

## **Broadband USA Applications Database**

**Applicant Name:** Sinte Gleska University

**Project Title:** Community Technology/Learning Center Enhancement Project

**Project Type:** Public Computer Center

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### **Executive Summary**

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Sinte Gleska University is a tribal institution of higher education, one of the first of the tribal colleges, located on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in south-central South Dakota. The University operates four Technology Centers, primarily serving the Sicangu Lakota but also available to all residents of the area. The Technology Centers provide Adult Basic Education, GED attainment, and other training and educational opportunities. The University intends to enhance its current program by adding three centers for a total of seven that are strategically placed throughout the vast reservation. Each Center will be equipped with 15-20 thin client computer stations that will have high speed broadband service through connection to the University's network. Application servers at the University tech center in Mission, SD will reduce the need for switches and extraneous wires in each center and allow for remote network maintenance and tech support to individual computers. This program extends over a five-county area spanning more than 2,000 square miles. It serves the Sicangu Lakota and other tribal and non-Indian residents who live in one of the poorest areas of the country.

All of the communities in the 5-county area of the reservation and Off Reservation Tribal Lands are considered underserved and unserved based primarily on the historical poverty of the area. There are 24,110 tribal members (source: RST Enrollment Office) and approximately 5,000 non-Indians living in the service area. The reservation has one of the youngest populations in the country with 44% under the age of 18, as well as one of the poorest populations with a per capita income of under \$9,000 and unemployment at 83% with 76% of employed living below poverty guidelines

The University proposes to provide high speed broadband so that all tribal residents can have access to information and educational programs through the Web. The service provider, Golden West Technologies, headquartered in Rapid City, SD, will provide fiber optic access to each center at a 5-MB speed capability. The University will hire 3 new center managers whose job will be to provide the GED instruction and to establish and keep times available for students in grades 5 through college level and provide assistance in accessing information through the Internet. A half-time employee recruited from SGU students living in the centers' areas will provide an extra 20 hours per week for center management, including maintaining a schedule with weekend hours that will be available for all community members. One full-time employee will be added to the University's IT staff to assist center

staff and will visit each center a minimum of once a month to provide on-site maintenance and assistance.

The seven centers are strategically placed throughout the reservation. They are located in communities that have several smaller population areas in their vicinity. Centers will serve at least 1,000 individual users each year with student age groups between 5th grade through college. Other constituents include those seeking a General Equivalency diploma (GED), and other adults, including elders. The potential to serve more than 1,000 users is great simply because the lack of access to individual homes is so great.

The University is foremost a recognized leader in community-based, grass-roots higher education. 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.

The University charter mandates that it provide higher education and other learning opportunities for the Sicangu Nation (Rosebud Sioux) and surrounding communities as 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 1,448 degrees and 184 certificates to over 1,000 graduates.

The University has also allocated resources and sought grants for technology infrastructure development. It services 27 buildings that house university departments and programs located in the town of Mission, SD. All of the buildings are connected through a robust Intranet and all students, faculty and staff have access to an equally robust Internet.

Our ability to provide consistent programs and to continually develop new degrees and work with the Tribe and tribal agencies on community development is apparent throughout our 40 year history. Sinte Gleska University is excited to take the lead in closing the digital divide that has created a chasm filled with lost opportunity between our tribal nation and the rest of the country.

The total project cost is \$1,295,267.