding communities. Education is seen as a key to improving the quality of life on the reservation, one of the poorest areas of the country. Since its inception, the University has conferred 2,180 degrees and certificates. The University awards an average of 100 degrees and certificates each year.

The University also has an extensive Adult Basic Education (ABE) program preparing adult learners for the General Equivalency Diploma (GED). The ABE program operates four learning centers spanning a 2,800 square mile, 5-county area that consists of the Rosebud Sioux Reservation and Off Reservation Tribal Lands (ORTL), amounting to 4.5 million acres. Over 2,400 individuals have received a GED since the University's inception. The University awards an average of 50 GEDs each year.

Today, in the 21st century, Sinte Gleska University remains committed to its earliest purposes: to

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preserve and teach Lakota culture, history and language, and to promote innovative and effective strategies to address the myriad of social and economic concerns confronting the Sicangu Lakota Oyate.

The University intends to engage in a one-year planning process leading to the development of an AmeriCorps program. In an area of low educational attainment, and limited economic opportunity, the planning process will focus on assessing literacy skills in four areas: language literacy, technology literacy, financial & economic literacy, and health & wellness literacy. In assessing the impact each of these skill areas play in hindering personal, family, community, and tribal development, the Planning Group will determine which focus area(s) and what activities will best result in an informed and active community, able to use information and available resources to access and improve 1) educational attainment, 2) financial acumen, and/or 3) health outcomes. It is expected that the one-year planning process will lead to decisions on how best to provide information to an area and people that lack access to information, and how AmeriCorps volunteers can be used to improve literacy and access in critical life-skill areas.

The regions encompassed by the Rosebud Sioux Reservation has historically been one of the most impoverished in the nation. For the Sicangu, who live on the sixth largest reservation in the country, access to economic opportunities that improve quality of life are among the greatest of challenges. The century and a half of poverty and the concerted efforts to destroy tribal cultures have created social conditions that contribute to the distressed environment of the Sicangu Lakota and of the entire Lakota Nation. The following table displays data that illustrates economic conditions, exacerbated by the youth of the people.

Data Category	Rosebud	United States	South Dakota
American Indian Population	31,546*	5.2 million	82,073
Average Per Capita Income	\$11,446	\$20,357	\$24,925
Median Household Income	\$27,431	\$35,062	\$48,010
Poverty Rate			
(Persons below poverty level)	48.4%	28.4%	13.9%
Unemployed	80%	43.5%	3.2%
No high school diploma			
(over age 25)	21.3%	23%	10.2%
Median Age	24	29	36.9
Population Under Age 18	41%	31%	24.7%

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Source: U.S. Census Bureau > 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates *Source: Rosebud Sioux Tribe Enrollment Office, Rosebud, SD, 2013

The Sinte Gleska University AmeriCorps Planning Program will be located in the ABE Department. This department, as noted above, operates four technology learning centers serving the major communities along with smaller communities in the same geographic areas. The centers serve 14 of the reservation's 20 communities and include Mission [Antelope, North Antelope, White Horse], Gregory [Bonesteel, Milk's Camp], Parmelee [He Dog, Upper Cut Meat, Lower Cut Meat], and White River [Horse Creek, Swift Bear]. The planning process will also consider how to engage residents in unserved communities in the AmeriCorps program. The University's ABE/GED Program consists of a director, tester, four center managers who also act as tutors, and two other tutors. There is a need to increase the number of tutors/teachers/presenters/facilitators in order to increase the number of persons seeking and attaining a GED, and who are able to manage their financial resources, no matter how limited, and who are also able to manage and improve their health and wellness. AmeriCorps members will serve as tutors/teachers/presenters/facilitators focused on area(s) determined during the planning process.

Planning Process

A Planning Coordinator will be hired to manage the planning process. The Coordinator will have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in education, business, or human services, and will preferably have experience with community development and working with Native Americans. The Coordinator will report to the University's Vice President for Community Education. Once hired, the Coordinator is responsible for scheduling all planning sessions. These sessions can include focus groups, targeted age-group meetings, and open community meetings conducted in the 14 communities served by the ABE Program. The Coordinator will also conduct a needs assessment, develop and administer surveys, and compile survey data that will be used to gauge community interest in literacy projects. Other sources of data include literacy, economic, and health information for the distinct reservation areas served by the ABE Program (communities listed above). The Coordinator will work with an Advisory Council of five to seven members. Members will include the ABE Director, one of the Learning Center Directors, and a community member from each of the four Learning Center communities. A cross-section of ages and gender will be considered when seeking Council members. The Advisory Council will help promote the planning process, provide cultural perspectives, particularly on the role of volunteerism and activism within their communities, assist in disseminating

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information and engaging community members in the planning process, and make recommendations for activities and projects that can best meet community needs.

As part of the planning process, the Coordinator work with the Advisory Council to develop scenarios of how an AmeriCorps project could work within each literacy area of consideration (basic skills/technology, economic & financial, health & wellness) and in each of the four areas of the reservation. The scenarios will also include likely activities that could enhance the basic information and education process. For example, some areas of the Rosebud have little commercial venues yet have micro-businesses that flourish. Some areas use more traditional Lakota practices for health and healing. Other areas have a wider spectrum of activities for all age groups. Using the planning process to gather this data and create scenarios that show the current literacy level and then the resultant literacy levels with AmeriCorps programming and interventions, can help demonstrate how to increase the literacy levels in key areas and what levels of improvement can be expected.

The planning process will also focus on the desirable skill areas for AmeriCorps members. It will determine the number of volunteers needed to bring about a positive outcome, using data analysis of the information gathered and the scenarios to determine the number of AmeriCorps members needed and the desirable qualifications and characteristics for each center location. At the end of the planning year, a handbook will be in place that details the recruitment, orientation, and training program for the AmeriCorps volunteers. It is expected that all of the AmeriCorps volunteers will be tribal members or non-members living on the reservation or ORTL. There are several programs that use volunteers extensively, such as the Head Start Program and the System of Care. These programs have written policy and procedure manuals for their volunteers that can serve as models for the Sinte Gleska University AmeriCorps Planning Program. All of these resources will help in the development of a proposal for an AmeriCorps grant.

As a way to keep the University community informed, the Planning Coordinator will create a Facebook page and link on the SGU website. An Administrative Assistant will help maintain records of meetings, forums, and focus groups, and assist with social media and local radio programming.

TIMELINE: The Planning Coordinator will be hired by the start of month 2 of the project. Month 1: The Personnel Director will advertise the position and conclude the hiring process for the Coordinator and Administrative Assistant. Month 2: Convene the Advisory Council; create a calendar of events, including dates/times for all Advisory Council and community meetings, focus groups, events designed to gather community input. Month 3-6: Meetings; gather data from tribal organizations and state and national databases; create social media spots (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, web page, radio

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programming); disseminate summary report of activities/accomplishments/challenges. Month 7-8: Using data collected, create scenarios to aid in decision-making (focus area for AmeriCorps proposal). Disseminate scenario-based surveys to community members. Collate data. Month 9: Determine the project best suited for an AmeriCorps grant proposal, including focus area, sites (communities), goals and objectives, and work plan for AmeriCorps members. Month 10: Develop brief handbook outlining qualifications and characteristics required of AmeriCorps members, roles and expectations for all collaborators in the AmeriCorps Project, and the plan for recruiting tribal and other community members for the AmeriCorps Project. Month 11: Hold meeting in each Learning Center community to discuss the proposed AmeriCorps Project and organize a sustainability group to help maintain the level of effort developed during the planning year. Month 12: Write final White Paper on the Result of the Planning Process, including an analysis of challenges, changes to original plan, lessons learned; include a summary proposal for an AmeriCorps grant application.

Organizational Capability

The University is foremost a recognized leader in community-based, grass-roots higher education. SGU began as an all-volunteer organization. Our history shows our dedication to the people of the area and underscores our ability to continually provide academic and community development programs that meet local needs, despite adverse socio-economic conditions. In our 41 year history, we have awarded over 2,000 degrees and certificates. The University charter mandates that it provide higher education and other learning opportunities for the Sicangu Nation (Rosebud Sioux) and surrounding communities, and the University holds fast to this mission.

SGU routinely manages federal and private grants. Our core funding is funneled through the Department of Interior in accordance with the Tribally Controlled Community Colleges and Universities Assistance Act, first signed into law in 1978. Fully one-third of the University's budget is the result of competitively awarded grants. Our leadership and success includes systems change efforts in the areas of juvenile justice (Reclaiming Futures initiative of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation) and youth and family services (System of Care). The System of Care, funded through SAMHSA, was the result of a three-year planning process funded with a Circle of Care grant. These projects include more than 20 tribal organizational and agency partners. Our Lakota Studies Department leads the Sicangu Oyate efforts in promoting Lakota language, history and culture, and traditional practices. The University sponsors quarterly Family Wellness Days, Health Fairs, and Economic Development/Entrepreneurship Market Days. SGU helped initiate action leading to the development of the reservation's Boys and Girls Clubs. We continually seek community input by annually sponsoring a

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week of forums focused on tribal nation building.

The University follows generally acceptable accounting practices. The Finance Office manages all financial and business transactions. SGU undergoes a yearly audit. A Finance Office Policy and Procedure Manual is in place as is a Procurement Policy. Employees are governed by these and other policies outlined in the Employee Policy & Procedure Handbook. A Board of Regents provides guidance on all policy and procedure development, and authorizes the University's officers to enter into contracts and grants for the benefit of the institution and its constituents. The President has the authority to hire new personnel, based on available resources. Current Regents include Lakota spiritual leaders, a tribal councilman, elders, and SGU graduates. All are Lakota tribal members who speak the Lakota language. They will be invited to attend the AmeriCorps planning sessions. The Planning Coordinator will provide the Board Secretary with a copy of the monthly report, also available to the Advisory Council and the Vice President for Community Education.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

The total project costs are \$93,618. This includes the salaries of a full-time Planning Coordinator and full-time Project Assistant and benefits. Benefits include the federal requirements FICA, FIT, and Medicare and university-provided health care and modest retirement of 2%. The salaries are according to the SGU Salary & Wage Scale and are based on education and experience. Other costs are relatively low but reflect usual costs associated with a high poverty area. Travel costs reflect the distances between communities and the University location. This project requires outreach to communities scattered over a 5,000 square mile area. The \$.50/mile is the current maximum allowance for staff travel. Supply items are minimal, but include the tools and items regular office items necessary to complete the planning activities.

The University has a negotiated indirect cost agreement through the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services with a predetermined rate of 28% on all budget items. The University is taking the 5% administrative allowance for a cost of \$4,458. The remaining 23% of project costs (\$20,507) and \$1,639 of the office rental constitutes the University's 24% match.

SGU regularly collaborates with many tribal and private agencies, organizations, and businesses. It routinely shares resources with these partner organizations in order to effect change. It is expected that the Planning Coordinator will engage other organizations and secure resource commitments in order to complete the project. The University also has a Foundation Office and other resource development personnel and practices that can be used to help create a sustainability plan. A final resource is the University's student body. Most departments require service learning projects as part

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of degree attainment. Students can be recruited to help with project, which may lead to their recruitment as an AmeriCorps member.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Clarification Summary

It is a challenge for institutions and organizations on the Rosebud to commit to dollar-for-dollar match initiatives. Financial resources are scarce for one of the poorest and youngest counties in the country, and one that relies so heavily on financial dollars for its economy. This is a typical situation for the large land-based tribal groups of the northern plains. Within this reality, we are able to work collaboratively with tribal and private groups who donate time, facilities, meeting space, and incentives/food/and other items needed to make projects attractive, workable, and maintained into the future. The University itself is a good example of a grassroots effort that has continued for over 40 years. As part of the planning grant, the Project Director will lead the effort to write a Sustainability Plan. S/he will work with the University's Foundation and other fundraising team members to ensure appropriate and manageable tasks related to securing financial and in-kind support are part of any proposal developed for future submittal to AmeriCorps. Our experience with our SAMHSA-funded System of Care program (Tiwahe Glu Kini Pi--Bringing the Family Back to Life), that includes over 20 tribal and private agencies who must also provide financial and in-kind matches, will help provide guidance for the AmeriCorps project. It is an area that volunteers can help with, and a role for volunteerism in resource development will be part of the Sustainability Plan. We have space and facilities. We also have donations and other income for operating expenses. We are able to provide the in-kind or dollar match noted in the budget. We also expect that we can get support for meeting space and incentives from the communities and our agency partners and tribal program partners.

The University will hire a Project Director to manage the Planning grant. The PD will be in place and working by the start of Month 2 of the project. It is the PD's job to manage and complete all of the tasks described in the TIMELINE, as submitted. By the end of the one-year project period, the PD will have prepared a summary proposal to serve as a basis for an AmeriCorps Project Grant. All of the activities outlined in the Timeline are geared to this final project. This is a Planning effort leading to a determination of what best suits our tribal community in terms of undertaking an AmeriCorps

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project.

Continuation Changes

It is a challenge for institutions and organizations on the Rosebud to commit to dollar-for-dollar match initiatives. Financial resources are scarce for one of the poorest and youngest counties in the country, and one that relies so heavily on financial dollars for its economy. This is a typical situation for the large land-based tribal groups of the northern plains. Within this reality, we are able to work collaboratively with tribal and private groups who donate time, facilities, meeting space, and incentives/food/and other items needed to make projects attractive, workable, and maintained into the future. The University itself is a good example of a grassroots effort that has continued for over 40 years. As part of the planning grant, the Project Director will lead the effort to write a Sustainability Plan. S/he will work with the University's Foundation and other fundraising team members to ensure appropriate and manageable tasks related to securing financial and in-kind support are part of any proposal developed for future submittal to AmeriCorps. Our experience with our SAMHSA-funded System of Care program (Tiwahe Glu Kini Pi--Bringing the Family Back to Life), that includes over 20 tribal and private agencies who must also provide financial and in-kind matches, will help provide guidance for the AmeriCorps project. It is an area that volunteers can help with, and a role for volunteerism in resource development will be part of the Sustainability Plan. We have space and facilities. We also have donations and other income for operating expenses. We are able to provide the in-kind or dollar match noted in the budget. We also expect that we can get support for meeting space and incentives from the communities and our agency partners and tribal program partners.

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Grant Characteristics

- AmeriCorps Member Population - Communities of Color
- AmeriCorps Member Population - Low -income Individuals
- AmeriCorps Member Population - Native Americans
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