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Abstract

Salish Kootenai College (SKC), a tribal college chartered by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT), proposes to sponsor a Native Youth Community Project (NYCP) to increase the college and career readiness of Native American students. The Pathways to College and Careers Project (Pathways Project) will serve approximately 500, 8-12th grade Native American students in two public school districts on the Flathead Indian Reservation. The partnership effort includes the SKC business, education, allied health, natural resources, and trades departments, local businesses, SKC Upward Bound, Polson and Ronan Middle and High Schools, and the CSKT Tribal Health and Natural Resources Departments. The Pathways Project is supported by the Tribal Council of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, which recognizes the magnitude of the need to increase the college and career readiness of tribal youth, and build community capacity to meet this goal. SKC will draw on its experience in successfully improving high school and college outcomes through synergistic programming.

The Project will collaborate with partners to meet the following objectives including increased student participation in teacher-training and other work-based learning opportunities; increased student and parent knowledge of college and career readiness factors and resources; completion of key career and college readiness indicators; and increased number and capacity of partnerships through community awareness and improved collaboration.

The evidence-based rationale and corresponding design draws on analysis of community needs and gaps in services, and incorporates activities to address the greatest identified barriers to student readiness and success. The Project recognizes sources of inequity and the potential to further opportunity on the Flathead Indian Reservation. The Project meets the terms of the Absolute Priority and will address Competitive Preference Priorities 1 and 3.

Salish Kootenai College (SKC), the tribal college of the Flathead Indian Reservation, proposes to increase the college and career readiness of Native American students, grades 8-12 through a Native Youth Community Project (NYCP). The Pathways Project uses research-based models to engage students along a work-based learning continuum with academic support in five career clusters: Business, Education, Health, Natural Resources, and Trades. The project will increase the rigor and relevance of existing programs and enhance opportunities for students to smoothly transition from high school to college and careers that provide family-sustaining wages. The proposed project will serve approximately 60 Ronan Middle School (RMS), 200 Ronan High School (RHS), 40 Polson Middle School (PMS), and 200 Polson High School (PHS), or a total of 500 Native American students in the two reservation Local Educational Authorities (LEAs). The Project also aims to increase LEA and college capacity to serve Native American students along a college/career preparation path, increasing the number and efficacy of local entities focused on college and career readiness of these students.

The Flathead Indian Reservation (FIR), is the home of the Séliš, Ksanka, and Q̓íispé people who comprise the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation (CSKT). The target area covers the Flathead Indian Reservation which spans 2500 square miles, or approximately 1.3 million acres, in northwestern Montana. The rural location, poverty levels, sociodemographic status, and impacts of the COVID pandemic present significant challenges to efforts to prepare youth for college and careers.

The Confederated Salish & Kootenai Sustainable Comprehensive Economic Development Plan notes the need for educational pathways tribal students interested in gaining the qualifications to become tradesmen, tribal business managers, culturally-sustaining health care workers and teachers, and tribal natural resource specialists.

A survey of target school, SKC, and tribal entities revealed an excess of 100 open positions in the career fields of focus. The percentage of tribal educators on the reservation is tragically low, hospitals are highly understaffed, and trade occupations such as electricians, tractor-trailer operators, and carpenters are among the careers with the highest percentage of growth and annual job openings in northwest Montana (<https://lmi.mt.gov/projections>). These demands align the project directly with the economic development priorities of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes as well as local/regional workforce needs.

(a) NEED FOR PROJECT

(1) Specific Gaps and Weaknesses to be Addressed by the Proposal

The design of this project is based on specific gaps and weaknesses in services identified through interviews with school counselors and principals, data sources such as the Montana Office of Public Instruction, and surveys of Native American parents and students.

Lack of successful collegiate and career role models and social capital

“Choosing a postsecondary option is especially daunting if students did not receive strong advising while in school or if their family does not include college graduates who can provide guidance” (Ross et al, 2020). The majority of Flathead Reservation Native students do not have parents, siblings, or friends who have succeeded in college and careers, nor do they have teachers and guidance counselors who represent their culture and come from a background similar to their own. On the Flathead Reservation, 13.5% of Native American adults have not graduated from high school, and only 19.1% have earned a bachelor’s degree (U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). While Native American students comprise 33% of the Polson and 58% of the Ronan High School student bodies respectively, only 2.5% and 1.2% of the teachers and none of the counselors are Native American (*SKCUB Target School Survey*, Fall 2021).

Need for individualized attention from college and career advisors

While the recommended ratio of students to high school counselor is 1:250, in Montana high schools the average student to counselor ratio is 1:291. As noted by the ASCA, “students of color and students from low-income families are often shortchanged, receiving unequal access to school counselors or attending a school with too few school counselors” (American School Counselor Association (ASCA), 2021). Many students have never had individual attention from a counselor in considering their education and career options. This is a critical problem, often resulting in impaired decision-making about high school course selection, potential college majors, and career opportunities.

Limited career readiness opportunities and lack of cohesive WBL programs.

Rural areas such as the Flathead Reservation are particularly challenged to provide innovative and effective college/career readiness programs (Dalton, 2021). In Winter 2022, Polson and Ronan school staff reported a need to close gaps in career and college readiness programming and address disparities in Native American student participation rates. They expressed a need for classroom displays, guest speakers, staff support, and after-school field trips at the middle school level. The high schools reported a need for additional CCR classes, college and career fairs, dual enrollment opportunities, and increased work-based learning (WBL) options. The schools currently focus on health career internships in collaboration with the local hospitals, which leaves a gap to be filled by coordination with the Tribal Health department, as well as the development of WBL opportunities in the fields of business, education, health careers, trades, and natural resources.

In all cases, the schools lack an organized model for cohesive service provision. Regardless of career interests and abilities, career and college readiness programs must illustrate

a clear pathway connecting high school course work, career exploration, skill attainment, and work-based learning with actual careers, trade and degree options.

Lack of a coordinated and cohesive school and community network

Native American parents have cited that lack of coordinated, consistent, and effective advising is a major concern. Only 17.4% of the parents surveyed agreed that the school helped their students figure out which careers and colleges match their interests and abilities. In addition, parents are left largely uninformed. When asked about the information they received from the schools, 65.2% reported they did not receive information on career, trade, college preparation, financial aid, or high school graduation requirements (SKC parent survey, 2022).

While multiple entities provide services for Native American youth, these services are not focused and coordinated with information readily accessible. The services do not advance preparedness for all Native American students, although there is a vast need for tribal employees in the fields selected for emphasis in this project.

Lack of postsecondary preparatory participation and low college-going rates.

Disparate participation in postsecondary preparation activities in the target schools substantiates the severity of structural gaps in the system. In 2021, an SKC Upward Bound survey of reservation schools revealed that less than a third of Native American students were enrolling in college preparatory math and science courses, and very few had participated in dual enrollment opportunities. Additionally, there are few opportunities for students interested in trades to explore or participate in career activities related to such occupations as carpentry, electricians, and auto repair (personal communication, Ronan HS Counselor).

Similarly, the Montana Office of Public Instruction (2021) reported that a gap in 2019 fall college-going rates, with only 25.5% of Native American graduates from the Flathead

Reservation enrolling in Montana colleges the fall following graduation compared with 30.3% of reservation graduates and 45.2% of the total Montana student body (MT OPI., 2021).

Lack of awareness about available resources

In March 2022, local college students were asked to describe the activities that best prepared them for college and career, as well as the lack of awareness they experienced in high school or recognized upon arrival at college. Most reported “having to figure it out on their own,” with lack of guidance and financial literacy the hindrances reported most frequently.

One student expressed that nothing in high school prepared her for the career in wildlife she sought, aside from her own recreational experiences. She described a class where she learned to write checks, do taxes, and create a budget as more effective in preparing for “real life” than any of the other courses she had taken, “hands down.” Similarly, an SKC business student reported having no career guidance in high school and struggling with a career plan until one of his SKC instructors intervened and pointed him towards recreation management.

Several students reported awareness of high school graduation and college entrance requirements, but little guidance in finding a college or career match. “I chose to study Education because it was familiar to me; my parents were teachers, and I had an internship at an elementary school...I often wondered if I would have chosen something different if my teachers had talked to me about my options. I think I chose to go into Education because it felt like the only open door for me.”

(2) The Magnitude of the Need for the Services/Activities to be Provided

Native American students’ lack of readiness for college and careers presents a significant impact to the students, their families, and the reservation community. The letter of support from

the Tribal Council of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes expresses the magnitude of need, including alignment of this project with tribal priorities for economic sustainability.

Currently, large numbers of Native American high school students are at risk of educational failure (personal communication, Ronan School Counselor). When the Covid-19 pandemic began, schools shut their doors and students were required to study online with detrimental impacts, especially for those already facing learning barriers. From Spring 2019 through the 2020 school year, 25% of SKC Upward Bound high school students reported a lack of access to either Internet service or the computers necessary to complete academic coursework (2019-2020 Upward Bound Student Surveys). Students also reported increased issues with mental health impacted by the disruption of academic and social routines, isolation, and lack of access to services. Unprecedented numbers of students failed to complete courses or dropped out of school entirely and many are still recovering from learning gaps and disengagement.

While students struggle to make up credits and stay on track to graduate, employers across the reservation are experiencing low application rates for the job positions available. Schools are one of many organizations negatively impacted by employee shortages with a significant demand for teachers indicated across the Reservation. The Reservation health care system is also in dire need of employees, with both Tribal Health and St. Joseph Hospital currently advertising for over 100 positions. Likewise, the CSKT Natural Resource Department has 13 position openings in land, hydrology, and wildlife management.

(3) Services or Activities Address the Needs of Students at Risk of Educational Failure

The Pathways Project is designed to meet the identified needs of Native American students at risk of educational failure. The College and Career Ready Coaches (“Coaches”) will collaborate with school counselors in each school to identify students at risk by monitoring ABC

indicators (attendance, behavioral referrals, and course completion) at mid-term and quarterly throughout the academic year. These indicators align with the recommendations presented in *Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools* (Rumberger et al., 2017). Coaches will also be present in the schools and meet regularly with students who have decreased attendance or grades. Students in need of intervention will receive weekly tutoring and mentorship, and support referrals as needed to assist them in moving forward with their educational goals.

The project will further address the needs of at-risk students through near-peer mentoring. SKC students in the project's selected career tracks will be paired with interested high school students to provide encouragement and mentoring as well as information about the realities of college. Research demonstrates that near-peer mentoring can be a successful strategy to increase student engagement and academic success as well as career aspirations (e.g. Garcia-Melgar & Meyers, 2020; Tenenbaum et. al., 2014).

(b) QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN

(1) The Design of the Project will Guide Possible Replication of Activities or Strategies

The project implementation and evaluation design will result in information regarding effectiveness of activities and strategies and guide replication of the model. Pathways will partner with SKC Upward Bound (UB), a program that has demonstrated the capacity to improve outcomes relevant to the project by preparing high school students for success in college for over 30 years. The project will utilize proven UB strategies, which apply a relationship-based model with individualized service provision for a selected group of Native and non-Native American students. Activities occur in the schools and extend to the larger community. In the last four years, an average of 65% of SKC UB participants enrolled in college the fall following graduation, and 44% of those students completed their course of study (UB Annual Report).

While the activities and strategies described in this proposal are based on evidence described in the literature review, the results of these strategies in career and college preparation programs for Native American students have not been well-documented. This project will gather data to increase knowledge about the effectiveness of activities and strategies as they apply to Native American students and provide information for replication of the project.

Project reporting will include components of the “Seven Activities to Enhance Program Replicability” (Metz, et. al., 2007), a model designed to ensure that description of program effectiveness includes conditions or characteristics of the original program that may impact replication. The final project report will provide detailed information about the effectiveness of each of the activities and processes listed in the evaluation plan and as described below.

Plan to Report Replicability Components	
Identify core intervention components	Strategies and services implemented
Identify core implementation pieces	Administrative structures and processes
Identify discretionary and adaptable program components	Components that can be adapted to particular target populations or environments
Address critical issues of culture	Careful descriptions of participants, including any cultural modifications
Detail information about effectiveness	Observable outcomes and benefits

The Project Evaluator will work with the Director to ensure fidelity of implementation and data collection concerning the factors that impact program outcomes, such as staff training,

program timelines, partnership participation, and external circumstances including ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Detailed evaluation data including aggregated participant outcomes and results of partnerships, the context of project results, and any modification of implementation to improve outcomes will increase program replicability.

(2) Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes are Clearly Specified and Measurable

The Pathways Project's goals, objectives, outcomes, and relevant measures are depicted in the Project Logic Model presented on page 16.

PROJECT GOAL: The overall project goal is to increase the number/percentage of Native American high school students from the target LEAs that are well-prepared to enter college and/or careers and meet stated benchmarks for college and career readiness.

Measure: The percentage of graduating Native American high school students who meet at least four indicators of college and career readiness by graduation.

GPRA OBJECTIVES

GPRA Objective #1: The Pathways Project will achieve a minimum of 90% of the annual measurable objectives.

GPRA Objective #2: The Project will report a minimum of a 20% increase per year in community collaborations that promote college and career readiness of Native American youth.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. A minimum of 20 Native American students per year will engage in WBL activities aimed at exploring and preparing for a K-12 teacher training program.

Measures: Participation and satisfaction with WBL activities in the education track

2. Native American students and their families will increase their understanding of factors and resources related to college and career readiness.

Measures: Satisfaction surveys, qualitative data from parent and student interviews.

3. A minimum of 75% of Native American students in the LEAs, grades 9-12, will complete at least three key indicators of college and career readiness as defined in this proposal.

Measures: Documentation of key indicator completion and review of student portfolios

OUTCOMES

1. Community partners, including LEAs, businesses, and tribal partners, will demonstrate increased collaboration and efficacy in efforts to increase Native American student college/career readiness. Measures: Survey of community partners, #s of students in WBL experiences, partnership evaluation.
2. The percentage of high school seniors prepared to enter college or a career such as a trade will increase by 50% over baseline by the end of the project. Measures: Completion of key college and career readiness indicators

Terms and definitions for the Pathways Project

College readiness: The level of preparation a student needs in order to enroll and succeed – without remediation – in credit-bearing coursework at a postsecondary institution” (ACT, 2008).

Career readiness: The ability to identify and articulate skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences related to the desired career and possessing relevant work-ready skills (NACE).

Work-Based Learning (WBL): A model in which high school students participate in real-life work environments to gain career experience and apply their classroom knowledge and skills.

WBL occurs across a continuum: career awareness, exploration, preparation, and training.

Key indicators of college and career readiness for the Pathways Project (Dalton, 2021)

1. Student completion of a college and/or career plan
2. Participation in a college or trade preparatory high school curriculum along a career map

3. Completion of dual enrollment or AP coursework or career-technical intensive courses
4. Participation in job-shadowing, internship, volunteer project, or other WBL
5. Completion of admission, FAFSA, and scholarships applications for college/trade school
6. Completion of college or career fair, college visits, college and career ready workshops

(3) Literature Review, High-Quality Implementation Plan, and Methodological Tools.

Relevant literature review

A review of relevant literature provides support for the design of the Pathways Project. The literature demonstrates that early and ongoing interventions with academic support, college/career planning, coaching/mentoring, and opportunities for work-based learning can increase student engagement in high school and readiness for college and careers.

Rosen and Molina (2019) drew on a panel of experts and review of the literature to note that the most promising readiness programs provide clearly articulated pathways from high school through postsecondary education, including providing adult mentors, peer support, and career maps that review potential career trajectories and pathways with progressive levels of training and experience. Providing individualized academic support to students who face significant challenges to success is listed as an intervention with moderate evidence of effectiveness in the What Works Clearinghouse (Rumberger et. al., 2017).

Multiple studies have documented the positive impacts of Work-based Learning on student engagement and college/career readiness. Detgen et. al.'s (2021) qualitative study of high school graduate's perceptions of the Bridge to Employment (BTE) Program found that students - especially those in disadvantaged communities - increased their awareness and understanding of high education opportunities. Carrol and Piro (2020) found that participants in a hands-on learning experience perceived themselves as being more ready for college and/or careers than if

they had remained exclusively in a traditional high school setting. Evaluators of a multi-site study found that WBL impacted high school retention and engagement, particularly for students who do not see themselves on the typical 4-year college track (Verrenti Consulting, 2017). Rogers-Chapman and Darling-Hammonds, L. (2013) cited the importance of industry and community partners who are able to allow students to explore and gain valuable career skills.

Research also documents the positive impact of college and career coaching and peer mentoring for high school students. Another factor that influenced student engagement was "social support from adult supervisors" (Bennett, 2007) or career coaches (Gerwitz, 2018) because students thrived on the personal relationships that were fostered. High-Eagle Strong et. al. (2018) found that student aspirations for college and career started as early as middle school and that academic planning support from adults was critical. The use of peer mentors, such as college students in students' desired career track, has been demonstrated to increase student interest and achievement (e.g. Garcia-Melgar & Meyers, 2017; Richert, 2018).

Implementation plan

The implementation plan is designed in response to identified needs, relevant literature, successful models, and local context. The overarching approach is to bring school, college, and tribal partners together to build clearly articulated pathways, and make them apparent, attractive, and attainable for Native American students. Pathways is designed around a synergistic set of activities that promote student academic and career preparation along a Work-based Learning Continuum in the five designated career pathways. Activities start in the 8th grade, as research indicates the importance of increasing middle school student college and career aspirations. Student stipends increase incentives for participation in various activities.

Career and College Learning Continuum Activities		
	Activity	Partner/Resource
Awareness	In-class displays, guest speakers, career classes, college/career fairs	Schools, SKC/tribal depts, community tradespersons and professionals
Exploration	Online exploration tools, college visits, volunteer opportunities	Community volunteer organizations, SKC depts, UB, peer-mentoring
Preparation	College/career prep workshops, dual enrollment, portfolios	Schools, UB, MUS Montana Career Pathways,
Experience	volunteer, summer service, job-shadowing, internships	SKC and Tribal depts, volunteer organizations

Partnership Agreements: The following entities have signed partnership agreements with the SKC Pathways Project, which have been included as an appendix: Ronan and Polson middle and high schools; the SKC Business, STEM (Natural Resources) and Education Divisions and Allied Health and Trades Departments; SKC Upward Bound; and CSKT Tribal Health and Natural Resources Departments, and Mission Mountain Youth. Partners will comprise a Pathways Advisory Committee (PAC), with each contributing a perspective and resources in accordance with their resources and area of expertise.

The Outreach Coordinator will lead the PAC and build a cohesive network with partners to expand current WBL opportunities and link traditional, cultural, and spiritual landscapes with practical and clearly articulated paths for Native American students. The College and Career

Ready Coaches (Coaches) will work primarily with the LEAs and students to increase participation in current activities, implement new activities along the career learning continuum, provide academic support and mentorship, and help students understand and follow a chosen pathway. The schools will provide access to students, meeting space, student transcripts, and scholarship information; integrate readiness activities, and collaborate to increase WBL and dual enrollment opportunities. The plan includes monetary incentives for students as they complete project components as detailed in the budget narrative.

The project will be housed on the SKC campus within the Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Division's Community Outreach Department. Coordination with SKC's Dual Enrollment Coordinator and Department of Academic Success will enhance project services.

Methodological tools will ensure successful achievement of project objectives

All project staff will be aware of the project objectives and their responsibility in collecting data as indicators of student progress and success in meeting objectives. The overarching method is to establish and integrate data collection tools and routines in all activity delivery systems to proactively monitor progress in meeting academic benchmarks. The high school databases provide a crucial link to academic indicator data. For non-academic data, staff will create documentation and tracking processes per objective and utilize student and supervisor assessment models designed specifically for career training programs.

The data collection tools to be created upon project start up include activity attendance reports, pre and post tests for knowledge-based modules, student activity assessments including qualitative reflections on their experiences, and WBL supervisor evaluations. The Coaches will monitor high school and dual enrollment course completion rates and college and scholarship application process completion in accordance with deadlines. While these data sets serve as

indicators of success in meeting objectives, they also serve as benchmarks in each student's journey of awareness, exploration, preparation, and training.

The Outreach Coordinator will create avenues for information exchanges to increase the number and capacity of the partners over the life of the grant. Methods of dialogue include Advisory Committee meetings, school Indian Clubs, and SKC staff and department meetings. Local newspapers and online social media forums are convenient tools for sharing project goals and activity schedules, and highlighting partnership contributions and student successes.

The Project Director will compile and analyze all quantitative and qualitative data to complete annual activity summaries, monitor success in meeting each objective, complete the annual performance report, and guide activity adaptations for the coming year. The director will share findings with Project staff and partners, and collaborate to adapt appropriate, data-driven intervention plans.

(4) Project Demonstrates a Rationale

The Pathways Project includes key research-based components to increase the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes. The Project is designed to address the complex set of attributes and factors suggested by Carrol and Piro (2020) as leading to college/career readiness, including exposure to experiential learning, college and career planning, and adequate academic preparation. Multiple studies document the impact of WBL on college and career readiness. The Brilliant Pathways WBL model (brilliantpathways.org) includes components to be addressed by the Project including college/career coaches, mentoring, college/career planning, and academic skill building (Dalton, 2021). The Logic Model below summarizes the Project's evidence-based approach, with an asterisk (*) indicating research-based components.

Pathways to College and Careers Logic Model			
Student Needs	Activities	Objectives	Outcomes/ Goal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of successful college/career role models and social capital • Need for college and career advisors • Lack of awareness of resources • Limited career readiness and WBL activities • Lack of coordinated community network • Lack of college and career prep participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring, academic support by Coaches*; contact with professionals; near-peer mentoring* • Advisory Committee provides coordination of WBL activities and project oversight • Meetings with parents/guardians, students about college/ careers and related resources • WBL activities* including job shadowing, internships, dual enrollment courses • Assistance with college tours, FAFSA, applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of college/career ready partnerships • Students engage in preparatory teacher-training and other career WBL activities • Students and families increase understanding of factors and resources related to college and career readiness • Students complete indicators of college and career readiness 	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners demonstrate increased collaboration and efficacy • An increased percentage of tribal high school seniors are prepared to enter college or career <p>Overall Goal: The number/percentage of tribal high school students meet stated benchmarks for college and career readiness</p>

The Project also incorporates the work of Ross et. al. (2020), who documented the importance of strong WBL programs and stressed the significance of strong mentorship relationships to college and career preparation. Additional design elements include recommendations from the U.S. Department of Education’s Practice Guide, *Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools*, featured in the What Works Clearinghouse. In particular, two recommendations from the Guide were adopted for Pathways. Recommendation 3 is backed by strong evidence and calls for engaging students by connecting schoolwork with college and career options, such as WBL. Recommendation 4 is backed by moderate evidence and calls for creation of small personalized communities that facilitate monitoring and support of at-risk students. The Pathways Project includes strategies to increase mentoring and social capital of Native American students by offering coaches, near-peer mentoring, and contact with professionals in areas of students’ career interest.

(5) Evaluation Includes Objective Performance Measures Related to Intended Outcomes with Quantitative and Qualitative Data

The Evaluation Plan includes qualitative and quantitative measures aligned with the overall goal, objectives, and outcomes of the project. The evaluation design includes both formative and summative assessment, a specific timeline, and responsibilities for collection and analysis of evaluation components. Objective performance measures are framed as evaluation questions that proceed from initial inputs through activities and outcomes, aligned with the project’s logic model and reporting structure.

Evaluation Question 1: Are inputs appropriate and adequate to lead to project success? Sub components include initial implementation: hires, establishment of advisory group, adequacy of organizational structure and communication between partners, initial development

of WBL and dual enrollment components. Evaluation will occur at 3 months, 6 months, and then every 6 months. Data will include meeting minutes, interviews, and document review. Initial and quarterly analysis will be completed by the PD and External Evaluator.

Evaluation Question 2: What is the baseline data for the selected evaluation measures? Baseline measures will be gathered for students from the designated LEAs and will include LEA-level data that provides evidence of initial college and career readiness as well as comparison with data collected in preparation for the project, e.g. parent/guardian surveys.

Evaluation Question 3: Are project activities implemented as planned? Subcomponents include implementation of planned academic and WBL activities and student, IEC, and partner satisfaction with relevant activities. Data will include logs completed by Coaches, satisfaction surveys, advisory committee minutes, calendar of project activities, and attendance data. Analysis of these measures by the PD, Evaluator, and PAC will occur as activities are completed and be compiled annually for final review and determination of effectiveness.

Evaluation Question 4: Do project activities meet the needs of the target population? Sub components include the effectiveness of processes for data management, effectiveness of materials designed for students/families, and whether activities and outputs are reaching the target population. Data to be collected will include participation rates of AI students/families in activities, numbers of students meeting with coaches, numbers of students satisfied with project activities. Data will be collected by the Coaches and analyzed by the PD and Evaluator.

Evaluation Question 5: Did the project achieve its objectives? Subcomponents include measurement of project objectives as delineated above. Additional components from the recommendations of Advance CTE (2016) for evaluation of Work-based Learning will be

developed and implemented, including student interviews and focus groups conducted annually. Data will be collected by the PD and analyzed/reported by the Evaluator and the PAC.

Evaluation Question 6: Were community partners (LEAs, tribal and business partners) satisfied with the results of their project participation and did the number of community partners increase annually and over the length of the project? Evaluation will include number of partners and annual partnership evaluation (CDC, 2008) including analysis of partnership processes and strength of partner collaborations. Partnership evaluation to be conducted by External Evaluator.

Evaluation Question 7: Did the project achieve its stated outcomes and overall goal? Final evaluation will include collection of student and teacher metrics as well as final evaluation of overall project outcomes including TCU and community capacity. Student portfolios provide an additional source of college/career readiness data and will be analyzed by the Coaches.

Evaluation Question 8: What is the replicability of the Project? Final evaluation will include components described above in section B (1), guided by recommendations by Metz et. al. (2007) regarding evaluation of project replicability. Replicability components to be gathered by the External Evaluator the final year of the project, provided in a final report to stakeholders, the U.S. Department of Education, and submitted for possible publication.

(c) QUALITY OF PROJECT PERSONNEL

(1) Applicant Encourages Employment from Members of Underrepresented Populations

SKC is a tribally-chartered college subject to the governmental authority of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) of the Flathead Indian Reservation. SKC's hiring policies encourage applications from Native Americans and do not discriminate against other underrepresented groups. SKC Policy 200.00 reads: "Salish Kootenai College (SKC) is an Indian preference and equal opportunity employer. SKC does not discriminate on the basis of

race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual identification, gender, age, or disability, except as allowed by the Indian preference provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.” The College recognizes the importance of hiring individuals with backgrounds and experiences similar to that of its target population and surrounding community. Over 65% of SKC staff are members of federally recognized Tribes or first-generation descendants.

SKC advertises position openings on its website, in the local newspapers, in national publications with Native American readership, and through the local state-affiliated Job Service office. Job advertisements state the tribal preference hiring policy.

(2) The Qualifications of the Project Director

The full-time Project Director (PD) will be [REDACTED] who holds a Master’s Degree in Administration, and has served for over 30 years in various teaching and student service areas at SKC. Most recently, [REDACTED] has directed SKC’s Academic Success Department, which offers academic advising, tutoring, short-term counseling, and career services. Within that position, she directed a Native Student Success grant with outreach to Reservation high schools. [REDACTED] has demonstrated experience designing and managing college and career preparatory programs and establishing community partnerships as well as strong data management skills. As a life-long resident of the Reservation and a former Upward Bound instructor, she is familiar with the socioeconomic, academic, and cultural challenges Flathead Indian Reservation students encounter. She has also worked with SKC dual enrollment services. [REDACTED] resume is provided within the appendices.

(3) The Qualifications of Key Project Personnel.

All key personnel must be familiar with the socioeconomic, academic, and cultural challenges Flathead Indian Reservation students encounter.

Career and College Readiness Coaches

The Coaches will hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree in education or a related field. They must have experience organizing and leading career/college preparatory or similar programs with middle/ high school students and the ability to collaborate with and engage students, parents, and other community partners. [REDACTED] (CSKT Descendant) will fill one of the Coach positions, with the remainder to be hired upon grant funding. [REDACTED] attended high school in Ronan and has a vast understanding of local context and culture. He holds a bachelor's degree in Social Work and associate's degrees from SKC in Native American Studies and Grants Project Management. He has worked with Upward Bound for fifteen years as an instructor, coordinator, and office manager. [REDACTED] has experience working with the target schools and community partners. He has completed the Department of Education annual performance report for Upward Bound and is familiar with all aspects of project management and implementation. [REDACTED] resume is provided as an Appendix.

Outreach Coordinator

A full-time outreach coordinator will hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree in education or a related field and demonstrate experience coordinating career and college preparatory or related programs. The coordinator must possess strong interpersonal, leadership, management, and organizational skills, and the ability to collaborate, and engage community partners while building capacity and a sustainable community network.

Teacher Training Liaison

A half-time K-12 Teaching Careers Liaison will hold a minimum of a Master's Degree in Education and demonstrated ability to work with high school students, parents, school personnel, and community partners. The liaison must demonstrate the ability to develop and teach a dual

enrollment course in the education field and experience working with school, community, and tribal organizations. The individual must also be familiar with the socioeconomic, academic, and cultural challenges tribal students encounter.

(d) QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES

(1) Collaboration of Appropriate Partners to Maximize Effectiveness of Services

The project will involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of services. The UB program is currently well integrated in the schools with well-established routines and protocols for school-based student meetings, field trips, workshop collaboration, and access to school databases and reports. They also have systems in place for implementation WBL activities with local and regional partners including volunteer, job-shadowing, and internship experiences on campus, in the larger community, and in outdoor settings where natural resources experiences occur.

SKC faculty partners and tribal leaders are experts in their fields and will expose students to careers, model professionalism in related work experiences, and familiarize students with campus life and careers in the fields of focus. Each of the faculty departments will offer a dual enrollment class, WBL opportunities in their specified field, and link students and the schools with college students for near-peer mentoring.

Based on the project's teacher training priority, the highly acclaimed SKC Division of Education has agreed to designate one of their faculty members to contribute to the project on a part-time basis. They will develop a dual enrollment course and implement mentorship models with culturally responsive content and approaches proven effective in their teacher education programs. The division offers degrees in Early Childhood, Elementary, Secondary Science and Math, and Native Language Teacher Education, along with a master's program in Curriculum

and Instruction. All programs are evaluated, approved, and accredited by the Montana Office of Public Instruction and the Montana Board of Public Education.

(2) Use of Community-level Data to meet Needs of the Local Population

Needs of the local population were determined through review of high school success data, the Montana Office of Public Instruction, community surveys, and interviews with LEA personnel. In March 2022, youth, parents, and LEAs offered numerous insights into local needs.

When college students and recent graduates reflected on helpful high school experiences, they reported tutoring, mentorship, application assistance, financial literacy classes, and campus visits as most beneficial. Most had little if any experience with career readiness activities. To the contrary, they created their own learning experiences and gained social capital by pursuing personal interests, and worked random jobs to meet financial needs. Many mentioned a teacher, mentor, or supervisor who provided support and helped them find their way.

Local parents responded to an online survey asking for their perspectives on school effectiveness. They rated how well, “the school helps my student figure out which careers (and college programs) match their interests and abilities.” The majority reported a need for increased information on available careers and trade school options; college selection, application, and entrance requirements; and high school graduation requirements,

- Of the parents surveyed, only 18.1% agreed that the school helped their students learn about careers, while 27.3% reported student assistance with college preparation.
- A majority of 65.2% of parents reported that they had not received any information regarding career and college readiness.

The following details the percentage of parents receiving specific information from the schools.

Job or career fields of interest 18.2%

High school graduation requirements 22.7%

Trade school and related careers 0%

College entrance requirements 9.1%

College selection and application 4.5%

Financial aid: 13.6%

School personnel detailed the activities already established in their schools including related participation rates. They discussed a range of opportunities currently in the planning stages, and stressed an immediate need for increased activities and support staff.

(e) QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN

(1) Adequacy of Management Plan with Responsibilities, Timelines, and Milestones

The Pathways management plan is designed to ensure that the project meets stated objectives on time and within budget. The management plan utilizes clearly defined structures and responsibilities and an achievable timeline, and related performance standards. The Project Director will maintain overall responsibility for project management, including attainment of project objectives and GPRA measures, monitoring the project budget and approving expenditures, and coordinating meetings and reporting schedules.

The Project Director will use a Management By Objectives (MBO) structure to ensure that all staff work together to record and monitor objectives within specified periods of time, with both top-down communication of organizational goals and bottom-up communication of issues impacting achievement of goals. (Campbell, 2015). The following tables provide a summary of responsibilities, timelines, and milestones.

Start-Up Activities and Project Management		
Task/Objectives	Responsibility	Milestones/Timeline
Personnel hired, training completed per SKC policies	Director (PD)	Responsibilities delegated with timeline; personnel hired (within 2 months)

Start-Up Activities and Project Management		
Budget Set Up	PD, SKC Office Staff	Budget set-up in Business Office (within 1 month)
Data Management System Implemented and Access to Student Records	PD, External Evaluator, Principals	Data structure reviewed by PD and Evaluator and guidelines for access established (within 2 months)
Project Team and PAC meetings scheduled	PD, Outreach Coordinator	Regular project team and quarterly PAC meetings (upon funding)
Student and parent recruitment implemented	Coaches	Students and parents receive materials about project (upon funding)

Annual Activities and Project Management		
Task	Responsibility	Milestones/Timelines
WBL and academic support activities implemented	PD, Coaches, partners	Initial responsibilities delegated with timeline (continuous)
GPRA/Project Objective data reviewed and program improvements implemented	PD, External Evaluator, PAC, Project Team	Quantitative and qualitative data used for program improvements with quarterly tracking (quarterly)

Annual Activities and Project Management		
HS and Dual Enrollment courses implemented	PD, SKC Academic Depts	New Dual Enrollment courses approved and implemented (within 3 months)
Budget and expenditures monitored regularly	PD, SKC Grants Office	Budget follows SKC policies and meet federal standards (monthly)
Biannual and annual reporting completed	PD	Timely finance and outcomes reporting completed (as required)

Student Records Management: The Coaches will maintain student activity attendance records to monitor success in meeting participation benchmarks and success indicators. They will assist students in creating a personal portfolio to highlight participation and success through high school and dual enrollment transcripts, teacher recommendations, career training evaluations, resume, ACT scores, and college and scholarship applications, acceptance, and award documents. Participant records are maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). All student-identifying information will be stored in locked file cabinets. Parents/guardians will have access to their child’s records upon request. Any other record requests outside of the program require signed releases from the parent/guardian.

Personnel Management: The director manages personnel matters according to the *SKC Policies and Procedures Manual*, which details position classifications and conditions of employment. All staff complete biweekly timesheets indicating hours worked and leave taken. The director approves and submits electronic timesheets to the business office.

(2) How Applicant will Ensure that a Diversity of Perspectives are Brought to Bear

The project will apply a diversity of perspectives to the project design, implementation, and administration. The Pathways Advisory Committee (PAC) is comprised of representatives from the LEAs such as school counselors or teachers; SKC faculty members from each career track; tribal department partners, and business representatives. Each will offer a unique perspective based on their role in the community, with tribal entities sharing cultural perspectives and furthering the understanding of career learning opportunities and employment needs. Additionally, student representatives will be invited to offer their input and insights. All project collaborators play key roles in the plan to achieve program objectives.

Principals provide an initial, direct link to each target school. The LEAs have been focused on college preparation for college-bound students for decades, with administrators in the early stages of building career readiness programs and working to engage students in a plan. And, as is typical in all school systems, the staff understand that a percentage of students fall through the cracks, and on the Reservation, the majority of those are Native American youth who don't receive the interventions they need.

The project engages SKC faculty members from diverse career areas. They are experts in their fields and accomplished at working with Native American students of all ages who come to the college with varying degrees of preparedness. They understand the academic and personal challenges young people face in college and are skilled academic advisors who guide students to pursue degrees aligned with their interests and abilities.

(3) Project Builds Capacity to Extend Beyond Period of Federal Financial Assistance

Several components ensure the project's ability to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the life of the grant. The project has selected committed partners that will

mutually benefit from expanded services, community collaboration, and clearly articulated pathways. The results are sustainable through well-established and efficient collaboration protocols and implementation strategies that involve all partners. The evidence-based design will accomplish this by drawing from expert sources and proven models of collaborative design.

The WBL model is based on research as described in the literature review and is supported by SKC, community, and school partners. The Project builds on existing structures and activities, with a plan to expand partnership during the life of the grant and beyond. The in-school service design is based on the proven UB model which has demonstrated success in preparing pathways to college. The Montana Career Pathways program aligns directly with Montana high school course offerings, graduation requirements, and pathways to specific Montana colleges and careers indicated. (Montana University System, 2022) Once integrated into the school system, it is a highly sustainable model.

SKC faculty and departments are key to sustaining efforts and outcomes. While the schools need clear and visible pathways to present to students and parents, the college has an outreach mission and degree programs to fill. The shared need for accessible, well-focused pathways extends to the Tribe who have an immense capacity for growth and sustainability. Additional design elements to persist include an active and responsive Advisory Committee, Facebook page, and published student reflections during the last year of this community project.

***f*) QUALITY OF PROJECT EVALUATION**

(1) Evaluation Will Provide Performance Feedback and Assessment of Progress

The Evaluation Plan was clearly outlined above in Section b (5), framed as evaluation questions structured to provide evaluation of inputs, activities, outcomes, and achievement of objectives and goals. The Plan is designed to provide timely and appropriate formative

performance feedback to the PD, Coaches, and partner entities, permitting assessment of progress as well as summative evaluation of overall program effectiveness. The evaluation design uses the Utilization-Focused Evaluation Model (Patton, 1996) to ensure that the evaluation is useful to and informs decision making by the PD and other project staff.

Utilization-Focused Evaluation uses questions designed to assist program staff and stakeholders in consideration of early and late indicators of program effectiveness. The plan includes collection of qualitative and quantitative data and ongoing analysis to monitor progress toward project objectives and outcome measures. Implementation evaluation will begin upon program start and assist in program management by providing indicators of the quality of inputs and activities including effective processes and utilization of program resources. Outcomes evaluation will begin approximately one year following project start, and include ongoing collaboration of the IHE, LEAs, and other partners including Native American families through involvement of the IECs. A qualified External Evaluator will be hired upon project funding and will provide timely and comprehensive reports to the PI and the Pathways Advisory Committee.

The Evaluation is also guided by standardized frameworks for evaluation, including evaluation of partnerships (CDC, 2008), of replicability (Metz, 2007) and of Work-Based Learning Programs (Advance CTE, 2016), providing a systematic and holistic framework for initial and ongoing assessment of project effectiveness.

(2) Evaluation Provides Guidance about Strategies for Replication

As described above, the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies that may be replicated or tested in other settings. The evaluation plan links recommended evidence-based practices to data and results with guidance strategies built into a layered system. The evaluation will produce information and guidance specific to individual strategies and project

objectives, as well as recommendations related to the comprehensive model and success in meeting the overall outcome. Schools, youth groups, and other organizations with similar goals, may replicate individual Project components such as mentorship, academic support, and WBL strategies, or the model as a whole based on evaluative findings, recommendations, and their unique needs.

The use of standardized definitions and evidence-based college and career readiness indicators add to the reliability of evaluation findings and the ability to accurately describe results and replicable components. Thorough and clear evaluation strategies link inputs and activities to Project objectives and outcomes, with measurement criteria and data collection methods well-defined, and therefore replicable.

Project evaluation includes both qualitative and quantitative components that provide a broad narrative of the context, conditions, and effectiveness of project implementation. Use of qualitative data is important in the context of tribal programs, in keeping with frameworks such as Indigenous Evaluation Methodology. Student stories from portfolios and interviews will provide key data concerning the actual responses of the target population of Native American students to the Pathways Project and its activities. Analysis of this qualitative data will occur via a structured coding methodology that allows project staff, the evaluator, and stakeholders to gain insights into students' thoughts and feelings about college and career readiness that may not otherwise be captured by surveys, grades, and activity completion.



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUDGET INFORMATION
NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS**

OMB Number: 1894-0008
Expiration Date: 09/30/2023

Name of Institution/Organization

Salish Kootenai College

Applicants requesting funding for only one year should complete the column under "Project Year 1." Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grants should complete all applicable columns. Please read all instructions before completing form.

**SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FUNDS**

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Project Year 5 (e)	Project Year 6 (f)	Project Year 7 (g)	Total (h)
1. Personnel	218,202.00	220,044.00	221,905.00	223,786.00	225,684.00			1,109,621.00
2. Fringe Benefits	66,052.00	66,679.00	67,312.00	67,951.00	68,597.00			336,591.00
3. Travel	4,237.00	4,237.00	4,237.00	4,237.00	4,237.00			21,185.00
4. Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			0.00
5. Supplies	22,500.00	20,000.00	16,500.00	14,500.00	12,000.00			85,500.00
6. Contractual	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00			25,000.00
7. Construction	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			0.00
8. Other	34,379.00	34,381.00	34,381.00	34,379.00	34,381.00			171,901.00
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	350,370.00	350,341.00	349,335.00	349,853.00	349,899.00			1,749,798.00
10. Indirect Costs*	75,838.00	75,830.00	75,589.00	75,714.00	75,724.00			378,695.00
11. Training Stipends	73,500.00	73,500.00	73,500.00	73,500.00	73,500.00			367,500.00
12. Total Costs (lines 9-11)	499,708.00	499,671.00	498,424.00	499,067.00	499,123.00			2,495,993.00

***Indirect Cost Information (To Be Completed by Your Business Office):** If you are requesting reimbursement for indirect costs on line 10, please answer the following questions:

- (1) Do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal government? Yes No
- (2) If yes, please provide the following information:
 Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: From: 06/30/2016 To: 07/01/2024 (mm/dd/yyyy)
 Approving Federal agency: ED Other (please specify): DHHS
 The Indirect Cost Rate is 24.00%.
- (3) If this is your first Federal grant, and you do not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement, are not a State, Local government or Indian Tribe, and are not funded under a training rate program or a restricted rate program, do you want to use the de minimis rate of 10% of MTDC? Yes No If yes, you must comply with the requirements of 2 CFR § 200.414(f).
- (4) If you do not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement, do you want to use the temporary rate of 10% of budgeted salaries and wages?
 Yes No If yes, you must submit a proposed indirect cost rate agreement within 90 days after the date your grant is awarded, as required by 34 CFR § 75.560.
- (5) For Restricted Rate Programs (check one) – Are you using a restricted indirect cost rate that:
 Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement? Or, Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)? The Restricted Indirect Cost Rate is %.
- (6) For Training Rate Programs (check one) – Are you using a rate that:
 Is based on the training rate of 8 percent of MTDC (See EDGAR § 75.562(c)(4))? Or Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, because it is lower than the training rate of 8 percent of MTDC (See EDGAR § 75.562(c)(4))?

PR/Award # S299A200037