

2017
-
2021



Looking back on the past five years of internship success and highlighting what's on the horizon for the program moving forward.

CONSTRUCTION INTERNSHIP PROGRAM REPORT





MISSION & VISION

The mission of the South Dakota Native Homeownership Coalition is to increase homeownership opportunities for South Dakota's Native people to build strong and healthy communities. The Coalition works to achieve its vision of strong, thriving, sustainable communities in South Dakota where Native people have the opportunity to achieve their dream of homeownership.



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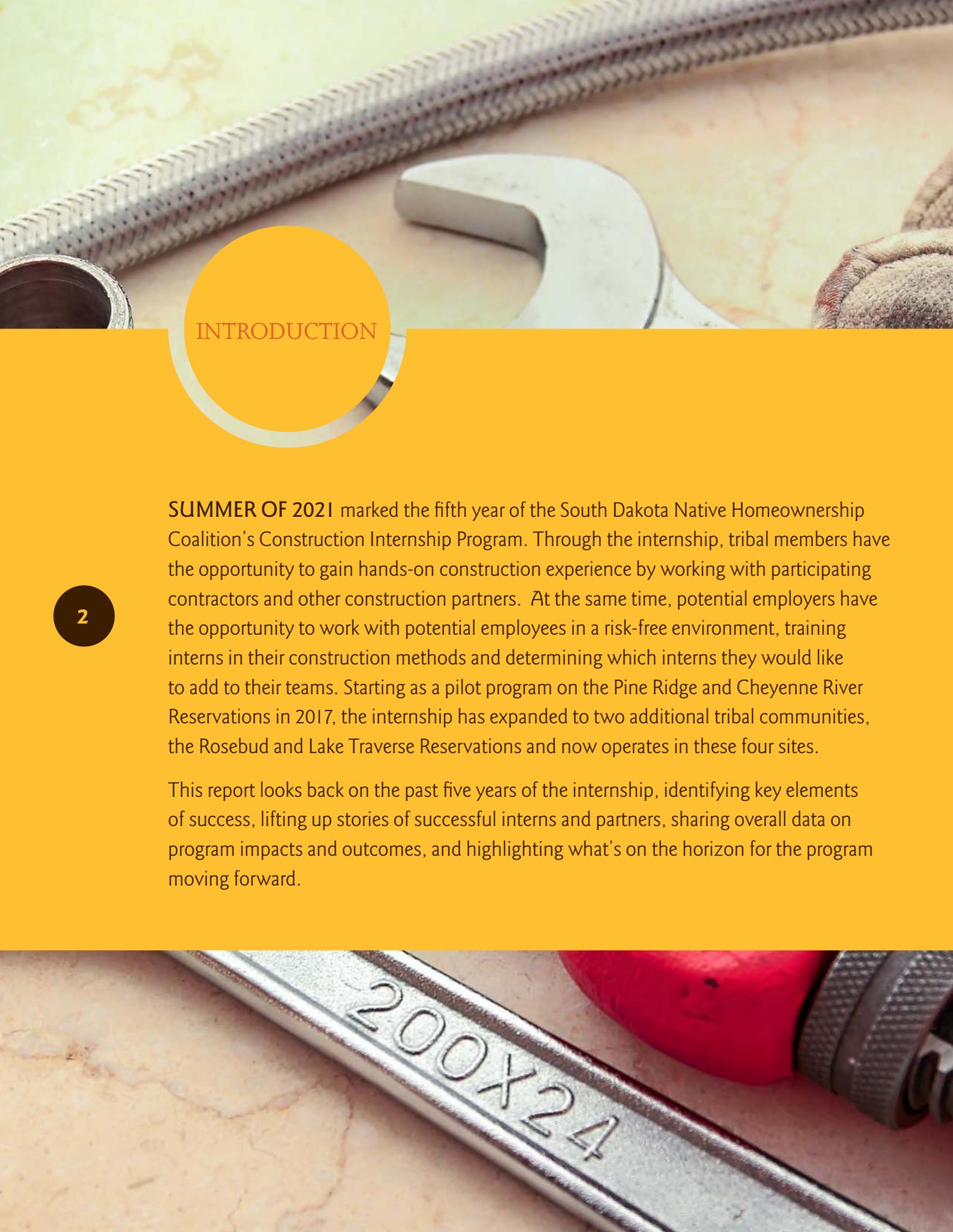
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INTRODUCTION

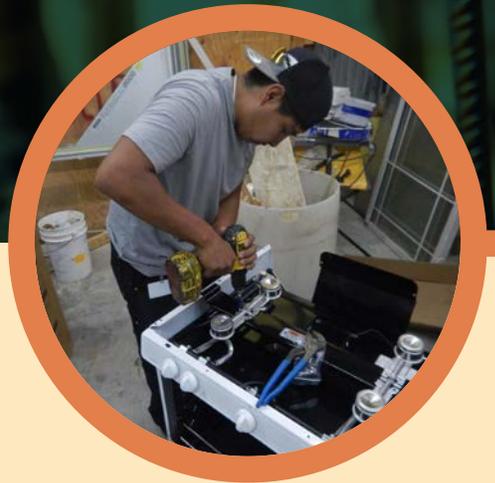
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SUMMER OF 2021 marked the fifth year of the South Dakota Native Homeownership Coalition's Construction Internship Program. Through the internship, tribal members have the opportunity to gain hands-on construction experience by working with participating contractors and other construction partners. At the same time, potential employers have the opportunity to work with potential employees in a risk-free environment, training interns in their construction methods and determining which interns they would like to add to their teams. Starting as a pilot program on the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Reservations in 2017, the internship has expanded to two additional tribal communities, the Rosebud and Lake Traverse Reservations and now operates in these four sites.

This report looks back on the past five years of the internship, identifying key elements of success, lifting up stories of successful interns and partners, sharing overall data on program impacts and outcomes, and highlighting what's on the horizon for the program moving forward.

FIVE DIMENSIONS OF IMPACT

BECAUSE THE Construction Internship Program has fostered a rich collaborative environment between many project partners, the program has impacted several dimensions of the homeownership sector in participating Native communities. First and foremost, the program has developed the construction workforce, providing experience that interns have carried with them to future employment opportunities and skills that have shaped their financial health and overall well-being. Participating contractors have built their capacity and positioned their companies for growth. In addition, numerous other partner organizations have gained a deeper understanding of the home building market, what it will take to increase housing stock in tribal communities, and ultimately increase homeownership opportunities for Native families. The following five stories detail the program impact as it relates to two interns, a contractor, a Tribally Designated Housing Authority (TDHE), and Native community development financial institutions (CDFIs).



RAY ROUILLARD

RAY ROUILLARD (Oglala Lakota) was a 2017 intern that was placed with the Oglala Lakota Housing Authority’s maintenance department. During his internship, he was able to apply his knowledge gained through general construction classes to real life scenarios. Alongside his supervisor, Ray performed a variety of repairs to the Oglala Sioux Tribe’s rental units and built skills in the areas of plumbing, siding, and drywall. He also built on his customer service skills while gaining substantial experience in dealing with tenants.

“My dad was a marine, and he always told me to treat people how you want to be treated. I also learned good people and social skills through school, playing basketball,” says Ray.

After completing his internship, Ray went on to secure employment in the same field. He worked in maintenance at Prairie Wind Casino for about a year and then moved to Rapid City to be closer to his partner as they were expecting a child. While

in Rapid City he continued building his resume with maintenance and grounds-keeping positions. Although the internship established a foundation for his career, Ray says the biggest takeaway from that experience was related to money management.

Ray entered the internship program with a good habits — instilled in him by his grandparents — of saving money. However, the financial literacy classes he took as part of his internship expanded on that knowledge.

“My grandparents always taught me about saving money, but the financial literacy classes helped with things like bank accounts and bills,” says Ray.

The day after Ray found out he was going to be a father, he went to the bank and opened an account for his child with a \$100 deposit. Since then, he has deposited \$100 from every paycheck into that account. His daughter will be three this coming



summer, and Ray continues to manage the account to pay for expenses related to raising a child.

“I wanted to have a savings account ready for her. That has been really helpful,” he explains.

In addition to building his own personal financial management skills, Ray has passed this knowledge on to friends and family.

“After I learned about all of these tips, I helped my friend out with setting up an account, saving, and building credit. He just had a little girl recently,” says Ray.

Ray is also helping his little sisters and says “they are kind of getting into savings, too.”

About a year ago, Ray leveraged his personal financial management skills to achieve a major milestone. He purchased a home! Located in Wagner, South Dakota, the home is a Victorian style with lots of charm that needed a little bit of

fixing up. Luckily, Ray has been able to save a lot of money by doing the repairs and remodeling himself. The home is providing him, his partner, and their toddler a larger space to live and grow into.

In his new town of Wagner, Ray has secured employment with the maintenance department at Indian Health Service. Ironically, he is doing a lot of the same things that he started out doing at his internship.

“The internship kind of made me go into a field that I liked,” reflects Ray.

While general construction jobs are seasonal, depending on good weather, Ray appreciates the consistent hours and the year-round work that maintenance positions offer.



JEFFRIE SHAVING

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In 2017, Jeffrie Shaving (Cheyenne River Sioux) was raising his infant son during the day and attending college classes at night with his partner while his mom would watch the baby. Today, Jeffrie is a father of three and has a full-time maintenance position for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

“Now I’m ready to go to work every day. I have a routine,” he says.

Jeffrie says his children are proud of what he does. He will occasionally bring them to side jobs as he fixes or builds various things for family or friends. They watch what he does, and he let’s them help a little.

“When they drive by a job site, they point and my work and say that I built that,” says Jeffrie.

Reflecting on how his life has changed over the last five years, Jeffrie says his internship experience was a major turning point for him.

“I don’t think I’d be where I am without that internship,” asserts Jeffrie.

As one of the first participants of the South Dakota Native Homeownership’s Construction Internship Program in 2017, Jeffrie was placed with a local contractor. Although the contractor mainly did concrete, that summer he built a house. Because of that, Jeffrie got a wide range of experience that included, electrical wiring, drywall and texturing, insulation, and decks. That on-the-job experience is what propelled him into his career in the building trades.

“The internship got me enough experience to get a job,” explains Jeffrie.

As a freshman in high school, Jeffrie’s grandfather introduced him to some basic construction methods and he had been doing small jobs for relatives for years. Despite those years of experience and the general construction classes he completed



at the tribal college, he struggled to obtain full-time employment in the trades because he hadn't worked for a professional contractor.

After he completed his internship, the contractor he was placed with hired him on permanently. Jeffrie continued working there for about three years. Because the work was mostly outdoors, it was a seasonal position, so Jeffrie supplemented his income with side jobs in the wintertime.

Jeffrie says one of the biggest benefits of the internship was not only the work experience, but also the financial skills he gained. As part of the internship, he completed a series of personal financial management classes. Before that, he didn't really know how to charge people for the side jobs he was doing.

"That helped me figure out my hours and material, and now I go off of that," he says.

The budgeting aspect of the financial literacy classes was also an eye opener.

"If I want a brand new drill, then I have to save. I have built my toolbox from the ground up, and I still have most of my tools from the internship," he says.

Jeffrie has been able to apply those concepts to find success in other life situations as well. Without a vehicle of his own at the time of the internship, Jeffrie would catch rides to work. However, when he started working full-time, he

made an arrangement with his grandmother to secure reliable transportation. He paid half of the car payment in return for using his grandmother's vehicle to get to and from work. Eventually, his grandmother gave him the vehicle.

"She saw that I was getting my feet under me," he says.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Jeffrie was out of work for about a year and then was able to get a job with his current employer over a year ago. Within that time, he has already received a promotion. As part of his job, he receives housing, which is another major life accomplishment. He also enjoys the variety of tasks he is assigned to with steady work year-round.

"It's a mystery every day. You don't know what you're going to work on. One day you can be an electrician, the next a plumber," says Jeffrie.

As the youngest member of his crew, Jeffrie learns a lot from his co-workers and is always looking to build his knowledge on how things work. The latest has been learning how to operate a skid steer that his employer recently purchased. Jeffrie says he's been running that piece of equipment every week now.

"I hope I get to learn even more stuff! It's using your brain and solving a problem - not just fixing it but improving it. I want to make it so it lasts longer or is more efficient," says Jeffrie.





ARROW CONSTRUCTION

With a fairly new construction firm, Arrowhead Construction, Daniel Kirk became involved with the Construction Internship Program during the summer of 2019. At the time, Arrowhead Construction was doing metal roofs and siding. Daniel worked with four interns who completed 400 hours of on-site work experience. At the end of the internship, he hired them on as permanent employees. Since then he has hired every intern he has worked with.

“Without the internship, I wouldn’t have been able to bring on college kids. One hundred percent have stayed on working,” he says.

Providing support to grow his crew, the internship has also been instrumental in expanding Daniel’s business. In the fall of 2020, Arrowhead Construction won their first contract for a full build of a home. The job, contracted through the Sisseton Wahpeton Housing Authority, took four months to completely rebuild a home that had burnt down.

“The [South Dakota Native Homeownership] Coalition has been a big help. In two years, we’ve gone from just roofs to full houses,” says Daniel.

Arrowhead Construction is currently working on a six-house contract for the Sisseton Wahpeton Housing Authority. Daniel is managing a crew of five full-time employees and plans to take on several more interns this upcoming summer.

“We have some really good students we will be picking up from college,” he says.

SICANGU WICOTI AWANYAKAPI CORPORATION

Sicangu Wicoti Awanyakapi (SWA) Corporation, the Tribally Designated Housing Entity (TDHE) that serves the Rosebud Reservation, has been participating in the Construction Internship Program for three years.

“We participated in the program so that we can be able to get some of these youth training and education. It helps them gain self-esteem so they can look at things in a different manner,” says Monica Hunger Moran, who facilitated the program.

From the start, SWA works with each intern to learn about their interests and places them accordingly. Interns have worked in the warehouse, painting, plumbing, carpentry, roofing, maintenance, and even administrative departments at SWA. The lead of each crew an intern is placed with shows the interns how to complete projects, and the intern always has a person they can go to for support. Interns also receive additional support from SWA’s partners for tools, appropriate work attire, and even Gatorade on the job site.

Like many other employers, SWA felt hard-hitting impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. They have struggled to fill regular employment openings as well as their intern slots.

“There is a change from the pandemic. It’s had a negative impact on the workforce,” explains Monica.

Despite the challenges, SWA and the Board of Commissioners believes in the Construction Internship Program and the results it brings.

“Even if they went for just a while, it will stick in their mind and keep them moving for a better life,” says Monica.



NATIVE CDFI's

Although Native community development financial institutions (CDFIs) are lenders, they have a mission-driven core that enables them to deliver programming to address the unique needs of the communities they serve. As small organizations, they are nimble and creative problem solvers. Two Native CDFIs — Four Bands Community Fund and Lakota Funds — were instrumental in launching the Construction Internship Program. As Coalition members, these two organizations invested time and resources into developing, piloting, and refining the program into what it is today.

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Each organization continues to bring valuable insight to the table year after year. With 10 years of implementing an internship program, Four Bands provided a vast array of programming documents to stand the program up. With construction as one of their targeted industries, Lakota Funds had developed relationships with several local contractors. These contractors provided insight into the true needs of the building sector and some even participated in the program. Both Native

CDFIs adapted their successful financial literacy programs to the internship, and both saw results far beyond workforce development.

Tawney Brunsch, Executive Director of Lakota Funds, says, “The program has brought life-changing events for our interns and their families — and a major step in them achieving self-sustainability.”

Lakota Vogel, Executive Director of Four Bands, says, “In my opinion the construction internship has been some of the most meaningful impact Four Bands has had with clients in some time.”

As visionary economic catalysts, these Native CDFIs saw the value of the Construction Internship Program from the start. They leveraged their experience, knowledge, and relationships to expand impact beyond their day-to-day programming. They have forged paths for others to travel. Tatanka Funds, an emerging Native CDFI serving the Rosebud Reservation, started to get involved with the program last year.



PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Examining program impact data collected this year and across all years of program implementation, revealed five key takeaways.

► 2017-2021 Cumulative Data

- ✘ More than 50% of interns who completed the program received job offers.
- ✘ Nearly 30% of interns who completed the program secured full-time jobs.

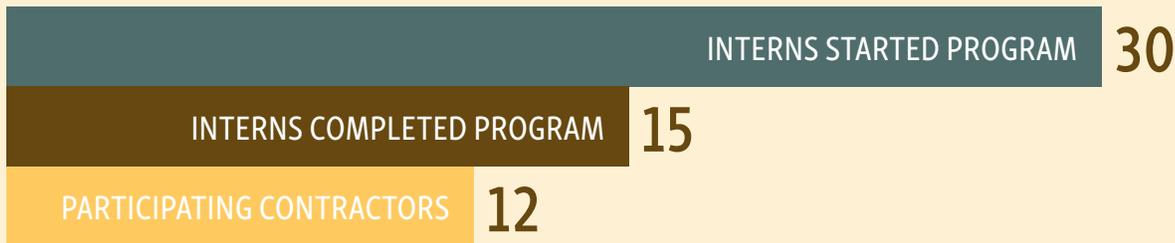
► 2021 Data

- ✘ 80% of interns who completed the program secured full-time jobs.
- ✘ 90% of interns who began the program gained work experience and employability skills.
- ✘ 93% of interns who began the program gained financial knowledge and skills.

2021 PROGRAM IMPACT

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► PARTICIPATION & COMPLETION



► INTERN SKILL BUILDING & EMPLOYMENT



FIVE KEYS TO SUCCESS

Looking back over the past five years, what have been the program's keys to success? How has the internship successfully grown beyond the initial pilot program, expanding to a total of four sites? How did the internship weather the global pandemic, especially when primary funding sources shifted to responding to COVID-19? How have partners institutionalized the program, ensuring that it can continue to provide critically-need workforce development opportunities in South Dakota's tribal communities. The answers to these questions lie in the internship's five elements of success:



1. Local support and buy-in

While the internship originally relied primarily on external philanthropic support, shifting priorities to address COVID-19 in 2020 made it necessary for internship partners to look to local sources of support. These local sources came through, enabling partners to continue providing the program, even with the constraints of pandemic precautions. These local partners include local TDHE's (Tribally Designated Housing Authorities, or Housing Authorities), tribal 477 Employment and Training Programs, and Native CDFIs (Community Development Financial Institutions) supporting entrepreneurship and housing in their communities.



2. Housing Authority participation

While the internship was originally designed to place interns with independent construction contractors, partners quickly realized the value of placing interns with tribal Housing Authorities, TDHEs. TDHEs play a critical role in homeownership development in tribal communities, constructing a significant portion of housing units for new homebuyers. They can provide valuable construction experience for interns, including both new construction and renovation, and are a key employer in these communities. TDHEs have played a critical role in the internship in each of the four participating tribal communities, providing intern placements, funding support, and hiring interns as they complete the internship.



3. A balance of flexibility and consistent core elements

Looking at the four internship sites, the program brings a number of consistent core elements that serve as the foundation for local efforts. The internship runs in the summer, designed to complement the schedule of contractors and college students alike. During their busiest season, contractors are able to get help from college students who typically have summers off. Interns are paid a stipend, which provides disposable income to support individual goals, which may include supporting family members, saving for college expenses, purchasing a vehicle, or saving for the future. Interns are placed with contractors and other community partners who can provide a quality construction experience for interns. All interns are required to complete financial education classes.

At the same time, each program has the flexibility to tailor the internship to their interns and their community. Each program can determine how many interns they will place, for example, and how long their program will run (five weeks, eight weeks, or ten weeks). Programs can determine where they place their interns – with contractors, the tribal Housing Authority, or a combination. Intern incentives and bonuses are also provided at the discretion of each site.



4. Commitment to financial education

While the construction internship program focuses on hands-on construction experience, financial education has also become a central component of programming. Originally implemented as an external funder requirement, partners recognized the value of teaching financial education to interns right away. While many interns are skeptical about the value of these classes on the outset, and want to maximize their hours on the job site, by the end of the summer, they often say that financial education classes are the most valuable part of the program. Because interns are receiving a financial stipend, the classes are not theoretical – they are very real, in teaching how to effectively manage funds.



5. Regular partner meetings and communication

Internship partners meet regularly throughout the year, convening every other week during the construction season, and once a month off-season. These meetings are critical to the success of the program, ensuring that partners can share their progress and obstacles, trouble-shoot, learn from one another, and plan together. While each site is autonomous, partners also benefit from being part of a larger team, as they implement this innovative and vitally-needed program together. Partners supplement their regular meetings with a special planning session each fall, when they convene to reflect on the past summer's outcomes and issues, and beginning planning for the following summer.



ON THE HORIZON

Looking at the next five years, what's on the horizon for the Construction Internship Program and its partners? Partners are committed to the following elements:

1. Expanding to additional tribal communities

Partners are excited about growing the internship beyond the four current sites, and bringing the internship to additional tribal communities. Partners see the impacts and value of the internship, and firmly believe that each tribal community in South Dakota would benefit. They have already started discussions with the Yankton Sioux Tribe, and look forward to opportunities exploring the program with each of the five remaining tribes in South Dakota.

2. Continuing to share the story

From the outset, the South Dakota Native Homeownership Coalition has looked for opportunities to share the story of the internship, to show what's possible, and encourage other tribal communities to implement similar programming. Beyond South Dakota, partners have lifted up the program through a workshop at Housing Assistance Council's national housing conference in 2018, and are planning a workshop in the Spring of 2022 at the national Construction in Indian

Country conference sponsored by the University of Arizona. Internship partners have also initiated discussions with members of a new Native homeownership coalition in Montana, who see a construction internship program as central to their budding efforts.

3. Developing partnerships with more educational institutions

Partners are also committed to continuing to develop partnerships with educational institutions. Initially, the internship was designed as a partnership between Oglala Lakota College on the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Reservations to provide the hands-on learning opportunity for Building Trades students. Moving forward, partners plan to explore additional partnerships with tribal educational institutions, as well as other vo-tech programs with Native students.

4. Providing additional training for interns

While partners recognize the value of hands-on construction learning opportunities for interns, they also recognize the value of formal certifications in strengthening interns' skills and employability. Looking to the future, partners are planning to provide certification training in first aid and CPR as well as OSHA training, two certifications that





employers value and seek out. Beyond these trainings, partners would like to explore additional construction-related training, including asbestos and lead remediation as well as plumbing, electrical, and mechanical inspections.

5. Encouraging interns to think about other construction related fields of study

As most sites have embraced a broad interpretation of construction to place more interns in positions, additional administrative and office support has contributed to increased capacity of participating contractors. This willingness to create solutions to fill needs is at the heart of the Construction Internship Program and is demonstrated in the Coalition's broader work to build the capacity of the construction industry. As the Coalition continues to implement initiatives designed to increase the number of inspectors and appraisers in Native communities, they will create pathways to these fields of study for interns. Other construction-related fields that would be viable options are architecture and engineering. A robust workforce in all of these fields is required for a thriving home building market.



WOPILA TANKA

The South Dakota Native Homeownership Coalition would like to thank the following organizations that have provided financial and programmatic support for the Construction Internship Program over the past five years.

KEY PROGRAM PARTNERS

TRIBAL COMMUNITY	LEAD ENTITY
Cheyenne River Reservation	Four Bands Community Fund
Pine Ridge Reservation	Lakota Funds
Lake Traverse Reservation (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate)	Sisseton Wahpeton Housing Authority
Rosebud Reservation	Sicangu Wicoti Awayankapi Tantanka Funds

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PROGRAM SUPPORTERS

- Johnson Scholarship Foundation
- Citi Foundation
- Bush Foundation
- Enterprise Community Partners
- NeighborWorks America
- Oglala Lakota Housing Authority
- Sicangu Nation Employment and Training Program
- Sisseton Wahpeton 477 Program
- Sisseton Wahpeton Housing Authority
- SWA Corporation





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