



# Foundation *for* Opioid Response Efforts

## **FORE Awards \$550,000 Grant to Expand Youth Substance Use Prevention Program on Pine Ridge Reservation**

*Grant will expand culturally grounded leadership programming for Oglala Lakota youth*

**NEW YORK (March 12, 2026)** — The [Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts \(FORE\)](#) today announced a **\$550,000 two-year grant to [Project Venture](#)**, an Indigenous-led nonprofit organization with nearly 40 years of experience developing healthier Indigenous communities through culturally-based positive youth programming. The funding will expand the reach of *Walking in Strength*, a community-driven, multi-faceted initiative to build resiliency and prevent substance use among youth on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

The grant builds on **FORE’s initial investment in 2022**, which helped launch *Walking in Strength* on Pine Ridge. Since then, the initiative has delivered programming to nearly **600 students**, with evaluation findings showing improvements in cultural connectedness, resilience, and empathy—protective factors that can reduce the risk of developing substance use disorders later in life.

The new FORE funding will allow *Walking in Strength* to reach additional middle and high school students through its **experiential education model**, which engages youth in outdoor activities, service projects, and leadership training.

*Walking in Strength* also brings together educators, health care providers, public safety leaders, housing specialists, and organizations across the Pine Ridge Reservation to coordinate a prevention strategy for youth. With the new funding, Project Venture and its community partners will continue **strengthening this coalition**.

Project Venture will also partner with the **Johns Hopkins Bloomberg Center for Indigenous Health’s Great Plains Hub** to support evaluation, quality improvement, and long-term sustainability planning that could help expand the *Walking in Strength* model to other Indigenous communities.

**Video:** See how Project Venture’s *Walking in Strength* initiative is helping Pine Ridge youth build resilience and leadership skills: [Watch Here](#)

“American Indian and Alaska Native communities have been disproportionately impacted by the overdose crisis, yet prevention strategies often overlook the cultural strengths that help young people build resilience,” said **Karen A. Scott, M.D., MPH, President of the Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts**. “By supporting Project Venture and its partners, FORE is investing in

a community-led approach to prevention that honors Indigenous traditions while equipping youth with the tools they need to thrive.”

“*Walking in Strength* reflects the power of culturally grounded prevention,” said **McClellan Hall, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Project Venture**. “By connecting young people with their culture, community, and the natural world, we help them build resilience and leadership skills that protect against substance use and support healthy transitions into adulthood.”

FORE’s grant is part of the foundation’s broader commitment to supporting **American Indian and Alaska Native communities** in addressing the opioid and overdose crisis. In addition to its support for Project Venture, FORE has funded initiatives led by the [Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium](#) and the [Johns Hopkins Center for Indigenous Health](#) to strengthen prevention, treatment, and community-based solutions. FORE has also supported [Avivo](#), a Minneapolis-based organization, to prevent overdose deaths among unsheltered Native American community members. Together, these investments reflect FORE’s strategy to advance evidence-based and culturally informed approaches that address the unique challenges facing Indigenous communities where adolescents experience high rates of fatal overdose and adverse childhood experiences that increase their risk of developing substance use disorders.

To learn more about prevention strategies in rural and Indigenous communities, register for FORE’s upcoming webinar on rural health: [Register Here](#)

### **About the Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts (FORE)**

Founded in 2018, FORE is a national 501(c)(3) grantmaking foundation dedicated to addressing the nation’s opioid crisis. Through strategic grantmaking, stakeholder convenings, and informational resources, FORE supports patient-centered, innovative solutions that drive long-term change. To date, FORE has awarded **130 grants totaling \$52.6 million to 106 organizations nationwide**. FORE is a nationally certified Recovery Friendly Workplace. Follow FORE on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#) for updates.

### **About Project Venture**

**Project Venture — formerly the National Indian Youth Leadership Development Project (NIYLDP)** — is an Indigenous-led nonprofit organization based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, with nearly four decades of experience developing healthier Indigenous communities through culturally grounded youth leadership programs.

**Source:** Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts

### **Contact**

Myrna Manners, MannersPR  
718-986-7255 | [mmanners@mannerspr.com](mailto:mmanners@mannerspr.com)