



NATIONAL
MENTORING
RESOURCE CENTER
A Program of OJJDP

FY 2020 OJJDP Mentoring Opportunities for Youth Initiative Grantee Profile

National Indian Youth Leadership Project (NIYLP)

Program Overview and Background

Project Venture is a culturally relevant group and peer mentoring model developed over 30 years of work with high-risk, underserved American Indian youth. The program relies on American Indian traditional values to help youth develop positive self-concepts, effective social skills, a community service ethic, internal locus of control, resilience, healthy decision-making, and effective problem-solving skills.

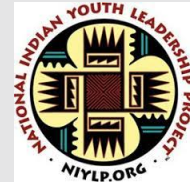
Project Venture is a “cascading” model of mentoring that provides several layers of multigenerational support and multiple opportunities for parent/caretaker and family engagement. Our program goal is to reduce negative outcomes associated with juvenile delinquency and improve outcomes in life skills, social emotional learning, and academic performance.

Program Services

Project Venture utilizes a positive youth development approach that capitalizes on strengths rather than deficits. Project Venture has several program components: (1) adventure-based, outdoor experiential activities, (2) service learning, and (3) peer mentor leadership. Experiential learning engages participants in outdoor adventure activities such as hiking, rock climbing, canoeing, and other activities that develop critical thinking skills alongside physical abilities. In surmounting physical challenges, participants gain a better sense of self and build confidence in their abilities.

Service-learning activities engage youth in their communities and focus on conservation, tree planting, low-cost solar energy projects and other activities to help address global warming/climate change. Project Venture’s high school peer mentoring program offers young people the opportunity to become peer mentors, where they serve as mentors to younger students and are mentored to become peer role models and leaders in positive youth development.

Peer mentors receive extensive training to cultivate facilitation and leadership skills and build self-esteem as participants become role models. Project Venture is implemented developmentally and sequentially, from classroom settings to after-school experiential community-based activities, to weekend outdoor activities, to an intensive summer camp, and is designed to provide 150–200 hours of programming per youth annually.



 **Headquarters:**
Albuquerque, NM

 **Founded:** 1986

 **Number of Youth Served:**
1100

Grant: JJ FY 20 Mentoring
Category 2: Multi-state Mentoring
Programs

Award Number: 2020-JU-FX-0034

Award Amount: \$2,000,000

Program Mentoring Model:
peer, group



Target Population

Project Ventures primarily targets at-risk, high-risk, underserved, low-income American Indian and other middle school students grades 6 to 8. Our secondary target population is high-risk, underserved, low-income American Indian and other high school students. Our target population resides in mostly rural locations. American Indian youth disproportionately contend with extreme social, cultural, and economic factors that dramatically and negatively impact their young lives. Our target youth possess predictive and correlative characteristics and reside in environments that place them at greater risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Additional Resources

- NIYLP Website: <https://www.projectventure.org>
- Project Venture: <https://www.projectventure.org/programs>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/National-Indian-Youth-Leadership-Project-NIYLP113530140730>

For more information on our OJJDP grant:

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