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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Over 600 Pine Ridge Business Owners to Benefit from New Training Program

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Kyle, South Dakota – *December 18, 2013* – Lakota Funds, a community loan fund, based in Kyle, South Dakota, was recently awarded a \$399,013 grant from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Administration for Native Americans in order to launch the Building Native Industry Institute (BNII), a three-year initiative designed to help Native entrepreneurs on the Pine Ridge Reservation improve business skills. Specifically, the BNII will deliver at least 26 business education classes to 625 participants through 11 public access points and an online learning center.

“With limited resources and local infrastructure, the entrepreneurs here on the Pine Ridge Reservation face many challenges in creating, maintaining, and expanding businesses. The Building Native Industry Institute will help them overcome those challenges by dramatically increasing access to professional business training workshops available online 24-7,” says Kadem Fisher, Business Success Coach at Lakota Funds who is responsible for implementing the initiative.

The BNII will utilize various technological advances, including webinar software and video conferencing equipment, in order to broadcast business training seminars at various access points throughout the reservation. The seminars that will include topics on starting and growing a business, marketing, business planning, accounting, and human resources, will be recorded and archived for viewing anytime so that Native entrepreneurs can complete the courses according to their own time schedule without having to travel long distances.

“We are in the process of establishing partnerships with approximately 10 other organizations, which will be key to creating greater access to the highest quality professional resources. And it is these resources that will foster greater economic growth on our reservation,” says Fisher.

The ultimate goal of the Building Native Industry Institute is to establish 60 new businesses on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

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About Lakota Funds

Lakota Funds, a Native community development financial institution (CDFI) established more than 25 years ago, has played a vital role in improving the quality of life for the Oglala Lakota Oyate by placing capital with new and growing businesses, providing customized business development services, and educating adults and youth on financial management concepts. Lakota Funds' mission is to promote economic sustainability on the Pine Ridge



Lakota Funds

Investing in the Oyate

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Reservation and geographic service area, through business loans, technical assistance, and wealth building education for families and businesses.