



CANKDESKA CIKANA  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
*Spirit Lake Dakota Nation*

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## **Cankdeska Cikana Community College and Partners to Launch Dakota Language Training Program**

*Students and instructors encouraged to apply; will receive stipend*

**Fort Totten, ND** – Cankdeska Cikana Community College (CCCC), in a partnership with the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC) in Minnesota and three other tribal colleges, today announced *Voices of Our Ancestors* (VOA), a two-year Dakota language training program. The Dakota language is one of our nation's most endangered. The project goal is to increase the total number of Dakota speakers and teachers.

In August 2017, *Voices of Our Ancestors* will begin in five participating Dakota communities across several states. The program is entirely funded by the SMSC, which committed nearly \$2 million toward its development and implementation. The program will train a total of 20 Native students across the five participating locations. To fully immerse the trainees in the experience, the program will be held 40 hours per week over 24 months. Instructors and students will receive a stipend for their participation.

*"We need Dakota speakers and interested learners to stand with us in our effort to protect the Dakota language,"* said Dr. Lindquist, President of CCCC. *"By preserving our language, we ensure that Dakota culture, values and traditions continue to enrich our children's lives. We will ensure that the Dakota heritage remains strong in America, where the story of the first Americans is the foundation of everything."*

The *Voices of Our Ancestors* curriculum will cover Dakota language, culture and history. The program will also include educational opportunities for students to share their newly acquired language skills with their communities and each other as a cohort group. All locations will have an open-door policy, allowing other tribal members and students to sit in on classes for free.

In addition to CCCC and the SMSC, the program's partners include three other tribal colleges: Fort Peck Community College in Montana, the Nebraska Indian Community College Santee campus, and the Sisseton Wahpeton College in South Dakota.

Go to [www.littlehoop.edu](http://www.littlehoop.edu) and under the News is a link to more information.

### **Cankdeska Cikana Community College**

CCCC is chartered by the Spirit Lake Dakota Nation, with a five member Board of Regents appointed by the Spirit Lake Tribal Council. The Board of Regents formulates and implements administrative policies and procedures for the operation of the institution.

CCCC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC); is a member of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), and the North Dakota Association of Tribal Colleges (NDATC).

CCCC is the founding member of Dakota Tribal College Alliance (DTCA) who developed and submitted the VOA proposal.

**About the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community**

The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community is a federally recognized, sovereign Indian tribe located southwest of Minneapolis. Following the Dakota tradition of generosity, the SMSC is one of the top philanthropists in Minnesota and is the largest contributor to Native American tribes and causes across the country. It is a strong community partner and a leader in protecting and restoring natural resources. The SMSC's government, Gaming Enterprise, and various other enterprises are collectively the largest employer in Scott County, MN.

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