

Top Visionary

7Gen Food System

Who We Are

As tribal citizens themselves, the team at Sicangu CDC is intimately aware of the current challenges and the radical changes needed to build a more prosperous future. In partnership with Rosebud Economic Development Corporation and Tatanka Funds, Sicangu CDC has created a seven-generation (175-year) strategic Vision with the goal to empower their people, strengthen their families, and rebuild their community.

Other partners include: Carmelita Sully (Sinte Gleska University Greenhouse); Robert Becker (Swift Bear Community President); Matthew West; and Dakota Rural Action.

The Challenge

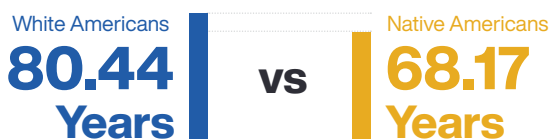
The Rosebud Indian reservation in south central South Dakota is the home of the Sicangu Lakota Oyate tribe. The area, rich in culture and history, represents 15% of the Great Plains Region.

With only three grocery stores serving an area nearly the size of Brunei, Rosebud is a food desert. Most tribal members live in a state of food insecurity, without access to affordable and healthy food, and suffer from extremely high rates of diet-related diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. Despite this, more than half of farms on Rosebud receive subsidies to raise commodity crops, rather than incentives to grow nutritious foods to feed the local population.

Start-up costs for agricultural businesses are high and often prohibitive in areas like Rosebud, where access to capital is limited. This means that food and agriculture entrepreneurs are unable to test out new growing methods or localize food delivery and distribution.

The Facts*

Life expectancy in South Dakota



*Citations available upon request

“Our Vision aims to strengthen Lakota identity for the citizens of the Sicangu Lakota Nation by rekindling our spiritual connection with the land, eating and making the foods of our ancestors, and living and breathing Lakota values.”

- Matthew Wilson, Food Sovereignty Director, Sicangu Food Sovereignty Initiative

The Vision for the year 2050

To promote tribal entrepreneurship and nutrition education toward the progressive development of local, autonomous and equitable food systems focused on the impact that food has on our mind, body and spirit.

Our Solution

To reach the equitable and health-focused food system we envision, we've continued to explore and identify the actions needed for a successful future in which the 7Gen Vision becomes a reality:

- Our Vision must become a shared social movement. We will hone our messaging to approach institutions, seek their support, and challenge them to rethink current practices and their role in becoming part of the solution.
- To further the social movement, we will identify, support, and nurture community members to become advocates and torch-bearers for the 7Gen Food System Vision, letting real-life stories speak.
- Schools play a key role in achieving our Vision. We will create markets for local and traditional foods while providing nutrition education in order to help shift the next generation's understanding of food and health.

- We must promote the idea that food is medicine while targeting the barriers to healthy eating—such as cost, lack of nutrition education, and low availability—through our messaging and institutional partnerships.
- To advance the Sicangu philosophy that food is medicine, we will produce and brand our own products for mainstream purchase. Sicangu-branded meat, salsa, baby food, herbs, honey and more will be developed to bring our philosophy to life in a tangible way.

