

Advocacy and Leadership Training for Native Americans with Disabilities & Their Families

Submitted by:

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Application submitted to:

South Dakota Council on Developmental Disabilities

Summary/Abstract

This application is to continue the **Advocacy and Leadership Training for Native Americans with Disabilities & Their Families** program through the Center for Disabilities' Oyáte Circle. Over the past four years, the Oyáte Circle has successfully developed and implemented this program across the nine Tribal Nations and off-reservation communities in South Dakota. The program will continue utilizing this effective partnership model.

The **Primary Goal** is to implement the advocacy and leadership training and materials specific to Native Americans with disabilities and their families with and to raise the expectations of people with disabilities and their families and to empower them to live their best lives through adapted *Charting the Lifecourse* tools. **Objective 1.1:** Maintain the advisory group of Tribal Members with disabilities and their families to advise and participate in the development and training activities; **Objective 1.2:** Provide a minimum of two on-site training events in reservation communities, along with a third session that may take the form of an off-reservation advocacy and leadership training or a webinar; **Objective 1.3:** Integrate the LifeCourse Framework philosophy and tools into the culturally designed training sessions. **Objective 1.4:** Continue to provide an ongoing presence and sustainable resource in Indian Country on disability related issues and needs. Continue to increase the partners and potential hosts for training events and potentially provide an off-reservation Advocacy and Leadership training and/or webinar.

Project Relevance and Current Need

Section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act (as amended 1998) not only identifies American Indians and Alaska Native populations as having the highest disability rate but also as the most underserved and unserved. This results in American Indians and Alaska Natives with disabilities facing exclusion from economic self-sufficiency and independent living. Tribal members from "Indian Country" face many challenges including poverty, isolation, low socio-economic opportunities, elevated educational dropout rates and high incidence of disabilities. These problems are further compounded within reservations and Tribal communities by the lack of services, which further excludes them from integration and full inclusion into society and employment.

Organizational Capacity

The Center for Disabilities has served as South Dakota's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD) for the state of South Dakota since 1971. Over the course of more than 50 years, we have partnered with individuals with disabilities, their families, and numerous healthcare, education, human service, employment, and community-based organizations to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families. The Center has a strong track record of success of carrying out its core functions areas of direct clinical services, pre-service training and continuing education, technical assistance, research and evaluation, and information dissemination. The Center's activities are based on data-driven strategic planning and measured by the improvements that result in the improved quality of lives of people with disabilities. With special focus on capacity building and systems change, the provision of interprofessional, family/person-centered,

evidence-based approaches are central in all we do. The Center strives to bridge these programs to the broader community, especially for underserved, underrepresented, rural, frontier, and Tribal communities.

The Oyáte Circle was developed to provide resources, training, education, and outreach to Native Americans with disabilities across the nine reservation communities in South Dakota. Named after the Lakota word for "the people," Oyáte Circle conducts a wide variety of initiatives aimed at improving the lives of Native Americans with disabilities. These efforts have been critical in building bridges, relationships, and collaboration to ensure the most underserved and underrepresented populations in the country have a voice on matters important to them. Tribal members have the highest rate of disability in the country, and disability rates are increased due to poverty and isolation in South Dakota. The relationships fostered by Oyáte Circle have allowed the Center for Disabilities to expand its services across our state.

The Oyáte Circle was created by Oglala Lakota Tribal member Jim Warne, the Community Engagement Director at the Center for Disabilities. Mr. Warne has a longstanding history of impactful work in advancing the resources, education, outreach, and training programs for tribal communities. He works with various government agencies, organizations, and tribal nations. He is also a motivational speaker and mentor to Native American youth. Mr. Warne provided meaningful testimony to the Congressional Senate Oversight Hearing. Mr. Warne wrote and produced the award-winning documentary, 7th Generation, which addresses historical and current perspectives from elders and community members with a focus on a positive future for Native American youth. His recent films have also received awards and Emmy nominations. His films are used as curriculum for several schools and universities throughout the nation. Mr. Warne has dedicated his life's work to helping Tribal Nations succeed in the contemporary American system.

Whiney Jones is a Sicangu Lakota member and has served as the of Oyáte Circle for the past two years. Whitney Jones has a varied experience as a Tribal Member, Ranchman, Disability Specialist and Tribal Outreach Coordinator Rosebud community member. He has held many leadership positions across education, mental health, human services, youth empowerment, and School counselor. Mr. Jones is a youth counselor and educator at heart; he provides cultural perspectives and teachings through story telling for a variety of Tribal and non- Indian organizations and Tribal Nations. His indigenous knowledge has made a significant positive impact in obtaining community support and building trust from the nine Tribal Nations in South Dakota. His new leadership role for the Oyáte Circle has brought a new perspective and contact network that has increased outreach, partnership development, and engagement not only for Indian Country, but throughout South Dakota.

Together, Mr. Warne and Mr. Jones have strong community connections and vast experience and expertise that has allowed them to established initiatives that engage Indian Country in program development.

Their efforts have also reached Native youth, adolescents, and young adults with disabilities, providing mentored and building skills and knowledge in how to access available services and supports, while maintaining their cultural heritage. Many of these individuals have gone on

themselves to become peer mentors supporting the younger generations. Oyáte Circle was awarded the Association of University Centers on Disability (AUCD) Leadership award in 2021.

Approach

The project centers Indigenous knowledge, person-centered principles, and the *Charting the LifeCourse* framework to deliver advocacy and leadership training tailored for Native Americans with disabilities and their families.

The **Primary Goal** is to implement the advocacy and leadership training and materials specific to Native Americans with disabilities and their families with and to raise the expectations of people with disabilities and their families and to empower them to live their best lives through adapted Charting the Lifecourse tools, strategies, and resources.

Objective 1.1: Maintain the advisory group of Tribal Members with disabilities and their families to advise and participate in the development and training activities;

Objective 1.2: Provide a minimum of two on-site training events in reservation communities, along with a third session that may take the form of an off-reservation advocacy and leadership training or a webinar;

Objective 1.3: Integrate the LifeCourse Framework philosophy and tools into the culturally designed training sessions.

Objective 1.4: Continue to provide an ongoing presence and sustainable resource in Indian Country on disability related issues and needs. Continue to increase the partners and potential hosts for training events and potentially provide an off-reservation Advocacy and Leadership training and/or webinar.

These objectives represent our “Universal Perspective” to enable replication of curriculum and approach for other underserved populations. The Center for Disabilities and Oyáte Circle has learned how to design and augment general curriculum and allow for new and successful outcomes of training and continuing education. This “tiospaye” Tribal philosophy serves as a traditional model of education and community inclusion.

Indigenous Knowledge is a foundation for our person-centered approach to training, community outreach, and engagement. The Medicine Wheel balance philosophies are centered by design for individuals, groups and communities. This approach is a focused Person-Centered model for inclusive communication and teaching styles. Tribal culture is a focus of teachings and mediation of disability information and effective applications to Indian Country. In addition, Oyáte Circle continue partnering with a consultant/trainer with experience and expertise with the LifeCourse Framework, to ensure the core knowledge, skills, and competencies are passed along in a culturally appropriate manner.

The past four years have provided many case studies and examples of best practices to ensure continued and increased participation from our target audience, Tribal members with disabilities

and their families. Since 2022 we have provided Advocacy for Families with Disabilities in three (3) reservation communities and off reservation events, including: Oyáte Health Hospital, One Heart Community Center, and a virtual webinar.

Evaluation

Evaluation will be ongoing and iterative. Post-training surveys will assess participant competencies, identify emerging needs, and gather feedback for continual improvement. Evaluation results will be used to:

- Prioritize and refine training content;
- Adjust training formats and delivery;
- Identify gaps or overlooked areas; and
- Modify titles or framing to better align with community interests.

These improvements will ensure continued relevance, participation, and impact within the communities we serve.

Budget Narrative

Salaries - \$46,900

Staff	Grant Salary	% Effort
Jim Warne	\$20,386	20%
Whitney Jones	\$16,250	25%
Pat Herman	\$10,264	15%

Jim Warne, MS, Program Director: Mr. Warne is a member of the Oglala Lakota (Sioux) Nation from Pine Ridge Reservation and currently resides in San Diego, CA. He is the current Community Engagement Director is the USD Oyáte Circle at the Center for Disabilities. Mr. Warne will be responsible for coordinating project activities, designing training content, conducting training activities, facilitating collaborative activities with partners for sustainability, and developing products and materials for dissemination.

Whitney Jones, Program Administrator: Mr. Jones is a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. Whitney's story in his words: "I reside on the Rosebud Sioux Indian Reservation in south central South Dakota where my wife and I raise two grandsons and our 15-year-old daughter." "I am a survivor of Residential Boarding Schools attending from 1976 -1988 both in St. Joseph's Indian School in Chamberlain SD and Flandreau Indian School in Flandreau SD. Mr. Jones will assist with coordinating project activities, designing training content, conducting training activities, facilitating collaborative activities with partners for sustainability, and developing products and materials for dissemination.

Pat Herman, MURP, AICP, ADAC Special Projects Planner: Ms. Herman serves a special projects planner for the Center for Disabilities and will be responsible for supporting all aspects of implementation of the project, including scheduling, communicating training events, supporting distance learning and video conferencing, as well as data collection and reporting.

Benefits - \$11,536

Staff	Benefits	% of Salary
Jim Warne	\$6,965	34%
Whitney Jones	\$1,285	8%
Pat Herman	\$3,286	32%

Employer paid variable benefits rate is 13.908% of salary plus a fixed health benefit rate of \$12,388 per employee above .5FTE. The fixed rate is paid based on the % effort assigned.

Travel - \$10,000

In state travel to reservation communities throughout the project will occur. Mileage is calculated at \$.30 per mile or 0.67 per mile dependent on vehicle size. Jones does not reside near a state fleet location and is reimbursed at 0.67 per mile for using his own vehicle. Per diem will be reimbursed at state rate of \$40/day and \$110/night for state rate lodging if overnight stays are necessary. Summer rates as high as \$161/night may apply depending on location. Out of state

travel request approval will be required to allow Warne to travel from home base to South Dakota. Warne requests first class airline accommodations to accommodate his stature.

Supplies - \$500

Costs are estimated to cover supplies required for trainings.

Consultants - \$3,000

Approved LifeCourse Framework trainers will be enlisted to assist in the design of the trainings.

Training Event Costs – \$7,200

Item	Per Event	Total (3 events)
Venue Space	\$200	\$600
Food and Drinks	\$2,000	\$6,000
Supplies	\$200	\$600

Events will be held on the reservations which have limited meeting facilities. Tribal owned facilities that may be used include schools, casinos, and tribal administration buildings for which there is usually a charge. For each training event food and coffee will be provided, which is the cultural norm. Depending on the item and the duration of the event, the food offered may be a snack or it could be a full meal. Average cost for meals is \$20.00 per person plus the cost of labor. Events held in Tribal Nations are open to the entire community and traditionally include family members of participants. Not all vendors will supply serving materials such as plates, cups, napkins and silverware so funds have been included in the budget for those items.

Total Direct Costs: \$79,136

Indirect Costs (5%): \$3,957

Total Budget Request: \$83,093

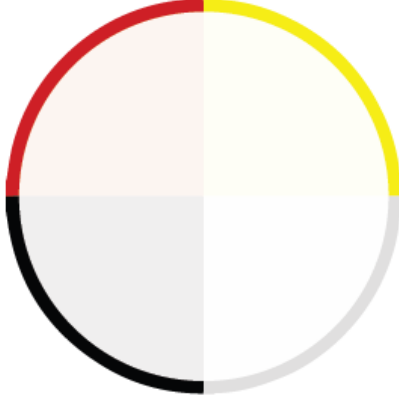


LIFE TRAJECTORY | FINDING MY WAY - AIMING FOR A GOOD LIFE

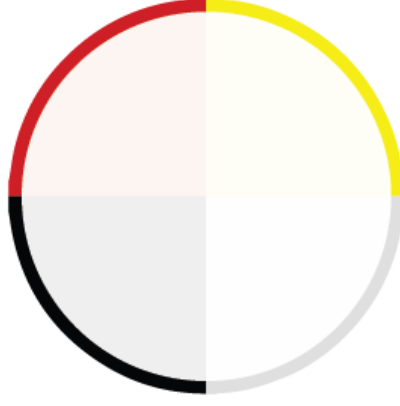
The Medicine Wheel philosophy is a traditional model of balance and wellness for many Tribal members in the South Dakota region and may be more applicable for Tribal members in South Dakota including other Indigenous regions.

What life experiences do I need to move toward my good life vision?

Vision for My Good Life



What I Don't Want



What choices or barriers could keep me from getting to my good life?

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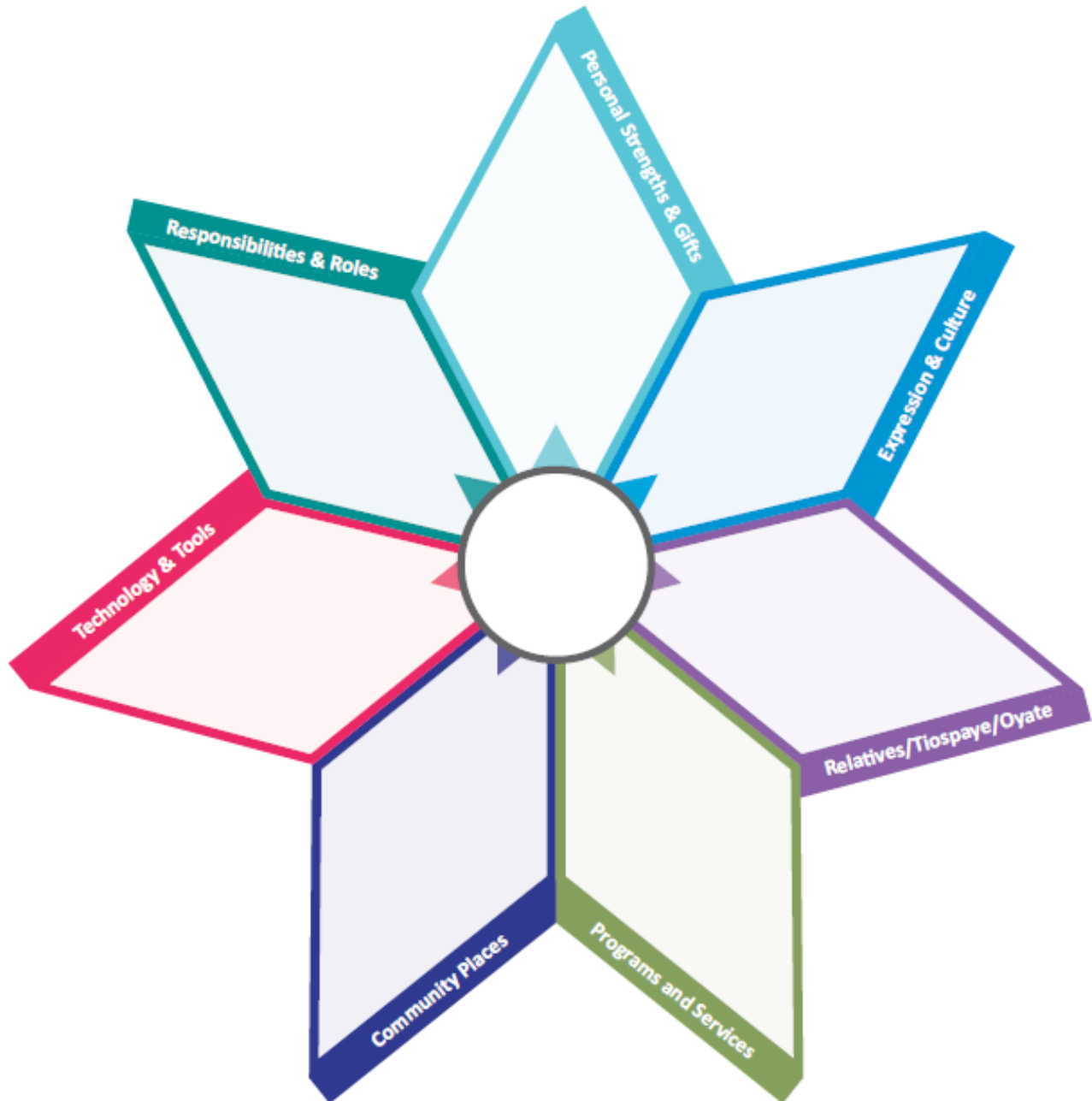
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Oglala Lakota Tribal members Wayne Westin, and Jim Warne, USD Community Engagement Director Center for Disabilities Sanford School of Medicine UCEDD, LEND,
provided technical assistance in the development of this model addressing Tribal nations in South Dakota.





INTEGRATED SUPPORTS STAR | FINDING YOUR WAY

All people give and need support in their lives. This 'Support Star' represents the supports a person needs for self and provides to others. Oglala Lakota culture recognizes star knowledge and the philosophy of the Star Quilt. This model uses the star to identify direction and balance.



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