



# South Dakota Native Homeownership Coalition Construction Internship Program

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OFFICE OF NATIVE AMERICAN PROGRAMS  
NATIONAL WEBINAR SERIES

# OFFICE OF NATIVE AMERICAN PROGRAMS (ONAP)

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# TODAY'S FEATURED GUESTS

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**Justin Williams**

Workforce Development Program Manager  
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**Tanisha Swanson**

Workforce Development Training Coordinator  
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Also featuring

**Nicole Pourier**

Business Development Coach/CIP Site Manager  
Lakota Funds/SDNHOC Member  
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# BACKGROUND

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## **The South Dakota Native Homeownership Coalition (SDNHOC)**

- Founded in 2013
- Mission to increase homeownership opportunities for Native Americans in South Dakota
- Members include South Dakota's Tribes, federal and state agencies, tribally designated housing entities (TDHEs), nonprofit organizations, housing developers, lenders, and community development financial institutions





# Why the Construction Internship Program was created

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- Homeownership successes limited by lack of available affordable housing.
- Contractors: Delays in developing residential housing due to lack of employment-ready workforce.
  - Lack of construction skills but also reliability and other job readiness skills.

# Internship Model Inspired by Four Bands

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- Modeled on a past youth internship run by Four Bands Community Funds.
- Initial goal: match Oglala Lakota College building trades students with local contractor organizations as summer interns.
  - Students gain hands-on experience.
  - Contractors can “test” potential employees with no risk.
  - CDFIs had some relationships with contractor organizations as clients.



South Dakota Native Homeownership Coalition spearheaded a construction internship in 2017 that has assisted nearly half of all interns in finding full-time employment or starting their own businesses.

# EARLY YEARS

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## 2017-2018 – Pilot program

- Cheyenne River Reservation - Four Bands Community Funds
- Lakota Funds - Pine Ridge Reservation – Lakota Funds

Interns: Students enrolled in Building Trades programs at Oglala Lakota College

### Components

- Construction education
- Financial literacy
- Required to open a bank account at a local institution
- Students worked 40 hours a week for 10 weeks in the summer
- Stipend of \$10/hour as short-term contractors
- Stipends for mileage and food



# EARLY YEARS

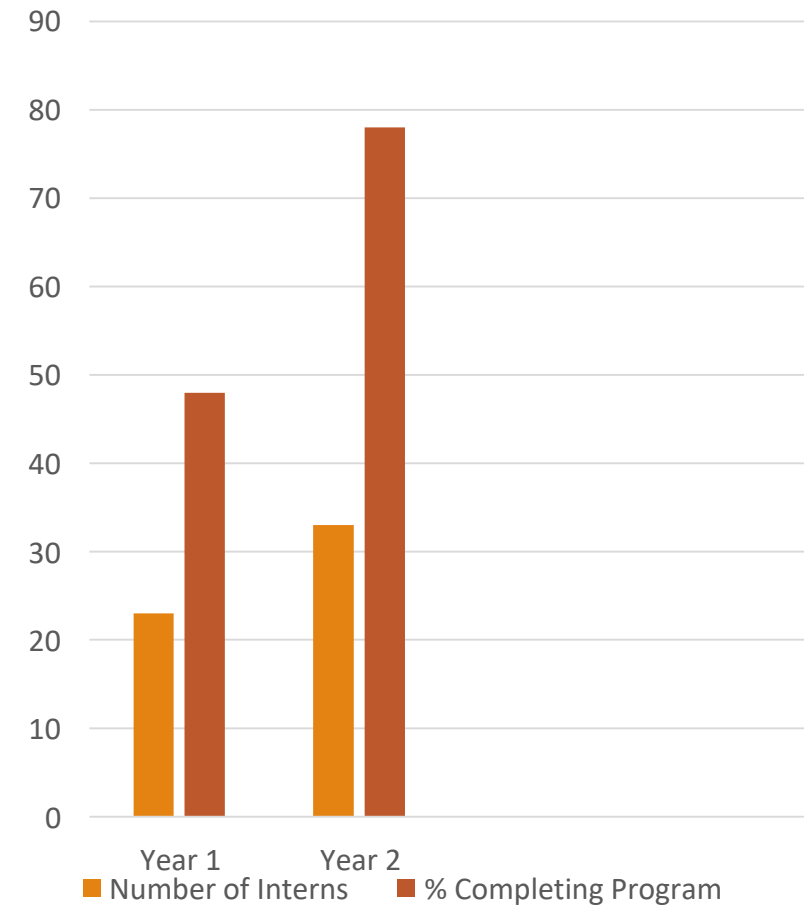
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## 2019 First Evaluations

- With interns, participating organizations, and contractor organizations
- Overwhelmingly positive results
- Confirmed need to increase recruitment and support interns through summer
- Barriers included transportation, getting equipment, retention concerns

## Program Outcomes

- Interns
  - Gained hands-on experience
  - Confidence about future job prospects
- Contractors
  - Hired some students immediately and developed relationships with future employees
  - Grew their businesses
- Community Development Financial Institutions
  - Strengthened existing relationships with local contracting company clients
  - Grew client base by identifying prospective clients





# PROGRAM GROWTH IN YEAR 3

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- Rosebud Reservation - Sicangu Wicoti Awayankapi (SWA) Corp, Rosebud Economic Development Corporation, Sicangu Nation Employment and Training Program - Rosebud Reservation
- Rosebud Reservation – Tatanka Funds
- Lake Traverse Reservation - Sisseton Wahpeton Housing Authority



# CURRENT PROGRAM SITES

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- Four Bands Community Funds - Cheyenne River Reservation
- Lakota Funds - Pine Ridge Reservation
- Sicangu Wicoti Awayankapi (SWA) Corp- Rosebud Reservation
- Tatanka Funds - Rosebud Reservation
- Sisseton Wahpeton Housing Authority - Lake Traverse Reservation
- Crow Creek Housing Authority – Crow Creek Reservation
- Yankton Sioux Housing Authority – Yankton Reservation

# Map

## Pine Ridge

- Lakota Funds

## Rosebud

- SWA Corp
- Tatanka Funds

## Crow Creek

- Crow Creek Housing Authority

## Cheyenne River

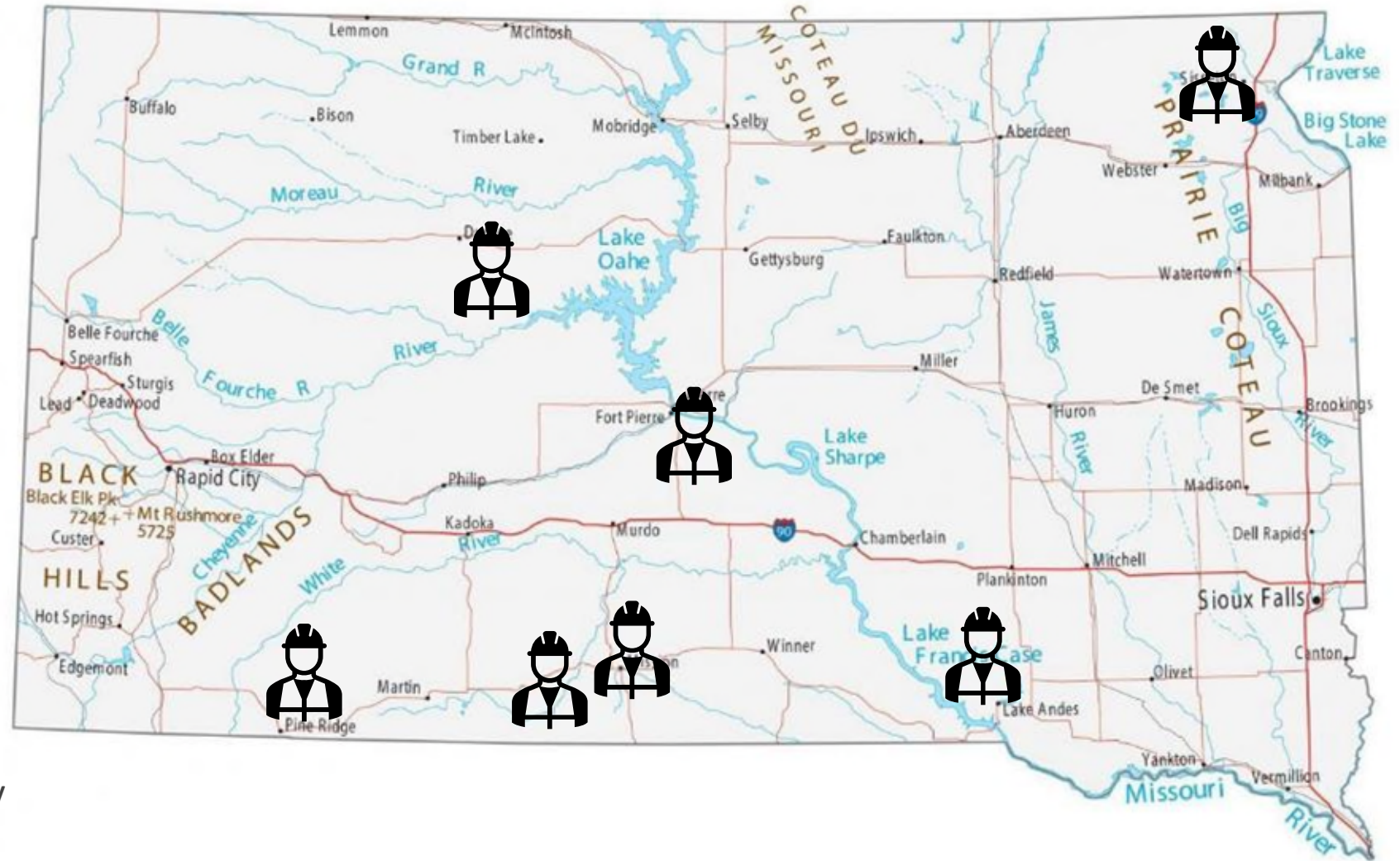
- Four Bands Community Fund

## Yankton

- Yankton Sioux Housing Authority

## Sisseton-Wahpeton

- Sisseton-Wahpeton Housing Authority







Without this internship, I probably wouldn't be at the phase I am at right now. It provides opportunities in places where there haven't been enough – and I am completely grateful for all of the opportunities I've been given.

– Daniel Kirk, former intern, owner of Arrow Lumber and Construction

# HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

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## Phase 1 – Planning

Sept - Jan

- Monthly Meetings
- Start & End Dates
- Logistics
- Financials
- Concerns from previous CIP Year
- Reporting
- MOUs

## Phase 2 – Recruitment

Feb - May

- Job Fairs & Career Fairs
- School Visits
- Social Media & Flyers
- Radio Ads
- Interviews
- Selection Process
- Safety Equipment & Tools

## Phase 3 – CIP Starts

May -Aug

- Orientation
- OSHA 10 Training
- 1<sup>st</sup> Aid & CPR Training
- Basic Trades Math Class (Depend on location)
- Financial Literacy
- Monthly Updates

## Phase 4 – Post CIP

Aug –Dec

- Reporting
- 6 Months Check up
- Resume Building
- Update Concerns
- What worked what didn't
- Update Program Needs



# MANAGING ORGANIZATION ROLE

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Managing organizations as each site oversee the program

- Conducting outreach to interns and contractor organizations
- Managing applications and selection process
- Making Placements
- Carrying out orientation sessions for interns and contractors
- Managing stipends and monitoring onsite work
- Troubleshooting

May include supporting with life skills and financial skills or setting up those classes

May include mentoring

May include supporting with equipment and uniforms



# The role of a CIP Site Manager

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- Recruitment
- Interviews
- Ongoing support
- Resume building
- Financial Literacy
- Reporting
- Meetings
- Site Visits

# FINANCIAL LITERACY

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- Financial education was initially added as a funder requirement.
- It has become a bedrock of the program.
- Sceptics worried that it takes them away from the field, but many say, in the end, it is the most important part of the program.
- Critical for interns who may have little experience with banks or budgeting
- Because the interns receive a stipend, the financial literacy classes are not theoretical. They are a very real lesson in managing funds.
- Opening the account impacts the individual interns but can spread to their children and other family members or friends.



# Wrap-Around Service

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- Gas
- Work Boots, Tools and Safety Equipment
- Meals
- Childcare assistance
- Driver License/State ID
- Transportation



“I never thought about credit or building credit. I never thought I needed it.  
I now know the importance of it.” –CIP Intern





# PARTNERSHIPS IN EVOLUTION

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2017. Program operates largely with private funds but begins outreach with Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) through SD Department of Labor and Regulation

- WIOA could provide 25 hours/week of funding for qualified interns, job search resources
- Regulatory hurdles: program payment structure and workmen's compensation
- Memorandum of understanding signed 2020

2020. As private funders shift their focus with pandemic, program looked to greater local support. Focus also grows from primarily placing interns with local contractors to substantial increase to placement with TDHEs.

- Big asset to program. Since they provide the majority of housing on reservations, they can provide interns with a range of construction experiences. They are main employers in their communities and offer the potential for full-time employment.

2022-2025 Awarded a U.S. Economic Development Administration Good Jobs Challenge grant of \$5 million. Supported CIP and also initiatives supporting residential inspection and appraisal continuing career development.

# SHAPED BY UNIQUE ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

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Tailoring programs around tribal strengths and tribal needs

- Tribal training and employment sites bring support resources such as access Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), adult education.
  - Sometimes they can purchase work gear, provide financial literacy, and contribute to intern stipend
- CDFIs have existing relationships with some contractor organizations, access to banking and loans.
  - Four Bands Community Fund sees its role as mentoring the interns.
  - Established the practice of providing extra support for contractor organizations

Pine Ridge Housing Authority offered interns a life mapping class in addition to their financial literacy program when their participation grew starting in 2020.

# SOURCES AND USES

## Federal Grants

- EDA Grant
- 477 Program

## Private Grants

- NeighborWorks
- Enterprise Community Partners
- SD Community Foundation
- Wells Fargo

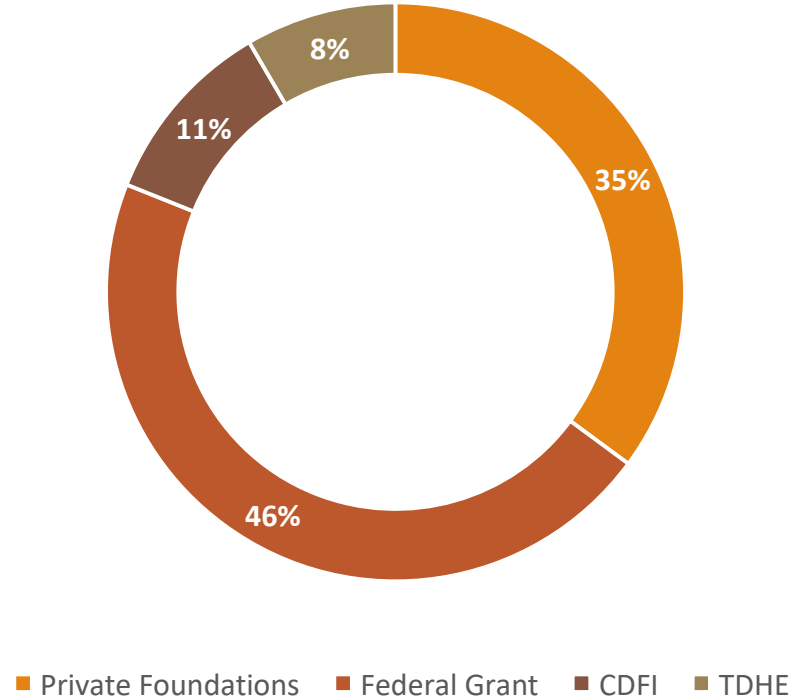
## Native CDFI

- Lakota Funds
- Four Bands Community Fund

## Tribally Designated Housing Entities

- SWA Corp.

Funding Sources



Item	Costs
Stipends	\$198,000.00
Tools & Safety Equipment	\$18,400.00
Wrap Around Service	\$16,500.00
Site Support	\$30,000.00
OSHA 10	\$16,800.00
1 <sup>st</sup> Aid & CPR	\$5,000.00
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>\$284,700.00</b>

Supporting 45-50 Interns Annually

“I’m passing down the example that you can achieve it if you work hard and follow through.” Jared Slater, Cheyenne River Reservation



# ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

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## **International Code Council Inspector Certification Training**

- Certifies individuals to uphold building code standards, ensuring safe, high-quality housing and strengthening tribal housing development

## **Contractor Capacity Building Training**

- Equips small to medium sized contractors with financial management, bidding, bonding, and business development skills to support growth, hiring, and job creation.

## **Appraisal Cost Approach Training**

- Preparing appraisers to conduct cost-approach appraisals on tribal residential properties, primary in South Dakota.





# Success Stories

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## **Henry Two Bulls – CIP Intern Pine Ridge Reservation**

- No trade experience
- No Equipment
- Applied everywhere
- Wanted a job

## **Henry Two Bulls – 2025 Laborer LaCreek Development Reservation**

- 2 Years Hands-on experience
- Full time Employed
- New Car
- Goal: get into an apprentice program to become a journeyman

“This Program literally got me back on my feet financially and got me a year-round job. The reason I am where I am is because of the internship I did at Lakota Funds.”

“I was in a bad place and bad environment, I just wanted to support my daughter and have a positive life, this internship helped me and now I’m working full time, made great friends and just want to keep furthering this career.”

# Success Stories

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“Without the internship, I wouldn’t have been able to bring on college kids. 100% have stayed on working.”

## Daniel Kirk – CIP Intern & Now Contractor Sisseton-Wahpeton Reservation

- One of the earliest Interns
- Wanted to start a construction business
- Graduated in a Building trades program at Sisseton Wahpeton College
- Created his construction company called Arrow Construction & Lumber
- Recruits CIP Interns
- From metal roofs to full house builds
- Hires CIP Interns

# Voices of CIP Interns

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***"This internship helped me with a job; I applied everywhere, its hard finding a job in this rez (reservation) but I seen the internship on Facebook and applied, finished the program and now I'm a full-time laborer with OHDC."***

- Tanisha Fast Dog, Rosebud Reservation

***"I was unemployed for years and I just wanted a job I had no experience and its hard finding a job here, so thank you for accepting me into this program I have a job now and I want to give everyone a hug who helped me through this journey."***

- CIP Intern, Pine Ridge Reservation

***"This program was great; I was working with arrow construction I learned a lot from them I recommend all our youth to try this internship."***

- CIP Intern, Sisseton Wahpeton Reservation

***"This internship helped me, financial literacy was important to me because I didn't know to much about financials, budgeting and the cost of everything."***

- CIP Intern, Rosebud Reservation

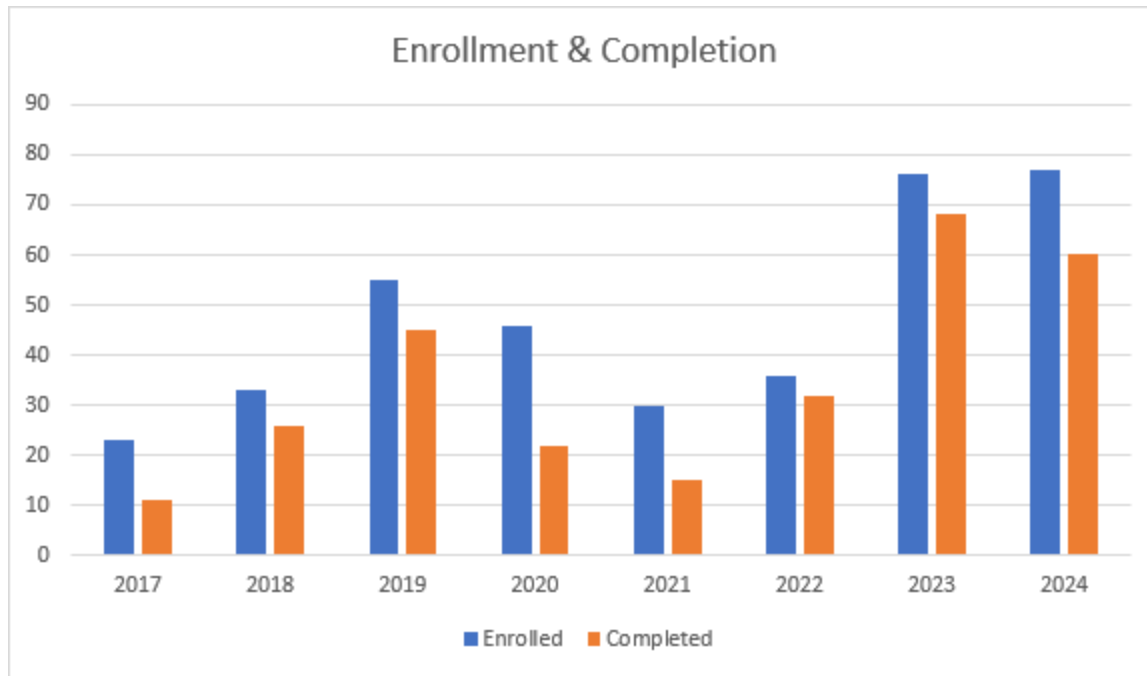
***"I learn a lot from this internship we worked on a new gym at wolf creek school, me and my coworkers learned a lot doing that gym we got hired on and financial literacy was good I opened a savings account and I'm saving some of the money I make to put into my savings account to get a house."***

- Chaz Rodriguez, Pine Ridge Reservation

***"Thanks to four bands, I wanted a job so bad and found the internship, it was a great experience I learned a lot and now I'm working with the housing authority."***

- CIP Intern, Cheyenne River Reservation

# RESULTS



376

Enrolled in CIP

272

Completed

175

Job Offers

127

Job placements



“The internship built my resume and helped me get a job with IHS in Wagner, SD. I'm learning about financials and was able to become a homeowner.”

**Raymond Rouillard, CIP Intern**



# LESSONS LEARNED

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- Expand and grow the program carefully. Ensure adequate staffing to provide the critical time needed to support interns for retention. Staff can be overloaded since they have duties with their own organizations. Adding sites takes planning!
- Commit to strong data collection and evaluation. From early on, collect data to support document success and evaluate to enable thoughtful, timely changes. These can facilitate funding and partnership growth. Remember to train the managing organizations in data collection techniques.
- Lean into local innovation. Sites have tailored program to their own needs and strengths. SWA got a van to transport interns without cars; in other sites, interns might carpool. Some sites continue to have 400 hours hands-on; others founds that 200 hours better matched their organizational or contractor needs.
- Local financial support and buy-in. Some of our most committed resources are the most local. These local partners included TDHEs, Tribes, Tribal 477 training and employment programs and Native CDFIs.

# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

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- Interns need to fully understand the program structure so they can plan for childcare, transportation and other issues. Our application includes a question about transportation and one about back-up transportation. But they should also know that we will try to work through issues that come up.
- Managing organizations need adequate staffing. The work of the managing organization is not just recruitment and placement. Ensuring program support throughout the internship plays a key role in retention and improved experience.
- Similarly, contractor organizations are small businesses. Having enough employees may not be their own challenge. Supporting these small businesses with stipends or financial management software can allow them to focus more attention on the interns.
- Logistical planning and monthly meetings have played a vital role in shaping the future success of the program by ensuring it remains responsive to evolving needs.

# FUTURE GOALS

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- Expand CIP to All Nine Tribal Reservations in South Dakota
- Increase Career Pipelines
- Explore & Expand Partnerships
- Increase Female Participation
- Strengthen Evaluation & Impact Tracking
- Secure Sustainable Funding





# CONVERSATION WITH ERNA

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# QUESTIONS?

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Webinar will be posted on the Office of Native  
American Programs homepage:

<https://www.hud.gov/helping-americans/public-indian-housing-best-practices>

Email comments to: [Codetalk@hud.gov](mailto:Codetalk@hud.gov)