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Peer reviewed

Rapid City Native American Population Needs Assessment

ABDOLLAH FARROKHI

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of Native Americans living in Rapid City, South Dakota.¹ Specifically, the research team wanted to know how Native American opinions were affected by the Rapid City economy and what Native Americans' concerns were in regard to available educational services, housing, transportation, recreation, and employment.² These data may be utilized to assess Native American needs within the Rapid City community. According to the 1990 census, there are 50,573 Indians living in South Dakota, compared to 44,968 in 1980—a 12.5 percent increase in ten years.³ The 1990 census indicated that there are 4,852 Native Americans living in Rapid City.⁴

The heads of 301 Native American households were interviewed concerning those programs they would most like to see in Rapid City.⁵ A head of household was defined as the principal income producer of the house. The answers given on the survey were kept confidential and no names were requested on the questionnaire.

Eight pilot test surveys were administered. Members of the task force critiqued the pilots, and a final survey form incorporating their changes was developed. The task force is a combination of Indian and non-Indian committee members in charge of the

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development projects for the Native Americans living in Rapid City. This project was approved and funded by the Rapid City Mayor's Task Force.

The objectives of the assessment that New Directions proposed for the mayor's task force were

1. Perform a comprehensive study of socioeconomic factors concerning the economic opportunities for Native Americans in Rapid City, South Dakota;
2. Conduct a survey within the acceptable cultural norms of the people being surveyed to determine the needs of the Rapid City Native American community;
3. Provide a reliable database to the mayor's task force that can be upgraded, when necessary; and
4. Determine a population framework for future studies.

New Directions is the consulting agency that signed the contract with the mayor's task force to conduct the research project. The research team collected the data in personal interviews, using a comprehensive survey adapted from a questionnaire provided by the mayor's task force. Clusters of the 301 households were selected from Lakota Homes, the Mother Butler Center, Sioux San Hospital, the dental clinic, and the rescue mission. Lakota Homes is a residential area for Indian population living in Rapid City. The others are nonprofit organizations in charge of health and social services to Native Americans living in Rapid City. Before beginning assessment, the research team provided information about the project to members of the Native American community through

1. Public service announcements and articles in the media, e. g., *Rapid City Journal* and KILI radio station;
2. Bulletins and announcements in churches in the Native American community; and
3. Notices posted at the Mother Butler Center and throughout the community.

The personal interviews were explained in these announcements and postings. The purpose and timeframe for the interviews were clarified to help the Native American community understand the importance of this project.

Native American Community

Sioux San Hospital, an IHS substance abuse treatment facility, was one of the sites selected for this survey. Located on Canyon Lake Drive at the intersection of Sioux San Drive, it has an inpatient capacity of twelve people and runs at maximum capacity at all times. According to hospital officials, the facility has about a 90 percent success rate, with 10 percent of the patients returning for a second treatment. There is no downward trend in admittance; increasing numbers of people want to get into the program at Sioux San. Reasons for being admitted include self-admittance, family pressure, and court enforcement. The court-enforced patients have had a higher rate of recurrence or relapse. In most cases, drugs as well as alcohol are involved. More female clients are being admitted, and, when children are involved, most are referred by the Department of Social Services. The average length of stay is thirty days. All patients are admitted for thirty-day cycles.

There are 198 households in Lakota Homes, with approximately 730 people living there now. There are no open units, with the exception of two that are being refurbished. The homes are bought through a co-op, which sells memberships to Native Americans. Co-op members then have a say in what goes on and who is on the board of directors. Assistance is available through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

There is a constant turnover of residents in Lakota Homes, usually ten or twelve per year. Many residents, however, have been there for the entire twenty-two years that Lakota Homes has been in existence. Typical problems faced at Lakota Homes include general maintenance, plumbing, painting, and appliance breakdown.

Several hundred people attend mass at St. Isaac Joques Catholic Church. Father Zuer, director of the St. Isaac Joques Mission in Rapid City, said the ideal is to have the parishioners attend mass, and then the church will help them financially or with food. In most cases, however, the church helps simply by donating necessary items to the parishioners. There is a senior citizen program, which feeds approximately thirty-six Indian and white people daily. The St. Isaac Joques Mission is funded through church donations (offerings) and assistance from the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, but these are simply not enough to meet even the daily needs of the parish. Cuts have had to be made in St. Isaac Joques's financial assistance to needy parishioners—usually Na-

tive Americans requesting help with overdue bills or needing travel money to get back to a reservation in another part of the country such as Oklahoma, Montana, or Minnesota.

Most of the problems that St. Isaac Joques faces are alcohol- and drug-related. Where there is alcohol involved, most cases also involve drugs. Usually it is the female member of the Native American family who comes to St. Isaac Joques for financial aid or alcohol/drug treatment, primarily because the female would like to have a role in resolving the family problem.

St. Isaac Joques has several programs, including Alcoholics Anonymous, to assist people with alcohol or drug problems. The church also refers people to Sioux San Hospital for more intensive treatment, since there are no professionally trained counselors at St. Isaac Joques. The goal of St. Isaac Joques is simply to meet human needs, and most assistance is done in the form of providing groceries for needy Native Americans. The church keeps a pantry stocked on the premises for this purpose, and there has been an increase in need for these services over the past few years.

Native Americans make up 45 percent of the population at Rapid City's Pennington County Jail, which houses 236 prisoners. Normal capacity is 198–210 prisoners, but the jail has not had a serious case of overcrowding to date. All are single cells, with the exception of the work release program, in which there are thirty-four male double-occupancy cells and ten female double-occupancy cells. There has been a slight decline in Native American inmates in the past year, for unknown reasons, according to Scott Schuft, the prison administrator.

There seems to be a major link between alcohol or drugs and the crimes committed in Pennington County; in addition, where alcohol is involved, drugs often are involved as well, but jail officials have no way of testing inmates when they are brought in.

Rehabilitation programs are available for those who are interested or who are ordered by the court. Programs include Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, a GED program, life skills, religious programs, basic education programs for adult learning skills, and an in-house alcohol/drug treatment program.

Demographic Information

Of the respondents, 15.8 percent were identified as single, 28.0 percent as married, and 56.3 percent as unknown. Of the respon-

dents, 43.3 percent were between the ages of 21 and 35 years; 32.7 percent were between the ages of 36 and 50 years; 12.4 percent were between 51 and 65 years; 7.6 percent were between 66 and 80 years; and 4.0 percent were between 15 and 20 years old. The majority of the respondents, 62.9 percent, were female, compared to 37.1 percent who were male.

The Native American families consist of one to eight family members. Of the respondents, 23.0 percent had two-member families; 18.7 percent were single; 16.5 percent had four members; 14.7 percent had three members; 13.3 percent had five members; 9.0 percent had six members; 4.0 percent had seven members; and .7 percent had eight members. Among the respondents, 47.1 percent had an average age of 7-20 years for the entire family; 23.4 percent averaged 21-30 years; 15.7 percent averaged 31-50 years; and 13.9 percent averaged 51-79 years.

Among those answering the survey, 41.5 percent had completed high school; 28.3 percent had less than a high school education; 24.5 percent had one to three years of higher education; and 5.7 percent completed college or had done graduate work.

The majority of the families in the study, 81.8 percent, had one person employed; 13.1 percent had two people employed; 3.0 percent had three people employed; and 2.0 percent had four people employed. One-third of the heads of households, 33.2 percent, are employed full-time, permanently; 6.5 percent are employed full-time, temporarily; 3.1 percent are employed part-time, temporarily; 2.7 percent are seasonal; 2.1 percent are occasionally employed; 11.0 percent are retired; and 21.2 percent are unemployed.

FINDINGS/DISCUSSION

Education

The results of this survey indicated that only two of every five people have completed high school. One in four interviewees had one to three years of college, and only one of every twenty people has a college degree.

The educational attainment levels of many low-income parents in Pennington County (Rapid City) are low, especially among teen parents and Native Americans. In fact, the average level of education attained by Indian adults in Pennington County and sur-

rounding areas is 8.9 years.⁶ The school dropout rate is a major factor in the low level of educational attainment. Of course, the dropout dilemma crosses all racial and economic lines, but its severity is acute among Rapid City's Native American population.⁷

Some of the programs for the district's 1,568 Indian students are funded entirely by the school district, but many are supported with federal money. The district's major Indian education program is Title V, funded entirely by the federal Office of Indian Education. Money is allocated to the district for each Native American child registered in the program. In 1990, the district received a \$139,730 Title V grant.⁸

The dismal findings in a preliminary study of the education of Indian students in Rapid City area schools are not surprising. A Title V study surveying first-semester 1991 test scores, attendance, dropout rates, and tutoring programs found that a majority of Indian children attending Rapid City schools score below all others in the school district, but with a significant difference: A higher number of Indian children simply give up and drop out of school.⁹ It is estimated, from student enrollment and dropout reports, based on the average enrollment of two quarters, that there is a 24 percent dropout rate for Indian students in the first semester and a 50 percent dropout rate for the second semester.

The Title V survey identified several areas of concern. There are too few Title V counselors in proportion to the number of Indian students. Tutors, also in short supply, often lack adequate instructional skills or training. The report recommends that planning begin for providing more and better educational services for Indian children. Among these is transportation, particularly a strong need to expand busing services to Central High School in Rapid City.¹⁰ Other high-priority student needs were identified as counseling services, drug and alcohol education, and more resources for academic support, school fees, and supplies.¹¹

Results of the three surveys conducted by the Rapid City Coalition for Dropout Prevention in 1989 indicate that the public and the school district staff perceive lack of family support in the education process as the major factor for the high student dropout rate.¹² In addition, an average of 120 to 130 Native American teens give birth at Sioux San Hospital in Rapid City each year. Of the forty young mothers who had babies from August to May 1989-90 and who participated in the Rural American Initiatives Welcome Baby Program, only 7.5 percent were in school or pursuing a GED.

The 92.5 percent of teen mothers who had dropped out of school expressed a desire but no plan to re-enter school.¹³

College Dropout

According to the 1980 census, nearly three out of four Native American college students do not complete degrees. William C. Demmert, Jr., Alaska commissioner of education, states that 30 percent of Native American students, regardless of where they are, perform very well in elementary and secondary school, yet, when they reach college, many fail.¹⁴

Tribal colleges may play a critical role in keeping Native American college students from dropping out. These schools can help students to survive long enough to transfer to larger institutions. According to Janine Pease-Windy Boy, president of Little Big Horn College at Crow Agency in Montana, tribal colleges are particularly significant in the Dakotas and Montana. Seventeen of the twenty-three tribal colleges nationwide are in South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana. Pease-Windy Boy states that the colleges are "of tremendous importance" to Indian people and "occupy the traditional position of colleges and universities."¹⁵ However, according to our survey, the colleges that were regarded by the respondents as particularly significant in Native Americans education were Black Hills State University (Spearfish, South Dakota) and National College (Rapid City, South Dakota).

Transportation

Rapid City, with a population of 59,000, does not have an adequate public transportation system. Low-income people, many of whom cannot afford private transportation, have great difficulty accessing services, because agencies are scattered throughout the city. The only public transportation includes taxicabs, which are relatively expensive, and a small bus called "the Ride," which began operation on 27 July 1992. "The Ride" operates only in Rapid City proper and accommodates only those requests that fit into its regular schedule. Because it requires a twenty-four-hour advance order for services, it is not useful for emergencies. Lack of adequate transportation makes it difficult for low-income community members without private transportation to hold a job.¹⁶

Rapid City's transport deficit has had a severe impact on Native American education in the area. Survey respondents reported a strong need for improvement of the transportation system between homes and schools. Title V's biggest impact in Rapid City is busing. It provides transportation for kindergarten through ninth-grade Native American students living in Lakota Homes and the Sioux Addition, another Indian residential area in Rapid City.¹⁷

Indian Culture

A need for development of Indian culture in the school curriculum was also indicated by the survey respondents. A \$52,498 block grant funds the Cultural Resources Program at Central High School. In 1990, the district was able to bring in guest lecturers who provided programs on Indian culture and traditions. These programs are designed to enlighten all students about differences in cultures. It focuses on Indians because of the district's high Native American population.¹⁸

In addition, a seminar targeted at the city's labor force aims to enhance cultural awareness and job performance for both Indians and non-Indians in the workplace. Robert Mullay, personnel director, said supervisors of city departments have attended the seminar, and the current focus is on four hundred city workers. Administrators believe that employees who are more culturally aware will be more successful and productive. Mullay states, "[The seminar] offers a solution to the performance problems of high turn-over, attendance, punctuality, sometimes high conflict between Indian and non-Indian workers, and misunderstandings resulting from lack of cultural knowledge."¹⁹

In an effort to meet the need for greater understanding between Indians and non-Indians in the Rapid City area, the city's Indian/White Relations Committee is planning to establish an Indian cultural center. In preparation for this project, committee members plan to contact other Indian cultural centers around the nation to learn what they offer, how they operate, and what problems they encounter.²⁰

Rapid City is one of the few cities in the United States with a large Native American population but no American Indian center. Many Sioux move to Rapid City from the reservations looking for employment, housing, and education, only to find themselves unemployed and isolated from Indian culture.²¹ The center is expected to

serve as an advocate, helping Indians with education, employment, and housing needs. It will also provide cultural activities, Indian art, job training, chemical/alcohol treatment through Indian spiritualism, and child care to develop more self-sufficient lifestyles. In addition, because tourism is the state's number one industry, an Indian arts and crafts market might be successful in this area. Such a market could successfully employ hundreds of Lakota and would intertwine the teachings of Lakota culture and heritage.²²

Social and Political Participation

Better communication is needed to understand and resolve the differences between the Native American population and the local organizations in charge of handling discrimination in education, employment, housing, health, and law enforcement. Almost two out of three people who reported instances of discrimination were not satisfied with the outcome of their reports.

In addition, at least two out of three Native Americans feel that the American Indian segment of their community is not fairly represented in city and county government. Efforts should be made to include more Native Americans in government.

Legal Aid

According to our needs assessment study, Native Americans regard legal aid as the third highest area of need. The study also found, however, that 37 percent of the respondents were not aware of Black Hills Legal Services, and less than half had used the services offered there.

According to Todd Schweiger, senior staff attorney at Black Hills Legal Services, approximately two thousand legal matters—from simple advice to extensive litigation—involving five hundred clients were processed in 1989 through his office. About 30 percent of the clients were Native Americans.²³

Race Reconciliation

Before former President George Bush signed the Native American-White Reconciliation Bill, the late Governor George

Mickelson of South Dakota had asked tribal leaders and the people on the eight reservations in the state to join him in making 1990 the year Indians and other South Dakotans came closer together. A proclamation declaring it the "Year of Reconciliation" was signed by Governor Mickelson on 1 February 1990.²⁴ "This ceremony is a symbolic, spiritual event designed to help launch a better understanding between Indian and non-Indian relations in our State," said Mickelson.²⁵

A special committee was organized to help coordinate events such as arts fairs and powwows. In addition, the committee worked on special projects, such as incorporating more Sioux history and culture into South Dakota's elementary and secondary school curricula.²⁶

Employment

One in three respondents indicated that Native American people have relocated to Rapid City to find employment. The next factor mentioned by the respondents was "better economic conditions." These expectations alone create a strong need for improved economic conditions and employment among Native Americans in the city .

One of every three respondents held a full-time, permanent job; the remainder were unemployed, retired, part-time, temporary/seasonal employees, or only occasionally employed. Unemployment is a major problem: One of every five Native Americans is out of work. At the time of this interview, one of every four people had been unemployed for a year, and one out of every ten people had been unemployed for eight years or more.

One of every four employed Native Americans was not satisfied with his or her job, and nearly half of the respondents believed their wages were too low. Two in five respondents were looking for other work. More than half of the respondents have changed their jobs in the last five years, and 10 percent of the respondents have changed their jobs at least five times or more during their employment. Many respondents had either moved or looked for better jobs.

The overall unemployment rate in the Anglo community in Pennington County is low—an average of 5 percent. However, Indian unemployment is ten times that of the white community

(50 percent). Two of every five survey respondents said the local job services have not helped them find work. They also said they need assistance in choosing a job. A complicating factor is that Shannon County, which is adjacent to Pennington County and contains the Pine Ridge Reservation, is the poorest county in the nation. A high number of families from Pine Ridge migrate periodically from Shannon County, where the Indian unemployment rate is nearly 80 percent, to Pennington County to compete for jobs.²⁷ In addition to the need for jobs for Native Americans, more training should be provided to prepare Native Americans for social work, office positions, technical jobs, health care work, physical labor, and teaching.

Financial

One in ten survey respondents earned less than \$200 a month; one in five earned between \$200 and \$399; and one in twenty people earned \$2,000 or more. The majority of the respondents depend on employment as the main source of their income. Most of the Native Americans are cash-oriented people who do not have checking accounts. Almost three out of five people receive food stamps, and about the same number run out of money or food periodically. Two in five need help with budgeting or must supplement their incomes with welfare.

Needed Services

Two of every five families do not have washing machines, and about the same number of respondents do not have a laundry facility within an accessible distance from their homes. One in one hundred families still washes clothes by hand. There is a strong need for more laundromats nearby.

Only one of every two hundred people owns a small business; more than half of the Native Americans said they would like to own a small business and would be willing to take a course on small business operation. More attention should be paid to entrepreneurial and business training, particularly in the area of service, Indian culture-related business, and the arts.

Housing

There is a definite need for the development of housing for Native Americans in Rapid City. Eighty percent of the Native Americans do not own a home. The majority of the respondents rent. About one-half of the Native American families who live in Rapid City spend less than \$300 a month for housing. The other half spend between \$300 and \$700 (or more) for housing.

Only one in ten families is financially dependent on Pennington County housing. The majority—three out of five families—depend on their own personal income for housing and utilities.

At least three out of five Native American families in Rapid City cannot afford their housing costs, and the majority need help. More housing facilities, particularly low-income housing projects, are needed for Native Americans.

Rapid City does not have adequate low-income housing. In 1988, a total of 188 families that had been declared eligible for low-income housing were on an official waiting list. At the present time, an average of ten to fifteen applications are submitted per week but remain unprocessed. Evidence exists that other eligible low-income families have not even applied because of the long waiting list. The number of homeless in Pennington County has not yet been accurately tabulated. However, the Care Center, a newly established facility for the homeless that also provides other services, has facilities for up to twenty-eight women, forty men, and seven families and has been filled close to capacity since opening.²⁸

Health Care

Health care is considered the greatest need by one-third of the Native American survey respondents. Sioux San Hospital, an IHS medical facility, is the primary health center for Native Americans in Pennington County. Ninety percent of the population uses the hospital. Further development of Sioux San Hospital or establishment of other, new facilities would benefit the Native American population of Rapid City. Sixty percent of the respondents indicated that they need help in the area of health services (physical, psychological, Medicare, and Medicaid).

Despite this urgent need, a federal study has proposed ending inpatient services in nineteen hospitals across the nation, including Sioux San Hospital in Rapid City and facilities in Wagner,

Sisseton, and Eagle Butte, South Dakota. The federal study recommends closing inpatient wards at any IHS hospital that averages fewer than fifteen patients per day.²⁹ An Aberdeen area tribal chairmen's health board task force has drafted an eight-point document in an effort to retain inpatient care in Indian Health Service hospitals. Non-IHS facilities are not prepared to absorb the Native American inpatient workload, and some do not want to, for a variety of reasons: Many are not accredited, their facilities may be inadequate, they may not be sensitive to issues of Indian patients or willing to adopt culturally relevant approaches, and transportation may be limited for American Indian patients and their families.³⁰

Rates of infant mortality, heart disease, and other disorders are increasing in the American Indian population. Proper education and adequate health care are the elements needed to stop these disturbing trends. According to the State Department of Health, 114 infants died in South Dakota in 1987, compared to 155 in 1986. Although this indicates an overall decline, the 1987 white resident infant death rate was 7 to 9 percent, compared to an American Indian infant death rate in the same year of 21.2 percent. The 1990 objective for the nation was to have less than nine infant deaths per one thousand live births and less than twelve infant deaths per one thousand live births in any county, racial, or ethnic group. The South Dakota white infant death rate of 9.9 during 1987 is not far above the objective; however, the American Indian mortality rate of 21.2 percent is well above the objective for a racial group.³¹ These statistics indicate an urgent need to expand health services for Native Americans in the Rapid City area.

CONCLUSIONS

Education—In addressing the educational needs of Native Americans, Rapid City area educational institutions should take a proactive rather than a re-active role. As the recipients of the highest survey preference rating for potential centers of Native American education and training, Black Hills State University and National College are logical resource centers. Their present programs should be expanded and developed by

1. increasing the provision of general educational counseling and economic assistance to Native Americans desiring educational training;

2. expanding nursing, business, and social work programs tailored to fit the specific needs of the Native American population;
3. developing courses of study related to Native American culture and language, coordinating the credits and instruction for such courses with the nearest regional tribal college (Oglala Lakota College); and
4. surveying Native American males to identify specific educational/vocational training needs for this population.

The Rapid City public schools can address the needs of the Native American community by

1. resolving transportation problems in all areas where bus-ing is needed for Native American children;
2. surveying the Native American community about specific ways to increase awareness of Indian culture within the school program and eliminate perceived racist attitudes of administrators, teachers, and students;
3. coordinating volunteer peer teaching/adult tutoring programs to improve reading and math skills and to improve homework habits of Native American children;
4. providing in-depth teacher in-services K-12 on Indian culture, language, and values, using local Native American persons and Oglala Lakota College as human resources; and
5. planning regular, quality class and school presentations K-12 throughout the school year, given by parents and other local Native American representatives, on Indian culture, language, and values.

Employment—Financial data provided by the Native American population indicates that even when Indian people work full time, they are often unable to maintain an income above the poverty level. Of 301 respondents, 90 earn less than \$4,800 per year, 118 have an income between \$4,800 and \$12,000 yearly, and 93 earn more than \$12,000.

We compared our data with national employment statistics. According to national figures, in 1990 a full-time, year-round worker at a minimum wage of \$3.75 earned only \$7,600 per year, or \$2,200 less than the poverty threshold for a family of three.³² National Census Bureau figures show that 3.3 million, or over one-half the heads of poor families, worked during the year. Over one million (or one-sixth of the total) worked at full-time jobs.³³

Despite these local and national statistics, which reveal ongoing systemic economic problems, two-thirds of the permanently employed Native Americans in our survey indicated they were satisfied with their jobs. Further, jobs are the major source of income for 55 percent of the Indian households surveyed.

Health—Sioux San Hospital in Rapid City clearly is an essential institution in fulfilling medical needs in the Native American community. This survey indicates that 91 percent of the population use Sioux San Hospital for their medical care, as compared to 9 percent who use private doctors. Since 58 percent of the people interviewed indicated a need for more health information (the highest percentage in the informational needs category), it is recommended that Sioux San explore expansion of health counseling as an ongoing service to Indian people. The Community Health Representative (CHR) program—an advocate outpatient nursing service to elderly Indians—needs to be assessed, since almost two-thirds of respondents do not use it. Some respondents indicated that they had not heard of this program. Others gave a negative assessment of the program as their reason for not using it.

Legal Aid—Almost one in four respondents, or 22 percent, expressed a need for legal assistance. At the same time, 37 percent of respondents are not aware of Black Hills Legal Services. Less than one-half have used these services. Information concerning available legal services should be more widely disseminated by providers.

Spiritual Well-Being—Available spiritual need services should be highlighted for members of this community. Of those responding, 26.7 percent expressed a need for spiritual assistance.

Housing—Most respondents rent rather than own their housing. Lack of upkeep, inadequate heat, and electrical problems are reported as the greatest problems with housing (38 percent). We recommended that the city of Rapid City consider an oversight committee to examine maintenance practices by landlords who rent primarily to Native American people. In addition, most of the people surveyed cannot afford their present rent and expressed a need for assistance in their housing costs. Building and/or acquiring additional low-rent housing should be explored by the city.

Food—The majority (60 percent) of respondents who receive food stamps run out of money or food stamps before the end of every month. Almost half of respondents want information or counseling regarding welfare and budgeting. Therefore, we recommend that the credit unions and banks frequented by Indian people (Black Hills Federal Credit Union, Norwest, and First Bank), in cooperation with nutrition/food budget specialists, sponsor budgeting classes, with special attention to food budgeting and nutritional information.

Transportation—Every college graduate in this survey owns a car. However, the one-quarter of all respondents who do not own cars cite transportation as a serious problem in relation to location of housing and schools. Expansion of Rapid City's public bus system to accommodate Native Americans could also benefit senior citizens, school children, tourists, and conventioners.

Laundry Facilities—Because 35 percent of the survey respondents do not own a washing machine, convenient laundromat locations constitute another area of need. We recommended that the Native American community explore development of a cooperative laundry facility in the Lakota Homes area and other areas with a high Native American population.

Telephones—Almost four out of ten people do not own a telephone. This is addressed elsewhere in relation to the community's ability to communicate, and in relation to reporting discrimination.

Awareness of Present Assistance Services—There is very low awareness and even less use of many services in Rapid City. Even the most widely recognized service, United Sioux Tribes—known by 73.6 percent of the people surveyed—has been used by only a little more than one-third of respondents. United Sioux Tribes is an advocacy organization for various Indian tribes, providing educational training, job placement, and support groups to the Indian population of South Dakota.

Local community organizations need to provide more extensive information to Indians in the area about services and should encourage greater use of such services; they also should examine reasons why services are not being utilized.

Perceptions of Discrimination—Although perceptions of discrimination were felt most often in the area of education, the people reporting the discrimination had the highest level of satisfaction (61 percent) compared to other categories of discrimination.

Only 15.6 percent of respondents felt discrimination in the area of health care, but the percentage of people reporting health care discrimination was as high (37 percent) as the percentage for education.

Some possible conclusions taken from these facts are

1. People may not expect discrimination from education or health care providers;
2. People feel safer reporting discrimination than in other areas (e. g., law enforcement or employment);
3. The educational community appears to be responsive to reports of discrimination and acts to make positive changes;
4. Health care providers need to encourage discrimination reporting and must be responsive to such reports.

In the areas of employment and food supply services, Native Americans show very low rates of reporting discrimination, as well as low satisfaction with results from reporting discrimination. An important factor that may create reticence in reporting in these two areas is a fear of economic consequences, but further study is needed to substantiate this tentative conclusion.

A positive finding in the survey relates to perceptions of discrimination in financial institutions. Only 15.6 percent of the respondents who maintain checking accounts indicated they felt discriminated against by these institutions (primarily Black Hills Federal Credit Union, Norwest and First Bank). We show that almost one-half of respondents (the highest percentage of any area) reported discrimination when they perceived it. Almost half of those reporting discrimination (again the highest percentage of any area) indicated satisfaction with the results.

We recommend that these financial institutions highlight their sensitivity to the Native American population in their customer relations programs. For example, the city could sponsor public service announcements in the media to inform the Native American population where to go to report discrimination. The announcements might also promote those businesses that have been successful in addressing such issues. Perhaps the businesses could spotlight their success in their advertising campaigns. In addition, they might consider exploring other ways to serve their Native American customers, such as sponsoring budgeting seminars.

Empowerment and Group Determination—It is the researchers' view that ultimate goals for Native American people are achieving (1) empowerment and (2) group determination. (We use the term *group determination* in contrast to self-determination, which is often a goal in the non-Indian culture.) Intrinsic to the process of achieving these goals are two concerns that must be addressed: a need for greater cultural awareness/cultural pride and a need for economic independence.

One of the overwhelmingly positive responses in our survey was given to the question, "Is there a need for a multipurpose Native American center?" The majority (91.7 percent) of respondents said "yes." Clearly, such a center would represent a tangible means for addressing the needs of Rapid City's Indian community. Some services suggested by the respondents are

1. vocational training;
2. assistance with owning a small business;
3. classes in traditional Lakota values and language;
4. information dissemination regarding health, nutrition, education, and discrimination reporting;
5. sports and recreation for youth;
6. alternative communication resource for persons with no telephone and limited transportation;
7. treatment for chemical/alcohol dependency;
8. legal services; and
9. child care.

We also believe that a Native American center could be used for political action and voter rights education. Since 70 percent of the registered voters felt they were not represented politically, these uses could serve to empower the community (62 percent of those surveyed are registered voters).

In addition, we recommend that the center house an art cooperative, which was cited by more than 90 percent of respondents as another needed enterprise. Other cooperatives that could be housed in the center include

1. parent cooperative for child care;
2. information and service exchange or barter (see above list of informational needs);
3. diaper service; and
4. laundromat.

We believe that a Native American center that includes an art cooperative, other cooperative ventures, and a small business training program could enhance two existing Rapid City goals: (1) entrepreneurship /small business growth; and (2) promotion and development of the tourism industry in Rapid City and the entire Black Hills region.

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NOTES

1. This survey was completed in March 1990. It was conducted through New Directions, a consulting firm owned by Cynthia Strom and directed by Dr. Abdollah Farrokhi. The study was sponsored by the Rapid City Mayor's Task Force on Indian Economic Development.

2. The assessment project was conducted by a team of professionals who have expertise in research and analysis. A representative from the Native American community served as community liaison to ensure that the project was conducted within the acceptable cultural norms of the people being surveyed. The team included

Abdollah Farrokhi, Project Director—Abdollah Farrokhi has a doctorate in mass communications from Florida State University and is an associate professor of journalism and mass communications at Black Hills State University, Spearfish, South Dakota. Dr. Farrokhi is an active member of the Multi-Cultural/Native American Concerns Committee, the chair of the BHSU Faculty Research Committee and a member of College Media Advisers (CMA, Inc.) Research Committee. He is the director of a summer program called "Rural School and Community Development," coordinating courses for community leaders, teachers, and business managers.

Faye Ismail, Community Liaison/Interviewer Trainee—Faye Ismail is a graduate of Oglala Lakota College. In the summer of 1978, she worked for the city and county

of Denver, Colorado, with a multiethnic group of young people, teaching them skills in writing job applications, writing resumes, and interviewing for a job. She has worked as a grants manager technician for the Department of Labor (Indian Division), reviewing proposals. As a Native American living in Rapid City, Ms. Ismail has a thorough understanding of her culture, which helped her train and supervise the student interviewers to gain thorough and accurate information from the community members.

Christine Jackson, Project Coordinator—Christine Jackson has been a writer for two major newspapers in South Dakota that cover Native American community news, the *Lakota Times* and the *Rapid City Journal*. She has a bachelor of science degree in human services from Oglala Lakota College. Currently, she is pursuing a master's degree in educational administration and studying the Lakota language.

Cynthia Strom, Project Consultant—Cynthia Strom has twelve years' experience in market analysis. She also is involved in developing new markets, writing long-range business plans, and creating public relations programs. Her clients include the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Rapid City Journal*, the South Dakota Press Association, and American Friends Service Committee. She recently completed an assessment of the AFSC Indian health projects on the Pine Ridge and the Cheyenne River Indian reservations. Ms. Strom also served as director of public education with the Christic Institute, an interfaith, nonprofit public interest law firm in Washington, D.C. She holds a B.A. in humanities and a B.S. in education and psychology. Currently, she is working on a master's degree at South Dakota State University.

3. "Census Finds Many Claiming New Identity: Native American," *Lakota Times*, 12 March 1992.

4. "1990 Census of Population and Housing," *Summary Population and Housing Characteristics; South Dakota*, U. S. Department of Commerce, August 1991, 46.

5. The interviewers selected were Faye Ismail, interviewer liaison; Kathy Jeffries, Sam Martin, Patty LeBeau, Judy Brown, and Ken West. They participated in two training sessions before interviewing. When they went into the community to interview, they wore badges giving their names and indicating that they were part of the Native American Needs Assessment Team. Each team member also had a photo identification badge.

6. State Department of Health, *Vital Statistics*, 1988, 15.

7. Erin Andersen, "Indian Dropout Problem Is Severe," *Rapid City Journal*, 20 May 1990.

8. Idem, "Programs Target Indian Needs," *Rapid City Journal*, 21 May 1990.

9. Pamela Stillman, "Few Surprises Appear in Area Education Survey," *Lakota Times*, 21 January 1992.

10. Ibid.

11. The area education survey indicates that, on the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test), all Indian children rank significantly below all other students in the Rapid City school district. The survey also indicates that there are severe attendance problems for all Indian students at almost all grade levels, with higher rates of absenteeism among Indian students in kindergarten and grades one and four, and all Indian students in grades seven through 12.

12. The Rapid City Coalition for Dropout Prevention, *Project 2000*, 1990, 2.
13. Rural America Initiatives, *Rural American Initiatives Data Bank*, Rapid City, SD, 1989–90, 1.
14. For more information, see Bruce J. Milhans, "Indian Education Review Begins," *Rapid City Journal*, 20 May 1990.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Vital Statistics*, 15.
17. *Rapid City Journal*, 21 May 1990.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Mary Cook, "Cultural Awareness Seminars of City for City Employees Planned," *Lakota Times*, 30 January 1990.
20. Patsy Jeitz, "Cultural Center Still Number One Need," *Lakota Times*, 17 April 1990.
21. Pamela Stillman, "Center Could Provide Heart, Unity," *Lakota Times*, 15 April 1992.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Jeitz, "Black Hills Legal Services Here to Serve the People," *Lakota Times*, 12 June 1990.
24. Hugh O'Gara, "State, Tribes Join Forces," *Rapid City Journal*, 25 February 1990.
25. "Reconciliation Year Signing Set Thursday," *Rapid City Journal*, 31 January 1990.
26. Kevin Woster, "Year of Peace Under Way," *Rapid City Journal*, 2 February 1990.
27. *Vital Statistics*, 15.
28. *Ibid.*, 16.
29. Stillman, "Move on to Save Health Care," *Lakota Times*, 1 April 1992.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Vital Statistics*, 11.
32. U. S. Budget—1990 House/Senate Budget Resolution, May 1989.
33. U. S. Census Bureau, 1988. The official poverty thresholds for 1988 for individuals and families according to size were

All one person households	\$ 6,024
One person—65 years and over	5,674
Two person households	7,704
Family of three	9,435
Family of four	12,092