



Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES

DISTRICT 7

PROJECT/REQUEST

LOCATION

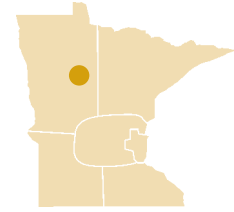
Northwest Technical College

Bemidji

Bemidji State University

Minnesota Native American Young Leaders Program

\$800,000



Project at a Glance

- Enhance and strengthen the talent, skills, leadership tools and awareness of young Native Americans ages 13 to 18 in northern Minnesota by introducing participants to the theory and practice of legal society
- Program participants will learn about government, law making and the attempts of public leaders and the judicial system to bring order and stability to their communities by application of the law
- Participants also will learn the public debate process, communication skills, keys to enhance academic skills and the processes associated with participating in higher education

Project Description

This program is different from other access and opportunity programs for nontraditional populations. The focus is on using participants' community and other role models to raise awareness of many societal structure and interrelationships that are important to understand when making life choices.

Participants will meet with tribal leaders, judges, attorneys, political leaders, leading local business people and young, successful Native Americans to learn from these leaders and their experiences.

The project is a collaboration of four rural Minnesota educational organizations – Northwest Technical College, Bemidji State University, Northwest Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center and the Northwest District Cooperative, a group of 13 K-12 school districts including a charter school and a Native American School. The area is home to the majority of Minnesota's Native American population.

Educational and legal professionals and support staff will help mentor 200 young Native Americans in a series of sessions largely housed at Northwest Technical College and Bemidji State University. They will travel to various venues in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area, including the State Capitol, the State Supreme Court and a metropolitan law school. They will visit with all levels of state public officials, tribal police, tribal courts and law enforcement experts.



Experiences with democratic and legal principles are planned to help encourage a new generation of talented young people become leaders. Photo courtesy of Northwest Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center.

Creating more efficient educational pathways for young learners and building a pool of Native Americans as future educators are key components of the project.

The counties that host Indian nations (Cass, Beltrami and Mahnomen) are among the least prosperous in Minnesota. Issues of affordable housing, adequate health care, graduation rates and a general lack of success planning among young people need to be addressed if the state is to advance a 21st-century social and economic agenda of inclusivity.

Community leaders are concerned that negative images are all that Minnesotans know about Native American people and rural Minnesota in general, while many positive changes are improving the quality of life.

Northwest Technical College, Bemidji State University, Northwest Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center and the Northwest K-12 School District Consortium are uniquely qualified to lead this initiative. The initial planning

and development were led by Northwest Technical College and the Northwest Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center which hosted meetings with leaders of Leech Lake, White Earth and Red Lake nations many times over several years. Others involved were Bemidji State University and groups such as Bemidji Leads, the Joint Economic Development Commission and the regional Ingenuity Frontier group.

The Opportunities Industrialization Center, Northwest Technical College and Bemidji State University are centrally located in Beltrami County. Bemidji State University has one of the few American Indian studies programs, a unique Ojibwa language program, and an American Indian Resource Center committed to the study and preservation of indigenous cultures. In addition, Bemidji State University is a partner in a regional Tribal College Consortium that works to promote cooperation among institutions and quality higher education for Native American people.

Outcomes

- Develop leaders and role models for young people in and external to their communities
- Broaden understanding of educational career options and prepare participants for matriculation to higher educational institutions
- Familiarize participants through computing exercises with technology, administrative processes, and college admission, financial aid and other forms
- Provide a management tool for participants to use to accomplish goals of their choosing

Participating Institutions:

Northwest Technical College*
www.ntcmn.edu

Bemidji State University
www.bemidjistate.edu
President Jon Quistgaard
Phone: (218) 755-2011

Project Contact:

Charles Giammona, Provost
Northwest Technical College
Phone: (218) 333-6611
charles.giammona@ntcmn.edu

* Northwest Technical College is aligned with Bemidji State University.

Project Collaborators:

Northwest Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center
Northwest K-12 school districts



Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES

WELLS FARGO PLACE
30 7th St. E., Suite 350
ST. PAUL, MN 55101-7804

ph 651.296.8012
fx 651.297.5550
www.mnscu.edu

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system is an Equal Opportunity employer and educator.