

Rosebud Economic Development Corporation (REDCO) – Mission, SD (Todd County)

SNAPSHOT

Overview

The Rosebud Economic Development Corporation (REDCO) is a tribally chartered corporation owned by the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, home of the Lakota Sicangu Oyate, (burnt high nation). In 1999, the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Government took a tremendous step forward by establishing REDCO, a corporation independent from local politics designed spur the local economy.

Mission

“REDCO’s mission is to generate Rosebud Sioux Tribal government revenues and promote economic development in the region. Our mission is accomplished in three ways. First, REDCO serves as the primary holding and development company for the Tribe, managing 14 difference subsidiary companies. Second, REDCO assists the Tribe in economic policy analysis and development. Finally, REDCO engages in signature community development projects.” – REDCO website



Constituency

- Native American/American Indian
- Alaska Native (Sicangu Lakota)

Local Conditions & Critical Issues Impacting 0-5 Childhood Health in Todd County

Drug Use & Safety Concerns—The prevalence of excessive drinking is 16.4% in Todd County.¹ Among high school students in South Dakota: 30.3% use tobacco, 12.4% report using marijuana in the past 30 days, and 19.0% were offered, sold, or given an illegal drug by someone on school property during the past 12 months.²

Loss of Culture

“*[There are] cultural concerns, as far as our children learning to speak [the language]...or are they being raised in a way where they understand traditional values or are they being adequately and properly exposed to spiritual or cultural opportunities?*”

– Michael Prate, Food Sovereignty Coordinator

Access to Healthy Foods—the food insecurity rate in South Dakota is 12.4%, and 20-24% for Todd County.³

“*We had read a research study that basically said you need to be exposed to a certain vegetable or a certain food three times before your palate would start to really like it. Fresh foods are really expensive here, so [if you’re in a wealthy neighborhood] it’s probably not a big deal if your kid takes a little bit of broccoli and throws it out, but when people are struggling to feed their family there’s not really room to experiment. You just make sure you feed people what you know they’re going to eat, which oftentimes is more processed and unhealthy foods. There’s not a luxury of being able to expose people to healthier food.*”

Childcare—65% of caregivers surveyed indicated that there are rarely or never any openings lasting longer than one month at childcare centers for their infants or toddlers (63%), respectively.⁴

“*Parents that have young children are often complaining that they’re not able to find reliable, safe childcare. Let alone stuff that’s real educational or adding other things that the parents value.*”

Key Indicators of Childhood Health in Todd County

16.5%

of youth (aged 5-19) were **overweight** and 15.7% were obese.⁵

7%

of babies born in Todd County are **low birth weight** (based on data from 2008-2014).⁶



there is only 1 dentist per 4,980 residents in the County⁷; Children 6-8 in SD have more **tooth decay** than the general U.S. population.⁸

REDCO's Accomplishments in Wellness & Safety

- **Farmer's Market**

"I would definitely say [the farmer's market] is a success as far as...raising awareness of local healthy foods and being able to physically put them into peoples' hands."

- **Healthy Food Label Project**—Developed healthy food labels for a local, tribally-owned grocery store that said, "Food is good medicine" in English and Lakota.

"We [put the labels on] the healthiest items in the store. For example, obviously, your fresh vegetables and fruits [are] labeled, but when you go to your canned vegetables, some have a lot less sodium than others so being able to identify all this is actually a healthier option in the canned vegetable item section. We have developed those labels and we're still furthering the education around them, so we do weekly cooking demonstrations in the store just to sample new foods or to highlight items in the store that are marked by the label. We're just trying to raise, again, more awareness and engagement with healthy food. That's been another slow process that we're building on. It was a good foundation to get those labels in the store and then we've been just trying to keep building on, "How can we make this even more prevalent as people come in and are shopping here? How can we make this more obvious or accessible to people?"

Current Wellness & Safety Efforts

Food Sovereignty Initiative—REDCO runs a one-acre production and teaching garden.

"[Through our community garden we increased] the amount of local healthy foods available in our community ...last year, we were able to host some of the Head Start and early Head Start kids out to our garden just to get them involved and show them what we were growing and let them pick carrots and just play in the dirt and pull their own food out for snack."



Community Defined "Best Practices" to Improve Childhood Health

1. Community Engagement & Leadership Development

"[We] tried to empower people to be doing different projects on their own. Not just ... like slave labor, 'You're not just here to pull weeds every day, but what are your ideas? What's something that you think would be really cool, how can we help you implement it?' That's what we're trying to do, is grow more leaders, not just the food itself. Use the food as ... on the one hand, getting healthy foods into peoples' bodies is going to make them physically healthier, but growing peoples' minds and spirits in the same way of just allowing them to work with the plants to grow, in that way."

2. Strategic Relationship Building

"There's a lot we don't know, especially around growing food, there's a lot that other people have been doing way longer than us. We just ask a lot of questions and are constantly trying to build bridges with people who have already done it so that we can get the best advice and support but then be able to become the best ourselves so that we can be doing that for other people here."

Allies/Partnerships Working on Children's Health

- South Dakota State University Extension—Brookings, SD
<https://rees.usda.gov/web/crisprojectpages/1000576-sdsu-tribal-extension-program-for-rosebud-reservation.html>



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