



United States
Department of
Agriculture

2016 USDA RESOURCE GUIDE FOR

AMERICAN INDIANS & ALASKA NATIVES

This Guide is available in .pdf online at www.usda.gov/otr.

United States Department of Agriculture
Office of Tribal Relations

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Preface

When President Abraham Lincoln founded the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1862, he called it “The People’s Department.” USDA staff across the country help promote a sustainable, safe, abundant, and nutritious food supply. USDA also supports rural communities by helping broaden economic opportunities. With the vast array of programs and services USDA manages, we are staying true to President Lincoln’s vision of serving all people.

The USDA Resource Guide for American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) was developed to provide tribal leaders and tribal citizens, 1994 Land-Grant Tribal Colleges and Universities, AI/AN businesses, and non-governmental organizations serving AI/AN communities with a tool for navigating USDA resources. The USDA programs and services available to members of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes are described in the following pages. This guide provides readers with a comprehensive summary of USDA Programs, separated into four categories:

1. Agriculture, Food Sovereignty, and Traditional Foods
2. Business and Community Development
3. Conservation and Forestry
4. Research, Extension, and Outreach

The appendix provides additional information on the 19 agencies of USDA and highlights valuable information that relates to Indian Country. In this section you will find:

- USDA’s organization chart and a list of agencies, offices, and contact information.
- Information on USDA boards and committees and how participate on them.
- Information on the Federal grant application process.
- Outreach and technical assistance for USDA programs.
- Information about the Federal and USDA policies that outline the Federal and Departmental work supporting AI/AN communities. These include departmental regulations, executive orders, and laws.

USDA is committed to serving tribal governments and individual American Indians and Alaska Natives by working to ensure that relevant programs and policies are efficient, easy to understand, accessible, and developed in consultation with the AI/AN constituents they impact. This guide is intended to encourage you to assess your community’s needs, collaborate with other community leaders, engage your local and state USDA representatives, and apply for and participate in USDA programs in order to support a vibrant and resilient Native America.

Although tribal set-asides are included in only a few USDA programs, almost all USDA programs are accessible by tribes, tribal organizations, or tribal citizens. The resources described in this guide are accurate up to this guide’s publication date, but are subject to change. Throughout this guide we have identified how to get in touch with someone at USDA who can



answer your questions and steer you in the right direction. NOTE: At the time this guide was produced, USDA did not have authority equivalent to that provided to tribes under Indian self-Determination and Education Assistant Act of 1975 (Public Law 93-638).

If you require any additional assistance finding the right person, please contact the USDA Office of Tribal Relations, and we will work with you to get the information you need. The USDA Office of Tribal Relations was permanently established by the 2014 Farm Bill to facilitate your access to USDA and serves as a central point of information for both external stakeholders and USDA agencies. The office can be reached at (202) 205-2249. The Office of Tribal Relations publishes a weekly list of announcements, including program funding openings and closings, jobs, and youth programs via email. To join the weekly listserv, please email tribal.relations@osec.usda.gov. We hope that this guide will serve as a valuable resource that you will return to often and that you will share with other leaders, organizations, and individuals in your community.

The USDA Office of Tribal Relations



Tribal Consultation



Since before its formation, the United States has recognized tribes as sovereign governments. A unique legal relationship exists between Federally recognized tribes and the Federal Government which evolved from this recognition of tribal sovereignty. This relationship is the basis of the “government-to- government” consultation requirement. The treaties in which many tribes ceded lands to the United States in exchange for protection and provisions for their tribal citizens were based on the premise of two sovereign governments interacting on an equal basis, just as foreign governments negotiate and sign treaties with the United States today. This relationship is incorporated in the Constitution and has been expressed through numerous treaties, statutes, executive directives, and court decisions as well as political, legal, moral, and ethical principles.

Tribal consultation, as described by Executive Order 13175, is the timely, meaningful, and substantive dialogue between Federal officials who have delegated authority to consult, and the official leadership of Federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, or their designated representative(s), pertaining to policies that may have tribal implications.

The USDA Office of Tribal Relations in the Office of the Secretary is the Tribal point of contact for Tribal requests for consultation.



USDA Programs

4.1 Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Traditional Foods

As stewards of the land, Native producers are in a unique position to speak on local agricultural traditions and priorities. In this section, we provide you with an array of programs that support agricultural producers, the ability of each tribal nation and its citizens to feed its people, and the recognition that Native traditional foods are important to the health and well-being of Native people.

4.1.1 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Loans

USDA's Farm Service Agency makes and guarantees loans to beginning farmers and ranchers who are unable to obtain financing from commercial lenders. A beginning farmer or rancher is an individual or entity who (1) has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years, (2) meets the loan eligibility requirements of the program to which he/she is applying, (3) substantially participates in the operation, and (4) for farm ownership loan purposes, does not own a farm greater than 30 percent of the median size farm in the county and meets training and experience requirements.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/beginning-farmers-and-ranchers-loans/>

Direct Farm Operating Loans

FSA direct farm operating loans may be made to purchase items such as livestock, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance, and other operating expenses. They can also be used to pay for minor improvements to buildings, costs associated with land and water development, family subsistence, and refinancing debts under certain conditions.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/farm-operating-loans/index>

Direct Farm Ownership Loans

FSA direct farm ownership loans may be made to purchase farmland, construct or repair buildings and other fixtures, and promote soil and water conservation.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/farm-ownership-loans/index>





Farm Storage Facility Loans

Farm storage facility loans provide low-interest financing for producers to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities to store eligible commodities they produce, including cold storage facilities, bulk tanks, new or used handling and storage equipment (portable or permanently affixed), and storage and handling trucks. A producer may borrow up to \$500,000 per loan with a minimum down payment of 15 percent, and loan terms are up to 12 years, depending on the amount of the loan. In addition, FSA provides a microloan option for producers who require financing of up to \$50,000 with a low 5 percent down payment.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/price-support/facility-loans/farm-storage/>

Guaranteed Farm Operating Loans

Guaranteed operating loans may be made to purchase items needed, such as livestock, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, farm chemicals, repairs, insurance, and other operating expenses. FSA-guaranteed loans provide lenders (banks, Farm Credit System institutions, credit unions) with a guarantee of up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. Farmers and ranchers apply to an agricultural lender, which then arranges for the guarantee. The FSA guarantee permits lenders to make agricultural credit available to farmers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria. A percentage of guaranteed loan funds is targeted to beginning farmers and ranchers and minority applicants.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/guaranteed-farm-loans/index>





Guaranteed Farm Ownership Loans

Guaranteed farm ownership loans may be made to purchase farmland, construct or repair buildings and other fixtures, develop farmland to promote soil and water conservation, or to refinance debt. FSA-guaranteed loans provide lenders (banks, Farm Credit System institutions, credit unions) with a guarantee of up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. Farmers and ranchers apply to an agricultural lender, which then arranges for the guarantee. The FSA guarantee permits lenders to make agricultural credit available to farmers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria. A percentage of guaranteed loan funds is targeted to beginning farmers and ranchers and minority applicants.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/guaranteed-farm-loans/index>

Land Contract Guarantees

Guarantees are available for the owner of a farm who sells real estate through a land contract to a beginning or targeted underserved farmer. The guarantee provides an incentive to sell to individuals in these targeted groups as it reduces the financial risk to the seller in the event of default.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/lc_guarantee_program.pdf



Microloans

Microloans are available for both direct farm ownership and direct operating loans and provide flexible access to credit for small farming operations, including specialty, niche, and local food producers. The Microloan Program includes a simplified loan application process and minimal paperwork. It provides additional flexibility in certain loan eligibility requirements, reduces documentation requirements, and streamlines financial planning for small operations. Eligible applicants may obtain a microloan for up to \$50,000.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/microloans/>

Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers

The overall goal of this program is to assist socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers in owning and operating farms and ranches while increasing their participation in agricultural programs and services provided by USDA. This program will assist eligible community-based and non-profit organizations, higher education institutions, and tribal entities in providing outreach and technical assistance to socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers.

Agency: Office of Advocacy and Outreach (OAO)

Eligibility: Tribal Organizations; Tribal Colleges & Universities

Contact: Kenya Nicholas, Program Director, kenya.nicholas@osec.usda.gov, (202) 720-6350

Website: <https://www.outreach.usda.gov/sdfr/>

Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is charged with implementing Section 10007 of the 2014 Farm Bill, the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program, to prevent the introduction or spread of plant pests and diseases that threaten U.S. agriculture and the environment. Under Section 10007, APHIS provides funding to strengthen the Nation's infrastructure for pest detection and surveillance, identification, and threat mitigation, while working to safeguard the nursery production system.

Agency: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations; Tribal Colleges & Universities

Contact: APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine, farmbillsection10007@aphis.usda.gov,

Website: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/resources/farm-bill>

Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program for Geographically Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers

The Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program for Geographically Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (RTCP) reimburses geographically disadvantaged producers with a portion of the cost to transport agricultural commodities or inputs used to produce an agricultural commodity.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/price-support/RTCP-Program/>



Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

The purpose of the SCBGP is to enhance the sale, consumption, access, diversity, food safety, conservation, and/or production of specialty crops. Specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture).

Agency: Agricultural Marketing Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations; Tribal Colleges & Universities.

Interested applicants must apply through their State Department of Agriculture for funding.

Contact: SCBGP Program Manager, john.miklozek@usda.gov, (202) 720-1403

Website: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgbp>

Youth Loans

FSA makes loans to individual rural youth, between the ages of 10 and 20 years, to establish and operate agriculture-related income-producing projects of modest size in connection with their participation in 4-H clubs, the Future Farmers of America, Tribal Youth Organizations and similar organizations. The project must be planned and operated with the help of the organization adviser, produce sufficient income to repay the loan, and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5,000, and the repayment term is 1 to 7 years. In certain cases, FSA may require a co-signer for a youth loan.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens between 10 and 20 years old.

Key Dates: Program signups vary. Loan applications are always available.

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=paca&topic=you>

4.1.2 ORGANIC AGRICULTURE CERTIFICATION

Two organic certification cost share programs are offered to assist certified organic operations in defraying the costs associated with organic certification.

Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP)

The AMA Program is available to certified organic producers in 16 states designated by Congress. Organic operations may receive up to 75 percent of their certification costs paid; not to exceed \$750 per certification scope. Payments are distributed to producers by eligible state agencies.

Agency: Agricultural Marketing Service

Eligibility: Organic producers in 16 states designated by Congress which include:

Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/occsp>





National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (NOCCSP)

The NOCCSP is available to organic producers and handlers. Organic operations may receive up to 75 percent of their certification costs paid; not to exceed \$750 per certification scope. Payments are distributed to producers by eligible state agencies.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/occsp>

4.1.3 AGRICULTURAL MARKETING & PROCESSING

Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)

The purpose of the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) is to increase domestic consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products, and to develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets by developing, improving, expanding, and providing outreach, training, and technical assistance to, or assisting in the development, improvement, and expansion of, domestic farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities.

Agency: Agricultural Marketing Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: FMPP Program Manager, USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov, (202) 720-0933

Website: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp>





Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMP)

The Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) provides matching funds to State Departments of Agriculture, State agricultural experiment stations, and other appropriate State agencies to assist in exploring new market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products, and to encourage research and innovation aimed at improving the efficiency and performance of the marketing system.

Agency: Agricultural Marketing Service

Eligibility: Tribal Colleges & Universities (only Land-Grant institutions)

Contact: Janise Zygmunt, janise.zygmunt@ams.usda.gov, (202) 720-5024

Website: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fsmip>

Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP)

The Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) offers grant funds with a 25% match to support the development and expansion of local and regional food business enterprises to increase domestic consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products, and to develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets. Two types of project applications are accepted under LFPP—planning grants and implementation grants. Applicants can apply for either but will receive only one type of grant in the same grant cycle.

Agency: Agricultural Marketing Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: LFPP Program Manager, USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov, (202) 720-2731

Website: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp>



Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) Small and Very Small Plant Outreach

Small and very small plant owners and operators can find information about FSIS policies, technical assistance, and answers to common questions from small processors across the country.

Agency: Food Safety Inspection Service

Eligibility: Tribal Organizations with fewer than 500 employees

Contact: FSIS Small Plant Help Desk: 1-877-FSISHELP (1-877-374-7435),
InfoSource@fsis.usda.gov.

Website: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulatory-compliance/svsp>

Value Added Producer Grant Program

The VAPG program helps agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of bio-based, value-added products in order to generate new products, create and expand marketing opportunities, and increase producer income.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office, <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants>

4.1.4 SHARING THE STORY: 2013 COLORADO STRIKEFORCE MEETING DRAWS A CROWD

By: Tedd Buelow, Native American Coordinator for USDA Rural Development

May 2nd [2013] dawned a majestic spring day in the Rocky Mountains of southwestern Colorado as rural and tribal stakeholders from the Four Corners region descended upon the San Juan National Forest Headquarters to learn more about USDA's StrikeForce for Rural Growth and Opportunity Initiative. Participants traveled from New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, and the east coast to discuss strategies to help USDA deliver its programs more successfully in persistently poor rural areas.

In a stroke of good fortune and opportune timing, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe's Farm and Ranch Enterprise received word that they had been selected for a Value Added Producer Grant (VAPG) the day prior to the roundtable event. The tribe's chairman, the tribe's executive director and two Farm and Ranch Enterprise managers were on hand at the event and graciously shared a few words about the tribe and what they plan to do with the grant funds. We all look forward to seeing the Tribe's cornmeal product in increased markets!

Two other tribes received VAPG awards through the same announcement, the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin and the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe in central South Dakota. The three tribal awards were a marked increase for awards to tribes in this program, and the awards this year were directly related to Tribal Consultation efforts facilitated by USDA's Office of Tribal Relations, which led to an internal education process that illustrated how tribes and tribal entities may be considered producers for the purposes of eligibility in the Value Added Producer Grant program. The full blog is available at <http://blogs.usda.gov/2013/05/13/colorado-strikeforce-meeting-draws-a-crowd/>.

From 2012 to 2016, USDA Rural Development funded 17 Value Added Producer Grants, totaling over \$1.4 million, to tribes, tribal producers, and tribal entities across the country. These funds have been used to strengthen tribal agriculture economies and expand market access for tribal products. The Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, for example, received \$75,000 to determine the feasibility of developing an Identity Preservation program, a non-GMO seed certification program, as well as marketing and development for the Cherokee Food brand.



4.1.5 TOOLS TO MANAGE AGRICULTURE PRICE LOSS, RISK, AND LIABILITY

Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs

The Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Programs provide revenue and price loss payments to eligible producers for the 2014 through 2018 crop years. Owners must one-time elect to select the type of coverage (ARC or PLC) for each of the covered commodities. Producers of covered commodities are eligible. Covered commodities include wheat, oats, barley, corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, sunflower seed, rapeseed, canola, safflower, flaxseed, mustard seed, crambe and sesame seed, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas, and large chickpeas.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/arcplc_program/index

Crop Insurance Program

The Federal Crop Insurance Program provides multi-peril crop insurance to America's farmers and ranchers to protect them against adverse weather events, natural disasters, or falling prices.

Agency: Risk Management Agency

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Key Dates: Deadlines to purchase crop insurance varies by each crop. Spring-planted crops typically have a March closing date, while fall-planted crops typically have a September closing date.

Contact: RMA's Regional Offices, <http://www.rma.usda.gov/aboutrma/fields/rsos.html>

Website: www.rma.usda.gov/fcic/

Crop Insurance Education in Targeted States Program

This program provides funding for the establishment of crop insurance education and information in States where there is traditionally, and continues to be, a low level of Federal crop insurance participation and availability, and producers are underserved by the Federal crop insurance program. The goal of this project is to ensure that producers in the Targeted States are fully informed of existing and emerging crop insurance products.

Agency: Risk Management Agency

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Targeted states currently include Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

Key Dates: Request for Applications opens in the Spring and closes after 60 calendar days. Awards made by September 30.

Contact: RMA's Risk Management Education Division, rma.risk-ed@rma.usda.gov, (202) 720-1416

Website: <https://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/10458>





Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program

The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides financial assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees, and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease, certain adverse weather events or loss conditions, including blizzards and wildfires, as determined by the Secretary. ELAP assistance is provided to producers for losses not covered by other disaster assistance programs, such as the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP).

Agency: Farm Service agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/emergency-assist-for-livestock-honey-bees-fish/index>

Livestock Forage Disaster Program

The Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have suffered grazing losses for covered livestock on land that is native or improved pastureland with permanent vegetative cover or is planted specifically for grazing. The grazing losses must be due to a qualifying drought condition during the normal grazing period for the county.

Agency: Farm Service agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/livestock-forage/index>





Livestock Indemnity Program

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides benefits to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by eligible loss conditions, including eligible adverse weather, eligible disease, and eligible attacks (attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the Federal Government or protected by Federal law, including wolves and avian predators). To be eligible for LIP, a livestock producer must have legally owned the eligible livestock on the day the livestock died. Eligible livestock include cattle, poultry, swine, sheep, goats, and other several other types of livestock.

Agency: Farm Service agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/livestock-indemnity/index>

Margin Protection Program for Dairy

The Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy) is a voluntary risk management program for dairy producers currently authorized through December 31, 2018. MPP-Dairy offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all milk price and the average feed cost (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer. MPP-Dairy offers dairy producers: (1) catastrophic coverage, at no cost to the producer, other than an annual \$100 administrative fee; and (2) various levels of buy-up coverage for an additional premium charge.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/Dairy-MPP/index>



Nonrecourse Marketing Assistance Loans and Loan Deficiency Payment

Nonrecourse marketing assistance loans (MALs) provide producers interim financing at harvest time to help them meet cash flow needs when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows. MALs for covered commodities are nonrecourse because the commodity is pledged as loan collateral and producers have the option of delivering the pledged collateral to the CCC as full payment for the loan at maturity. A producer who is eligible to obtain a loan, but who agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain a loan deficiency payment (LDP). An LDP is the amount by which the applicable loan rate exceeds the alternative loan repayment rate for the respective commodity.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)
Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations
Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>
Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/price-support/commodity-loans/non-recourse-loans/index>

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops to protect against natural disasters that result in lower yields or crop losses, or prevents crop planting. NAP provides basic coverage equivalent to the catastrophic-level risk protection plan of insurance coverage, which is based on the amount of loss that exceeds 50 percent of expected production at 55 percent of the average market price for the crop. The 2014 Farm Bill authorized higher levels of coverage ranging from 50 to 65 percent of production, in 5-percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Additional coverage must be elected by a producer by the application.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)
Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations
Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>
Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/noninsured-crop-disaster-assistance/>

Risk Management Education Partnership Program

The goal of this program is to ensure that producers will be better able to use financial management, farm financial benchmarking, crop insurance, marketing contracts, and other existing and emerging risk management tools. This program strives to ensure that producers are well informed of the risk management solutions available to them. The Risk Management Education Partnership Program provides funding for risk management training and informational efforts for agricultural producers through the formation of partnerships with public and private organizations.

Agency: Risk Management Agency
Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations; Tribal Colleges & Universities
Contact: Risk Management Education Division, rma.risk-ed@rma.usda.gov, (202) 720-1416
Website: <http://www.rma.usda.gov/aboutrma/agreements/>

Tree Assistance Program

The Tree Assistance Program (TAP) is a permanent disaster program that provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, and vines damaged by natural disasters.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)
Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations
Key Dates: Program signups vary. Loan applications are always available.
Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>
Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/tree-assistance-program/index>



4.1.6 ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS AND NUTRITION LITERACY

Child and Adult Care Food Program

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) plays a vital role in improving the quality of day care by making it more affordable for low-income providers and by encouraging homes and centers to serve nutritious meals to eligible children attending daycare. Children receive nutritious meals and snacks for which providers receive reimbursements through CACFP. The program also provides meals and snacks to adults who receive care in nonresidential adult day care centers. CACFP reaches even further to provide meals to children residing in homeless shelters, as well as snacks and suppers to youths participating in eligible after-school care programs.

Agency: Food and Nutrition Service

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens, Tribal Organizations

Contact: State Administrative Offices, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/cacfp-contacts>

Website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program>

ChooseMyPlate.gov and SuperTracker

The ChooseMyPlate.gov Website provides information for consumers as well as message multipliers on healthy eating and physical activity. MyPlate teaches the 5 food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy. Consumers are encouraged to visit the ChooseMyPlate.gov Website for resources including testimonial videos with real families sharing their own healthy eating solutions, tip sheets, interactive tools, quizzes, the ability to submit tips and testimonials - “MyPlate MyWins,” and more.

SuperTracker is a free online food, physical activity, and weight tracking tool. It can be accessed from <https://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov/> or directly at www.SuperTracker.usda.gov.

Agency: Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens

Contact: Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, 703-305-7600

Website: <https://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov/>

Commodity Supplemental Food Program

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) works to improve the health of low-income elderly persons at least 60 years of age by supplementing their diets with nutritious foods purchased by USDA and distributed by State agencies to local health, social services, education, or agriculture organizations.

Agency: Food and Nutrition Service

Eligibility: Tribal Elders at least 60 years of age

Contact: State Food Distribution Offices, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/food-distribution-contacts>

Website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/csfp/commodity-supplemental-food-program-csfp>

Community Foods Projects

Community Food Projects (CFP) tends to fund three types of grants. The types are entitled (1) Community Food Projects (CFP), (2) Planning Projects (PP) and (3) Training and Technical Assistance (T & TA) Projects. The primary goals of the CFP are to:

- Meet the food needs of low-income individuals through food distribution, community outreach to assist in participation in Federally assisted nutrition programs, or improving access to food as part of a comprehensive service;





- Increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for the food needs of the communities;
- Promote comprehensive responses to local food access, farm, and nutrition issues; and
- Meet specific state, local, or neighborhood food and agricultural needs including needs relating to:
 - Equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a project; and
 - Planning for long-term solutions; or the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers.

Agency: National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Eligibility: Tribal Organizations

Contact: Dr. Jane Clary Loveless, jclary@nifa.usda.gov

Website: <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/community-food-projects-cfp-competitive-grants-program>

Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations

The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) provides USDA Foods to income-eligible households living on Indian reservations and households living in approved areas near reservations or in Oklahoma that contain at least one person who is a member of a Federally recognized tribe. Many tribal households participate in FDPIR as an alternative to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) because they do not have easy or reliable access to SNAP offices or authorized retail food stores.

Agency: Food and Nutrition Service

Eligibility: Income-eligible Tribal Citizens that reside on a reservation, on designated areas near reservations, or in Oklahoma

Contact: USDA Food and Nutrition Service, 703-305-2062

Website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdpir/food-distribution-program-indian-reservations-fdpir>





National School Lunch Program

Under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), participating school districts and independent schools and residential child care institutions receive cash reimbursements and donated commodities from USDA for each meal they serve. In return, they must serve lunches that meet Federal requirements, and they must offer free or reduced-price lunches to eligible low-income children. School districts can also be reimbursed for snacks served to children through age 18 in after-school educational or enrichment programs.

Agency: Food and Nutrition Service

Eligibility: Income-eligible Tribal Citizens and the Tribal Organizations that serve them may receive assistance through State Agencies. At the State level, the National School Lunch Program is usually administered by State education agencies, which operate the program through agreements with school food authorities.

Contact: Local School Meals Contacts, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/school-meals-contacts>

Website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-nslp>

School Breakfast Program

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) operates in the same manner as the NSLP. School districts and independent schools that choose to take part in the breakfast program receive cash reimbursement from USDA for each meal they serve. In return, they must serve breakfasts that meet Federal requirements, and they must offer free or reduced-price breakfasts to eligible children.

Agency: Food and Nutrition Service

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens and Tribal Organizations may receive assistance through State Agencies

Contact: Local School Meals Contacts, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/school-meals-contacts>

Website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/school-breakfast-program-sbp>



Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)

This program awards grants to States, U.S. Territories, and Federally recognized tribal governments to provide low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community- supported agriculture programs.

Agency: Food and Nutrition Service

Eligibility: Tribes

Contact: Local SFMNP Contacts: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfmnp/sfmnp-contacts>

Website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfmnp/senior-farmers-market-nutrition-program-sfmnp>

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) serves to safeguard the health of low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age five who are at nutritional risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement their diets, nutrition education, and referrals to health and other social services at no cost. Participants must meet income guidelines and a State residency requirement and must be individually determined to be at "nutritional risk" by a health professional.

Agency: Food and Nutrition Service

Eligibility: Income-eligible Tribal Citizens, Tribes

Contacts: Local WIC Agency Offices, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-contacts>

Website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/women-infants-and-children-wic>

Summer Food Service Program

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides free, nutritious meals and snacks to help children in low-income areas get the nutrition they need to learn, play, and grow during school vacations. Children who are age 18 and under, and people over age 18 who are determined by a State educational agency to have a mental or physical disability, may receive meals through the SFSP when school is out. SFSP meals are accessible to children through local sponsors who provide meals at feeding sites such as schools, community centers, parks, churches, pools, housing projects, playgrounds, migrant centers, or Indian reservations.

Agency: Food and Nutrition Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations; Tribal Schools

Contact: Local Summer Food Service Program Office, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/sfsp-contacts>

Website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program>

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides low-income households with benefits on an electronic card that they can use to purchase approved foods at most grocery stores to ensure that they have access to a healthful diet. SNAP, which is the cornerstone of the Federal food assistance programs, provides the crucial support to needy households and to those making the transition from welfare to work.

Agency: Food and Nutrition Service

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens

Contact: Local SNAP Office, [https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/snap-application-and-local-offi e-locators](https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/snap-application-and-local-offi-e-locators)

Website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>



What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl

In November 2014, USDA launched What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl, an online tool featuring a large collection of recipes and resources to support building healthy and budget-friendly meals. The site includes both household and large-quantity recipes, many of which were developed specifically for USDA Programs to build menus that align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Agency: Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
Contact: Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, (703) 305-7600
Website: <https://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/>

WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program was established by Congress to provide fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables from farmers' markets to WIC participants. The program was also established to expand the awareness of, and sales at, farmers' markets. Each State agency is responsible for authorizing individual farmers, farmers' markets, or both.

Agency: Food and Nutrition Service
Eligibility: Currently, 45 State agencies and Indian Tribal Organizations administer the FMNP. A full list of states and tribes administering WIC Farmers Markets is available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fmnp/fmnp-contacts>.
Contact: USDA Food and Nutrition Service, 703-305-2062
Website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fmnp/wic-farmers-market-nutrition-program-fmnp>

4.1.7 SHARING THE STORY: ST. REGIS MOHAWK TRIBE OPENS THE DIABETES CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

On February 12, 2014, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe of Akwesasne, New York, celebrated the grand opening of its Diabetes Center for Excellence (DCE). The project was supported by a variety of federal agencies and local partners such as the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, the Akwesasne Housing Authority, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and USDA Rural Development. USDA Rural Development provided \$515,880 through its Community Facilities Program for construction of the new center. DCE staff also raised funds for the project through bake sales, cook-offs, golf tournaments, and other community events. The center, located on the Saint Regis Mohawk Reservation in Franklin County, will help improve the health and wellness of the Akwesasne community, providing specialized services for diabetes prevention and management.

4.1.8 BIOFUELS AND BIOBASED PRODUCTS

Biomass Crop Assistance Program

The Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) is a voluntary program for agricultural and forestland owners and operators. BCAP supports the production and use of biomass crops for conversion to bioenergy or for the development of bio-based products. BCAP provides assistance in three ways: 1) Establishment payments for growing new biomass crops; 2) Maintenance payments to maintain the new biomass crop as it matures until harvest; and 3) Retrieval matching payments to help with the cost of sustainably harvesting and transporting agricultural or forest residues to an energy facility (biomass conversion facility).

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)
Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations
Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>
Website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/energy-programs>





4.1.9 EXPORTING AND IMPORTING COMMODITIES

Export Credit Guarantee Program

The Export Credit Guarantee Program provides credit guarantees to encourage financing of commercial exports of U.S. agricultural products. By reducing financial risk to lenders, credit guarantees encourage exports to buyers in countries—mainly developing countries—that have sufficient financial strength to have foreign exchange available for scheduled payments.

Agency: Foreign Agricultural Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Credit Programs Division, registrations@fas.usda.gov, (202) 720-6211

Website: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/export-credit-guarantee-program-gsm-102>

Emerging Markets Program (EMP)

The Emerging Markets Program (EMP) provides cost-share funding for U.S. organizations to promote exports of U.S. agricultural products to countries that have—or are developing—market-oriented economies and that have the potential to be viable commercial markets. Examples of approved technical assistance activities include feasibility studies, market research, sectorial assessments, orientation visits, specialized training, and business workshops.

Agency: Foreign Agricultural Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Office of Trade Programs, podadmin@fas.usda.gov

Website: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/emerging-markets-program-emp>





Facility Guarantee Program

The Facility Guarantee Program is designed to boost sales of U.S. agricultural products in countries where demand may be limited due to inadequate storage, processing, handling, or distribution capabilities. The program provides credit guarantees to help finance manufactured goods and U.S. services that improve or establish agriculture-related facilities in emerging markets.

Agency: Foreign Agricultural Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Credit Programs Division, gsm.registrations@fas.usda.gov, (202) 720-6211

Website: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/facility-guarantee-program>

Foreign Market Development (FMD) Program

Also known as the Cooperator Program, the Foreign Market Development Program helps create, expand, and maintain long-term export markets for U.S. agricultural products. FAS partners with U.S. agricultural producers and processors, who are represented by non-profit commodity or trade associations called “cooperators,” to 1) reduce foreign import constraints, or 2) expand export growth opportunities.

Agency: Foreign Agricultural Service

Eligibility: Tribal Organizations

Contact: Office of Trade Programs, podadmin@fas.usda.gov

Website: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/foreign-market-development-program-fmd>

Market Access Program (MAP)

The Market Access Program (MAP) promotes overseas marketing and promotional activities that help build commercial export markets for U.S. agricultural products and commodities.

Agency: Foreign Agricultural Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Office of Trade Programs, podadmin@fas.usda.gov, (202) 720-4327

Website: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/market-access-program-map>



Quality Samples Program (QSP)

The Quality Samples Program enables potential customers around the world to discover the quality and benefits of U.S. agricultural products. The program focuses on processors and manufacturers rather than consumers, and QSP projects should benefit an entire industry or commodity rather than a specific company or product. Projects should focus on developing a new market or promoting a new use for the U.S. product

Agency: Foreign Agricultural Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Office of Trade Programs, podadmin@fas.usda.gov, (202) 720-4327

Website: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/quality-samples-program-qsp>

4.2 Business and Community Development

USDA offers a suite of programs designed to provide financial backing and technical assistance to stimulate business creation and growth in rural communities. The programs work through partnerships with public and private community-based organizations and financial institutions to provide financial assistance, business development, and technical assistance to rural and Tribal businesses. These programs help to provide capital, equipment, space, job training, and entrepreneurial skills that can help to start and/or grow a business. These programs also support the creation and preservation of quality jobs in tribal areas.

Business and Industry Loan Guaranty Program

This program bolsters the existing private credit structure through the guaranteeing of loans for rural businesses, allowing private lenders to extend more credit than they would typically be able to.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office, <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Intermediary Relending Program

Provides 1% low-interest loans to local intermediaries that re-lend to businesses and for community development projects in rural communities.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office; <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/intermediary-re lending-program>

Small Business Innovation Research Program - SBIR

Funds may be awarded up to \$100,000 for a Phase I project. Proposed Phase I projects should prove the scientific or technical feasibility of the approach or concept. Projects dealing with agriculturally related manufacturing and alternative and renewable energy technologies are encouraged across all SBIR topic areas. USDA SBIR's flexible research areas ensure innovative projects consistent with USDA's vision of a healthy and productive Nation in harmony with the land, air, and water. USDA's SBIR Program has awarded over 2,000 research and development projects since 1983, allowing hundreds of small businesses to explore their technological potential, and providing an incentive to profit from the commercialization of innovative ideas. Click below for more SBIR information.

Agency: National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Eligibility: Tribal Organizations with less than 500 employees

Website: <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/small-business-innovation-research-program-phase-i>



Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program

This program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial or business undertakings.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office; <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>

Community Facilities Economic Impact Initiative Grants

This program provides funding to assist in the development of essential community facilities in rural communities with extreme unemployment and severe economic depression. An essential community facility is one that provides an essential service to the local community, is needed for the orderly development of the community, serves a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial, or business undertakings.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office, <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/economic-impact-initiative-grants>

Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan Program

This program provides loan guarantees to eligible private lenders to help build essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial or business undertakings.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office, <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-guaranteed-loan-program>

Community Connect Grant Program

This program helps fund broadband deployment into rural communities where it is not yet economically viable for private-sector providers to deliver service.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Most state and local governments, Federally recognized tribes, non-profits, or for-profit corporations. Rural areas that lack any existing broadband speed of at least 4 Mbps downstream and 1 Mbps upstream are eligible.

Program Contact: Rural Utility Service Telecom Program Loan Origination and Approval Division, (202) 720-0800, Community.Connect@wdc.usda.gov

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-connect-grants>





Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans & Loan Guarantees

This program provides financing for the construction, maintenance, improvement, and expansion of telephone service and broadband in rural areas.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Loan Origination and Approval Division, (202) 720-0800

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/telecommunications-infrastructure-loans-loan-guarantees>

Rural Broadband Loans & Loan Guarantees

The Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program (Broadband Program) furnishes loans and loan guarantees to provide funds for the costs of construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to provide service at the broadband lending speed in eligible rural areas.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Rural Utility Service Telecom Program Loan Origination and Approval Division, (202) 720-0800

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/farm-bill-broadband-loans-loan-guarantees>

Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grants

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine program helps rural communities use the unique capabilities of telecommunications to connect to each other and to the world, overcoming the effects of remoteness and low population density. For example, this program can link teachers and medical service providers in one area to students and patients in another.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: RUS Telecom Program Loan Origination and Approval Division,
dlinfo@wdc.usda.gov, (202) 720-0800

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>





Distributed Generation Energy Project Financing

The RUS Electric Program can provide loans and loan guarantees to energy project developers for distributed energy projects including renewables that provide wholesale or retail electricity to existing Electric Program borrowers or to rural communities served by other utilities. Electric Program project financing loans follow the same regulatory requirements and processes as do our traditional electric infrastructure loans and loan guarantees (also known as system loans or loans for rural electrification).

Distributed generation projects, including generation from renewable resources, are providing more power supply options for rural communities. There is growing interest among electric cooperatives to enter into power purchase agreements (PPAs) with project developers or to interconnect distributed generation projects directly into their systems.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Office of Loan Origination & Approval, Joe.Badin@wdc.usda.gov

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distributed-generation-energy-project-financing>

Electric Infrastructure Loan & Loan Guarantee Program

The electric program makes insured loans and loan guarantees to nonprofit and cooperative associations, public bodies, and other utilities. Insured loans primarily finance the construction of electric distribution facilities in rural areas. The guaranteed loan program has been expanded and is now available to finance generation, transmission, and distribution facilities. The loans and loan guarantees finance the construction of electric distribution, transmission, and generation facilities, including system improvements and replacement required to furnish and improve electric service in rural areas, as well as demand side management, energy conservation programs, and on-grid and off-grid renewable energy systems.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations



Contact: Rural Utilities Service, Electric Program Office of Loan Origination and Approval, (202) 720-1422,
Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/electric-infrastructure-loan-loan-guarantee-program>

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Loan Program

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Loan Program (EECLP) provides loans to finance energy efficiency and conservation projects for commercial, industrial, and residential consumers. With the EECLP, eligible utilities, including existing Rural Utilities Service borrowers, can borrow money tied to Treasury rates of interest and re-lend the money to develop new and diverse energy service products within their service territories. For instance, borrowers could set up on-bill financing programs whereby customers in their service territories implement energy-efficiency measures behind the meter and repay the loan to the distribution utility through their electric bills.

Agency: Rural Development
Eligibility: Tribal Organizations
Contact: Rural Utilities Service - Electric Program, (202) 720-9545,
Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/energy-efficiency-and-conservation-loan-program>

High Energy Cost Grant Program

Assists energy providers and other eligible entities in lowering energy costs for families and individuals in areas with extremely high per-household energy costs (275 percent of the national average or higher.)

Agency: Rural Development
Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations
Contact: Rural Utilities Service - Electric Program, High Energy Cost Grants Program, (202) 720-9545,
Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/high-energy-cost-grants>

Rural Energy for America Program Energy Audit & Renewable Energy Development Assistance Grants

Grantees assist rural small businesses and agricultural producers by conducting and promoting energy audits, and providing renewable energy development assistance (REDA).

Agency: Rural Development
Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations; Tribal Colleges & Universities
Key Dates: Review application dates in current Notice of Funding Availability.
Contact: USDA RD State Office, <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>
Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-energy-america-program-energy-audit-renewable-energy-development-assistance>

Rural Energy for America Program Renewable Energy Systems & Energy Efficiency Improvement Loans & Grants

Provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for renewable energy systems or to make energy-efficiency improvements.

Agency: Rural Development
Eligibility: Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations
Contact: USDA RD State Office, <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>
Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-energy-america-program-renewable-energy-systems-energy-efficiency>



Rural Energy Savings Program

The Rural Energy Savings Program (RESP) helps rural families and small businesses achieve cost savings by providing loans to qualified consumers to implement durable cost-effective energy-efficiency measures.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribal Organizations

Key Dates: Applications for this program will be accepted on a first-come first-served basis until the depletion of available funding. Please see the funding announcement which provides detailed information on the RESP, including how to apply.

Contact: Titilayo Ogunyale, Titilayo.Ogunyale@wdc.usda.gov, (202) 720-0736

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-energy-savings-program>

Highly Fractionated Indian Land Loans

Highly fractionated Indian land loans provide loans to qualified intermediary lenders that will relend the funds to qualified tribes and individuals to reduce or eliminate fractionated ownership interests of Indian lands. Participating intermediary lenders must be approved by FSA. The lenders may be private and tribal nonprofit corporations, public agencies, Indian tribes or lenders subject to Federal or state regulation (such as a credit union or other financial institution). To receive a loan from the intermediary, they must:

- comply with highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation requirements on all their land;
- agree to continue to use the land for agricultural purposes during the term of the loan; and
- agree to comply with the requirements of the intermediary lender; funds may be used to pay costs incidental to land acquisition, including, but not limited to, title clearance, legal services, archeological or land surveys, and loan closing; may be used to pay for costs of an appraisal conducted for this loan; and be able to purchase fractionated interests resulting in at least 51-percent ownership.

Agency: Farm Service Agency

Eligibility: Tribes and/or Tribal Organizations as Intermediary, with the Tribal Citizens as the End Recipient

Contact: Local FSA County Office

Website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/index>

Indian Tribal Land Acquisition

Indian Tribal Land Acquisition Program (ITLAP) loans enable Indian tribes to purchase privately held lands that lie within their reservations. Loan funds may be used to pay expenses incidental to the purchase of the land, but not for land development.

Agency: Farm Service Agency

Eligibility: Tribes

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Farm Labor Housing Direct Loans & Grants

This program provides affordable financing to develop housing for year-round and migrant or seasonal domestic farm laborers.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office, <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/farm-labor-housing-direct-loans-grants>





Housing Preservation & Revitalization Demonstration Loans & Grants

The program restructures loans for existing Rural Rental Housing and Off-Farm Labor Housing projects to help improve and preserve the availability of safe affordable rental housing for low-income residents.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office, <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/housing-preservation-revitalization-demonstration-loans-grants>

Housing Preservation Grants

The program provides grants to sponsoring organizations for the repair or rehabilitation of housing occupied by income-eligible (I) people.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office, <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/housing-preservation-grants>

Multi-Family Housing Direct Loans

This program provides competitive financing for affordable multi-family rental housing for low-income, elderly, or disabled individuals and families in eligible rural areas.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Citizens; Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office, <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/multi-family-housing-direct-loans>





Multi-Family Housing Loan Guarantees

The program works with qualified private-sector lenders to provide financing to qualified borrowers to increase the supply of affordable rental housing for low- and moderate-income individuals and families in eligible rural areas and towns.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/multi-family-housing-loan-guarantees>

Multi-Family Housing Rental Assistance

This program provides payments to owners of USDA-financed Rural Rental Housing or Farm Labor Housing projects on behalf of low-income tenants unable to pay their full rent.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/multi-family-housing-rental-assistance>

Single Family Housing Direct Home Loans

Also known as the Section 502 Direct Loan Program, this program assists low- and very-low-income applicants obtain decent, safe, and sanitary housing in eligible rural areas by providing payment assistance to increase an applicant's repayment ability. Payment assistance is a type of subsidy that reduces the mortgage payment for a short time. The amount of assistance is determined by the adjusted family income.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-direct-home-loans>



Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program

This program assists approved lenders in providing low- and moderate-income households the opportunity to own adequate, modest, decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings as their primary residence in eligible rural areas. Eligible applicants may build, rehabilitate, improve, or relocate a dwelling in an eligible rural area. The program provides a 90%-loan note guarantee to approved lenders in order to reduce the risk of extending 100% loans to eligible rural homebuyers.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens

Contact: USDA RD State Office, <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-guaranteed-loan-program>

Single Family Housing Repair Loans and Grants

Also known as the Section 504 Home Repair program, this provides the following: 1) loans to very-low-income homeowners to repair, improve, or modernize their homes, or 2) grants to elderly very-low-income homeowners to remove health and safety hazards.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-repair-loans-grants>

Rural Business Development Grant Program

RBDG is a competitive grant designed to support targeted technical assistance, training, and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas that have fewer than 50 employees and less than \$1 million in gross revenues. Programmatic activities are separated into enterprise or opportunity-type grant activities.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations; Tribal Colleges & Universities

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants>

Rural Community Development Initiative Grants

This program provides funding to help non-profit housing and community development organizations support housing, community facilities, and community and economic development projects in rural areas.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-community-development-initiative-grants>



Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program

The primary objective of the RCDG program is to improve the economic condition of rural areas by assisting individuals and businesses in the startup, expansion, or operational improvement of rural cooperatives and other mutually owned businesses through Cooperative Development Centers. Grants are awarded through a national competition.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribal Organizations; Tribal Colleges & Universities

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-cooperative-development-grant-program>

Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program

Provides loans and grants to Microenterprise Development Organizations (MDOs) to provide microloans for microenterprise startups and growth through a Rural Microloan Revolving Fund and to provide training and technical assistance to microloan borrowers and micro entrepreneurs.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations; Tribal Colleges & Universities

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-microentrepreneur-assistance-program>

Special Evaluation Assistance for Rural Communities and Households Program (SEARCH)

The program helps very small, financially distressed rural communities with predevelopment feasibility studies, design assistance, and technical assistance on proposed water and waste disposal projects.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/search-special-evaluation-assistance-rural-communities-and-households>

Household Water Well System Grant Program

This program helps qualified non-profits and Tribes create a revolving loan fund (RLF) to extend access to clean, reliable water to households in eligible rural areas.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/household-water-well-system-grants>

Individual Water & Wastewater Grant Program

Individual Water and Wastewater Grants (WWD) provide government funds to households residing in an area recognized as a Colonia before October 1, 1989. Grant funds may be used to connect service lines to a residence, pay utility hook-up fees, and install plumbing and related fixtures, i.e. bathroom sink, bathtub or shower, commode, kitchen sink, water heater, outside spigot, or bathroom, if lacking.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens in states with Colonias, and those are Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas. The colonia must be located in a rural area (unincorporated





areas and any city or town with a population not in excess of 10,000 inhabitants) and is identified as a community designated in writing by the State or county in which it is located.

Program Contact: USDA RD State Office: www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/individual-water-wastewater-grants>

Rural Alaska Village Grant Program

The program helps remote Alaskan Villages provide safe, reliable drinking water and waste disposal systems for households and businesses.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/grants-rural-and-native-alaskan-villages>

Solid Waste Management Grant Program

This program helps reduce or eliminate pollution of water resources through funding for organizations that provide technical assistance or training to improve the planning and management of solid waste sites.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations; Tribal Colleges & Universities

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/solid-waste-management-grants>





Water & Waste Disposal Grant Program to Alleviate Health Risks on Tribal Lands and Colonias

This program provides access to safe, reliable drinking water and waste disposal facilities and services to low-income communities that face significant health risks.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes and Tribal Organizations serving areas recognized as Colonias before October 1, 1989.

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-grants-alleviate-health-risks-tribal-lands-and-colonias>

Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program

Provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program>

Water & Waste Disposal Loan Guarantee Program

The program helps private lenders provide affordable financing to qualified borrowers to improve access to clean, reliable water and waste disposal systems for households and businesses in rural areas.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-guarantees>



Water & Waste Disposal Predevelopment Planning Grant Program

The program assists low-income communities with initial planning and development of an application for USDA Rural Development Water and Waste Disposal direct loan/grant and loan guarantee programs.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-predevelopment-planning-grants>

Water & Waste Disposal Revolving Loan Fund Program

This program helps qualified non-profits create a revolving loan fund (RLF) that can provide financing for the extension and improvement of water and waste disposal systems in rural areas.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-revolving-loan-funds>

Water & Waste Disposal Technical Assistance & Training Grant Program

This program helps qualified, private non-profits provide technical assistance and training to (a) identify and evaluate solutions to water and waste problems; (b) assist applicants in preparing applications for water and waste disposal loans/grants; and (c) assist associations in improving operation and maintenance of existing water and waste facilities in eligible rural areas.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribal Organizations

Contact: USDA RD State Office: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-technical-assistance-training-grants>

4.2.1 SHARING THE STORY: COLLABORATIVE USDA AND TRIBAL PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS LAKE TRAVERSE RESERVATION

By: Bruce Jones, Acting Rural Development State Director for South Dakota

USDA Rural Development and the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate (SWO) of the Lake Traverse Reservation have a unique relationship. They have been working closely together to expand economic opportunities for over two decades. USDA's initiatives, a welcoming spirit of collaboration, and forward thinking—combined with the use of the many USDA programs—have made a positive impact in the region with USDA-financed homes, infrastructure and economic development projects.

USDA and the Tribe have partnered on projects including multiple homeownership and rental housing developments; a Head Start building; the SWO C Store; multiple water and waste projects; community buildings; a library; the SWO Housing Authority building; facility improvements at Sisseton Wahpeton College, a local foods project, and a revolving loan fund that includes the provision of technical assistance to small and emerging private businesses. From Fiscal Year 2009 – 2016, USDA Rural Development invested **\$42.9 million** in projects and has been a strong partner working collaboratively with the Tribe and stakeholders to help improve the quality of life across the Lake Traverse Reservation. This has contributed to economic growth and modern infrastructure, while creating and saving jobs.



This long-term relationship has resulted in a few signature projects and fostered an environment of trust, allowing additional innovation to bloom. USDA Rural Development Water and Environmental Program (WEP) loans and grants were used to fund clean water projects across the Reservation. The water infrastructure in place provides necessary water and sewer services to existing development, but was also built to accommodate additional expansion for new project development including community, business, and housing projects.

Through a Community Facility (CF) direct loan, the SWO also constructed a state-of-the-art Tribal Administration Building. Today, Tribal leaders' vision of providing needed services to its members in one central location has become a reality. The facility replaced 26 individual office sites into one single-service location. This was also the largest CF direct loan ever made by USDA Rural Development South Dakota.

Over the past few years, Rural Development South Dakota, SWO, the SWO Housing Authority, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines, and lenders have collaborated to provide innovative and increased access to RD's homeownership programs. This includes an agreement to facilitate the use of Federal Home Loan Bank funds to provide down payment assistance to SWO Tribal members, coupled with Rural Development's Single Family Housing (SFH) 502 homeownership loans. Additionally, the Tribe has made commitments to ensure lenders have adequate security (backed by the Tribe) when providing housing loans to Tribal members on Tribal lands.

"The partnership with USDA Rural Development has proven to be of great success. Especially with the 515 subsidy program [including Multi-Family Housing (MFH) direct loans coupled with rental assistance to provide safe and affordable rental housing opportunities], along with other partners, we are building the much needed rental properties for our membership," said JC Crawford, Director of the SWO Housing Authority.

The strong working relationship between the Tribe and USDA Rural Development has helped to provide a brighter future for the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate and its Tribal members—and there will be more fruitful collaboration to come.

4.3 Conservation and Forestry

Stewardship of the land is a sacred principle for many American Indian Tribes and Alaska Native villages, and Tribes across the country carry an intimate knowledge of their land and how environmental cycles progress throughout the year. Reflecting the traditional knowledge of America's first stewards, Native producers, foresters, and environmentalists offer a unique perspective on effective land management practices. USDA recognizes that within each state are a diverse array of land-use and land-conservation practices.

4.3.1 CONSERVATION ON AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

The purposes of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) are to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands on eligible land; to protect the agricultural viability, and related conservation values of eligible land by limiting non-agricultural uses of that land; and protect grazing uses and related conservation values by restoring and conserving eligible land.

Agency: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations





Contact: Easement Programs Division

Website: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/easements/acep/>

Agricultural Management Assistance Program

The Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program promotes the adoption of conservation practices by agricultural producers in order to manage risk and address natural resource issues through natural resources conservation.

Agency: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Citizens

Contact: Financial Assistance Programs Division

Website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/ama/>

Conservation Loan Program

FSA guarantees conservation loans to implement conservation techniques that will conserve natural resources. The loans are available from lenders working with FSA, and funds can be used to implement conservation practices approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), such as the installation of conservation structures; establishment of forest cover; installation of water conservation measures; establishment or improvement of permanent pastures; and similar practices.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Citizens

Contact: Local FSA County Office

Website: <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>





Conservation Stewardship Program

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities; and undertaking additional conservation activities.

Agency: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Citizens

Contact: Financial Assistance Programs Division, mark.rose@wdc.usda.gov

Website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/csp/>

Conservation Reserve Program

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary program available to agricultural producers to plant long-term, resource-conserving grasses or trees on environmentally sensitive farmland to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Participants can enroll in CRP in two ways. The first is through a competitive process known as CRP General Sign-up. General CRP sign-ups are announced on a periodic basis by the Secretary of Agriculture; they do not occur according to any fixed schedule. The second way to enroll is through CRP Continuous Sign-up, which allows for environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices to be enrolled in CRP at any time without competition. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp>



Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns and for opportunities to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air, and related resources on Tribal land, agricultural land, and non-industrial private forestland.

Agency: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Citizens

Contact: Financial Assistance Programs Division, mark.rose@wdc.usda.gov

Website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/>

4.3.2 SHARING THE STORY: TRIBAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROVIDES AQUACULTURE PONDS FOR WALLEYE

The Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council, an advisory group consisting of the 11 Federally recognized Tribes in Wisconsin, has fostered a strong conservation partnership with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Tribe. Multiple technical and financial assistance projects to combat shoreline erosion, improve wildlife habitat, improve forest health, improve wild rice populations, and build hoop houses, were made possible through NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). One of their Tribes, the Lac du Flambeau Tribe reservation, established by the Treaty of La Pointe in 1854, includes 86,000 acres of land, 24,000 acres of wetlands, 260 lakes, and 65 miles of streams and rivers. Sustainable conservation and protection of natural resources has always been a goal of the Tribe since inhabiting parts of Wisconsin in 1745. Their focus is to protect pristine areas, restore degraded natural and wildlife resources, and help build strong communities. From its small beginnings with a fish hatchery in 1936 to today, Lac du Flambeau now has grown into a multi-faceted Tribal natural resources department raising and restocking fish to meet their vision of sustainability. Over the last 30 years, the hatchery has restocked the lakes with well over 415 million walleye.

4.3.3 RESOURCES FOR PRIVATE AND TRIBALLY OWNED FOREST LANDS

Community Forestry Program

The Community Forest Program is a grant program that authorizes the Forest Service to provide financial assistance to local governments, Tribal governments, and qualified nonprofit entities to establish community forests that provide continuing and accessible community benefits.

The Community Forest Program was authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill (Section 8003 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-234)), which amends the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978.

Agency: Forest Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: FS Community Forestry Program

Website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/cooperativeforestry/programs/loa/cfp.shtml>



Forest Health Protection Program

The Forest Health Protection program protects non-Federal forest and tree resources from damaging forest insects, disease-causing agents, and invasive plants; develops and improves forest health protection technologies; and monitors the health of our Nation's forests. Technical assistance, formula grants, and project grants are available. For technical assistance on private or Tribal trust land, Indian Tribes can approach the Forest Service directly. The Forest Service can also conduct detection surveys and biological evaluations of forest insect and disease outbreaks on U.S. Department of the Interior and Tribal trust lands.

Agency: Forest Service

Eligibility: Tribes

Contact: FS Forest Health Protection, <http://www.fs.fed.us/foresthealth/>

Forest Stewardship Program

These project grants help private forest landowners and individuals develop plans for managing non-Federal forest land. Note that projects cannot be conducted on Tribal trust lands, thus only land owned by the Indian Tribe is eligible. The Forest Service offers assistance, primarily through State agencies, to help protect and improve soil, water, range, aesthetics, recreation, timber, and fish and wildlife resources. It requires parties to share 50 percent of the costs. The Program provides assistance to owners of forest land and other lands where good stewardship, including agroforestry applications, will enhance and sustain the long-term productivity of multiple forest resources and produce healthy, resilient forest landscapes.

Agency: Forest Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: FS Forest Stewardship Program Website: <https://www.fs.fed.us/cooperativeforestry/programs/loa/fsp.shtml>

Healthy Forests Reserve Program

The Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) helps landowners restore, enhance, and protect forestland resources on private lands through easements and financial assistance. HFRP aids the recovery of endangered and threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, improves plant and animal biodiversity, and enhances carbon sequestration.

Agency: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Citizens

Key Dates: Announcement of application period as funding is available.

Contact: National Program Manager Website: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/easements/forests/>

National Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Cost-Share Grant Program

The Secretary of Agriculture has a congressionally designated advisory council that assists the U.S. Forest Service in establishing the grant categories and recommendations of final proposals for the Forest Service to consider. This is the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (Council). The National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council seeks innovative (new, cutting-edge studies or studies that build upon existing studies) grant proposals for program development, study, and collaboration that will launch some of the new strategies in the (2016-2026) Ten Year Urban Forestry Action Plan.

Agency: Forest Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Current-year priority funding topics can be found on the National Urban and Community Advisory Council

Website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/ucf/nucfac.shtml>





Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA)

The Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004, PL 108-278 (TFPA) was enacted to provide a means for Federally recognized Tribes in the United States to propose projects that would protect their rights, lands, and resources by reducing threats from wildfire, insects, and disease on Federal lands. Under TFPA, Indian Tribes may submit proposals to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to enter into agreements or contracts to carry out projects on Forest Service or BLM-administered land if their Tribal trust lands or resources are adjacent to the government land. TFPA funding is not limited to a specific appropriation or budget code. There is no funding specifically allocated for TFPA projects. That means that there is no money set aside specifically for TFPA Projects. TFPA projects can be funded by a variety of allocated funds as long as they meet the criteria for those funds.

Agency: Forest Service

Eligibility: Tribes

Contact: Forest Service TFPA

Website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r5/workingtogether/tribalrelations?cid=stelprdb5351850>

Wood Innovations Grants

The Wood Innovations Grants funding supports traditional wood utilization projects, expands wood energy markets, and promotes using wood as a construction material in commercial buildings. These grants and cooperative agreements support the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113–79), Rural Revitalization Technologies (7 U.S.C. 6601), and the nationwide challenge of disposing of hazardous fuels and other wood residues from the National Forest System and other forest lands in a manner that supports wood energy and wood products markets.

Agency: Forest Service

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Forest Service Wood Innovation Grants

Website: <https://www.fs.fed.us/science-technology/energy-forest-products/wood-innovations-grants>





4.3.4 SHARING THE STORY: FOREST SERVICE PROMOTES INNOVATIVE WOOD ECONOMIES IN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

Three Tribal projects received Wood Innovation grants in FY 2015 and FY 2016. In FY 2015, grants were awarded to Menominee Tribal Enterprise (Neopit, Wisconsin) and the Oglala Sioux Parks and Recreation Authority (Kyle, South Dakota). Menominee Tribal Enterprise was awarded \$250,000 to implement a project entitled “Woody Biomass Value-Added Fuel Market Development and Energy Cluster Project.” The goal of the project is to develop a new business to utilize Tribal woody biomass resources to replace the use of fossil fuels for heating on the Menominee Reservation and in surrounding communities.

The Oglala Sioux Parks and Recreation Authority was awarded \$100,447 to complete a project entitled “Utilization of By-Product from the Ecological Restoration of Forests on the Pine Ridge Reservation”. The Tribe hopes to expand markets for by-product from the ecological restoration of the Oglala Sioux Tribe’s game range forests. Material from treatments will be used to construct several structures in order to develop new markets for these materials and reduce the cost of ecological forest management.

In FY 2016, the Spokane Tribe (Wellpinit, Washington) was awarded a grant of \$212,630 to complete a project entitled “Spokane Tribe Biomass District Energy System for Wellpinit, WA”. The objective of this project is to complete the final design and engineering for a wood fired district heating system for Wellpinit, WA. More information on the Wood Innovations Program and on these and other Wood Innovation grants can be found at <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/werc/>.



4.3.5 WATERSHED AND WATER PROTECTION RESOURCES

Grassroots Source Water Protection Program

The Grassroots Source Water Protection Program (GSWPP) is a joint effort between FSA and the nonprofit National Rural Water Association (NRWA), designed to help prevent source water pollution in states through voluntary practices installed by producers and other landowners at the local level. GSWPP relies on the onsite technical assistance capabilities of each state's rural water association in those states that operate a source water protection program. These associations deliver assistance in developing source water protection plans within watersheds with the goal of preventing contamination of drinking water supplies.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/source-water-protection/>

Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program

The Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO) Program includes the Flood Prevention Operations Program authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1944 and the provisions of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954. The Flood Control Act originally authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to install watershed improvement measures in 11 watersheds, also known as pilot watersheds, to reduce flood, sedimentation, and erosion damage; improve the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water; and advance the conservation and proper utilization of land. The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act provides for cooperation between the Federal government and the States and their political subdivisions in a program to prevent erosion, floodwater, and sediment damage; to further the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water; and to further the conservation and proper utilization of land in authorized watersheds.

Agency: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Eligibility: Tribes

Contact: Watershed Programs Team Leader

Website: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/landscape/wfpo/>

4.3.6 REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a part of the Conservation Reserve Program whereby non-federal partners and resources are coupled with Federal resources to address high-priority conservation concerns within a State. CREP is a voluntary program that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water. CREP is a partnership between state governments and the Federal Government. Participation is voluntary, and the contract period is typically 10–15 years.

Agency: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/conservation-reserve-enhancement/index>



Conservation Reserve Program - State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) is designed to address state and regional high-priority wildlife objectives. Producers within a SAFE area can submit offers to voluntarily enroll acres in Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts for 10-15 years. In exchange, producers receive annual rental payments, incentives, and cost-share assistance to establish, improve, connect, or create higher-quality wildlife habitat.

Agency: Farm Service Agency

Eligibility: Tribal Citizens

Contact: Local FSA County Office, <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp>

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through program contracts or easement agreements.

Agency: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Eligibility: Tribes, Tribal Citizens, Tribal Organizations

Website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/farmbill/rcpp/>

4.4 RESEARCH, EDUCATION and EXTENSION

USDA provides substantial funding and programs for the land-grant colleges and universities throughout the United States. In addition to programs supporting the 1994 Tribal Colleges and Universities, USDA offers a number of programs supporting other land-grant institutions working with Tribal Colleges and Universities, as well as programs that support Tribal students and young professionals.

4.4.1 General Research and Education Resources

Some of these resources even assist with providing social and economic indicators commonly referenced through research or funding applications. The Economic Research Service (ERS), for example, helps anticipate trends and emerging issues in agriculture, food, the environment, and rural America through objective, high-quality economic research. ERS released *Measuring Access to Healthful, Affordable Food in American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal Areas* in December 2014. The study compares distances to outlets for obtaining healthy, affordable food in Tribal areas to those for the general U.S. population, with implications for improving the health of Tribal populations.

Addressing food insecurity and food deserts often relies on an understanding of where food is grown. The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) 2012 *Census of Agriculture* reported at least 58,475 self-identified Native producers were helping provide food for their communities and the country. While the 2012 *Census of Agriculture Highlights* provides a snapshot for Native producers, these numbers consistently impact USDA decision making processes and how the country measures its food supply. NASS surveys are confidential, with the names, addresses, and other personal identifiers protected by NASS with the force of law. The next *Census of Agriculture* will be released in 2017, and producers interested in being counted should contact their regional NASS office at https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/RFO/.

Additionally, the National Agricultural Library offers a searchable listing of additional resources, including those provided by other Federal agencies, and is viewable at www.nal.usda.gov.





4.4.2 1994 LAND-GRANT TRIBAL COLLEGES

The 1994 land-grant Tribal Colleges were established through the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994. The department has three offices that specifically work to deliver programs and support to these land-grant institutions: the USDA 1994 Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Program Office, the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and the Rural Development Community Facilities Program office.

4.4.3 USDA 1994 TRIBAL LAND-GRANT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES PROGRAM OFFICE

The USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach 1994 Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Program's (USDA 1994 TLGCU Program) mission is to develop 1994 TCU's land-grant capacities to benefit rural Tribal economies and to strengthen the United States' food security. The authorities for this office come from the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 and were reauthorized most recently through the Agriculture Act of 2014. Among Congress' requirements is that "The Secretary shall develop and implement a formal memorandum of agreement with the 1994 Institutions to establish programs to ensure that Tribally controlled colleges and Native American communities equitably participate in Department of Agriculture employment, programs, services, and resources."

USDA 1994 TLGCU Program has four major programmatic areas:

- The USDA and the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) Leadership Group
- The Tribal Land-Grant Liaison Program
- The USDA Tribal Scholars and Internship Program
- The Terra Preta do Indio Tribal Fellowship (for faculty and staff)

Website: <http://www.outreach.usda.gov/education/1994tlgcu/index.htm>





4.4.4 USDA RESEARCH AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR TRIBAL COLLEGES

1994 Education Equity - TCEG

The purpose of the TCEG Program is to provide funding to enhance educational opportunities for Native Americans in the food and agricultural sciences. The TCEG program is intended to strengthen institutional capacity to deliver relevant formal education opportunities. The TCEG is intended to be a component of the applicant 1994 institution's land grant roadmap or strategic planning process. To the extent practicable, priorities should reflect NIFA's following national critical needs areas: 1) Development of sustainable energy; 2) Increased global food security; 3) Adaptation/mitigation of agriculture and natural resources to global climate change; 4) Reduction of childhood and adolescent obesity; and 5) Improved food safety.

Agency: National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Eligibility: Tribal Colleges & Universities (only Land-Grant institutions)

Website: <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/tribal-colleges-education-equity-program-tceg>

1994 Extension - TCEP

The Tribal Colleges Extension Services Program provides funding to (1) increase Extension program capacity at 1994 Land-Grant Institutions; and (2) address special needs, take advantage of important opportunities, and/or demonstrate long-term sustained benefits of Extension projects at 1994 Land-Grant Institutions. Awards will be made to support one or more of the following Extension base program areas: Agriculture; Community Resources and Economic Development; Family Development and Resource Management; 4-H and Youth Development; Leadership and Volunteer Development; Natural Resources and Environmental Management; and Nutrition, Diet and Health.

Agency: National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Eligibility: Tribal Colleges & Universities (only Land-Grant institutions)

Website: <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/tribal-colleges-extension-services-program-capacity-tcep>



1994 Research - TCRGP

This program was designed to assist 1994 Land-Grant Institutions (Tribal Colleges) in building institutional research capacity through applied projects that address student educational needs and solve community, reservation, or regional problems. Awards are to be made on the basis of a competitive review process. Collaboration with 1862 or 1890 Land Grant Institutions is a requirement. Eligible institutions may propose projects in any discipline of the food and agricultural sciences.

Agency: National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Eligibility: Tribal Colleges & Universities (only Land-Grant institutions)

Website: <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/tribal-colleges-research-grants-program-tcrgp>

Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions Education Competitive Grants Program - ANNH

The purpose of this program is to promote and strengthen the ability of Alaska Native-Serving Institutions and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions to carry out education, applied research, and related community development programs. NIFA intends this program to address educational needs, as determined by each institution, within a broadly defined arena of food and agricultural sciences-related disciplines. Priority will be given to those projects that enhance educational equity for underrepresented students; strengthen institutional educational capacities; prepare students for careers related to the food, agricultural, and natural resource systems of the United States; and maximize the development and use of resources to improve food and agricultural sciences teaching programs.

Agency: National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Eligibility: Tribal Colleges & Universities in Alaska

Website: <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/alaska-native-serving-and-native-hawaiian-serving-institutions-education>

Beginning Farmer & Rancher Development Program

Beginning farmer education for adult and young audiences to support the delivery of education, mentoring, and technical assistance programs to help farmers and ranchers in the United States with entering, establishing, building, and managing successful farm enterprises.

Agency: National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations; Tribal Colleges & Universities

Website: <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/beginning-farmer-and-rancher-development-program-bfrdp>

4.4.5 SHARING THE STORY: USDA HELPS TRIBAL CONSERVATION DISTRICT SUPPORT FOOD SECURITY FOR ALASKA NATIVES

The Tyonek Tribal Conservation District was formed in 2005 as the first Tribal Conservation District in Alaska and the thirty-first in the Nation through a mutual agreement between the Native Village of Tyonek, Tyonek Native Corporation, and USDA. The District covers a total of 6.6 million acres of land. Through the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, the Tyonek Tribal Conservation District received \$427,740 to provide education and technical assistance to Alaska Native beginning farmers and ranchers.



Community Facilities Tribal College Initiative Grants

This program provides funding to 1994 Land Grant Institutions (Tribal Colleges) to make capital improvements to their educational facilities and to purchase equipment.

Agency: Rural Development

Eligibility: Tribal Colleges & Universities (only Land-Grant institutions)

Contact: USDA RD State Office, <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/tribal-college-initiative-grants>

Critical Agricultural Research and Extension - CARE

Despite prior investments in basic and applied research, critical problems continue to impede the efficient production and protection of agriculturally important plants and animals.

These problems may be local, regional, or national, and may call for work focused on one or more scientific disciplines. However, all need immediate attention to meet producer needs.

Finding and implementing solutions to these critical problems requires partnership and close coordination among researchers, extension experts, and producers. Funded projects will quickly yield solutions or practices that can be rapidly implemented by producers.

Agency: National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Eligibility: Includes, but is not limited to Non-profit and For-profit business entities; Land-Grant Universities, including 1994 Institutions; and Individuals

Contact: <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/afri-foundational-critical-agricultural-research-and-extension-care>

Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Grant Program (FINI)

To support projects to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables among low-income consumers participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by providing incentives at the point of purchase. The program will test strategies that could contribute to our understanding of how best to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables by SNAP participants that would inform future efforts, and develop effective and efficient benefit redemption technologies.

Agency: National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations

Contact: <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/food-insecurity-nutrition-incentive-fini-grant-program>

Food Agriculture, Natural Resources and Human Sciences Education and Literacy Initiative - REEU (undergraduate Research)

The AFRI Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Human Sciences Education and Literacy Initiative (ELI) provides fellowships to undergraduate, predoctoral, and postdoctoral students in the agricultural sciences.

Agency: National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Eligibility: Tribes; Tribal Organizations; Tribal Colleges & Universities

Website: <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/agriculture-and-food-research-initiative-food-agriculture-natural-resources-and>

Higher Education Challenge

Projects supported by the Higher Education Challenge Grants Program will: (1) address a State, regional, national, or international educational need; (2) involve a creative or non-traditional approach toward addressing that need that can serve as a model to others; (3) encourage and facilitate better working relationships in the university science and education community, as





well as between universities and the private sector, to enhance program quality and supplement available resources; and (4) result in benefits that will likely transcend the project duration and USDA support.

Agency: National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Eligibility: Tribal Organizations; Tribal Colleges & Universities

Key Dates: Application dates vary.

Website: <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/higher-education-challenge-hec-grants-program>

Multicultural Scholars Program - MSP

The purpose of this competitive undergraduate scholarship grant program is to increase the multicultural diversity of the food and agricultural scientific and professional workforce, and advance the educational achievement of all Americans by providing competitive grants to colleges and universities.

Agency: National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Eligibility: Tribal Colleges & Universities

Website: <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/higher-education-multicultural-scholars-program-msp>

Rural Health and Safety - RHSE

The RHSE program proposals are expected to be community-based, outreach education programs, such as those conducted through Human Science extension outreach, that provides individuals and families with the following:

- Information as to the value of good health at any age;
- Information to increase individual or family's motivation to take more responsibility for their own health;
- Information regarding rural environmental health issues that directly impact on human health;





- Information about and access to health promotion and educational activities; and
- Training for volunteers and health services providers concerning health promotion and health care services for individuals and families in cooperation with state, local, and community partners.

Agency: National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Eligibility: Tribal Colleges & Universities (only Land-Grant institutions)

Website: <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/rural-health-and-safety-education-competitive-grants-program-rhse>

Scientific Cooperation Exchange Program (SCEP)

SCEP supports collaborative relationships between teams of scientific and technical experts from the United States and the People's Republic of China. Approximately 16 SCEP teams (each team is comprised of six to eight representatives from the United States and six to eight representatives from China).

Agency: Foreign Agricultural Service

Eligibility: Tribal Organizations; Tribal Colleges & Universities

Trade and Scientific Exchanges Division, SCEPProposals@fas.usda.gov,
(202) 720-0858

Website: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/scientific-cooperation-exchange-program>

Scientific Cooperation Research Program (SCRP)

SCRP pairs U.S. research institutions with at least one counterpart overseas to conduct a joint research endeavor that supports food security needs of eligible countries. There are approximately six awards of up to \$40,000 each.

Agency: Foreign Agricultural Service

Eligibility: Tribal Organizations; Tribal Colleges & Universities

Contact: Trade and Scientific Exchanges Division, SCRPProposals@fas.usda.gov,
(202) 690-1983

Website: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/scientific-cooperation-research-program>



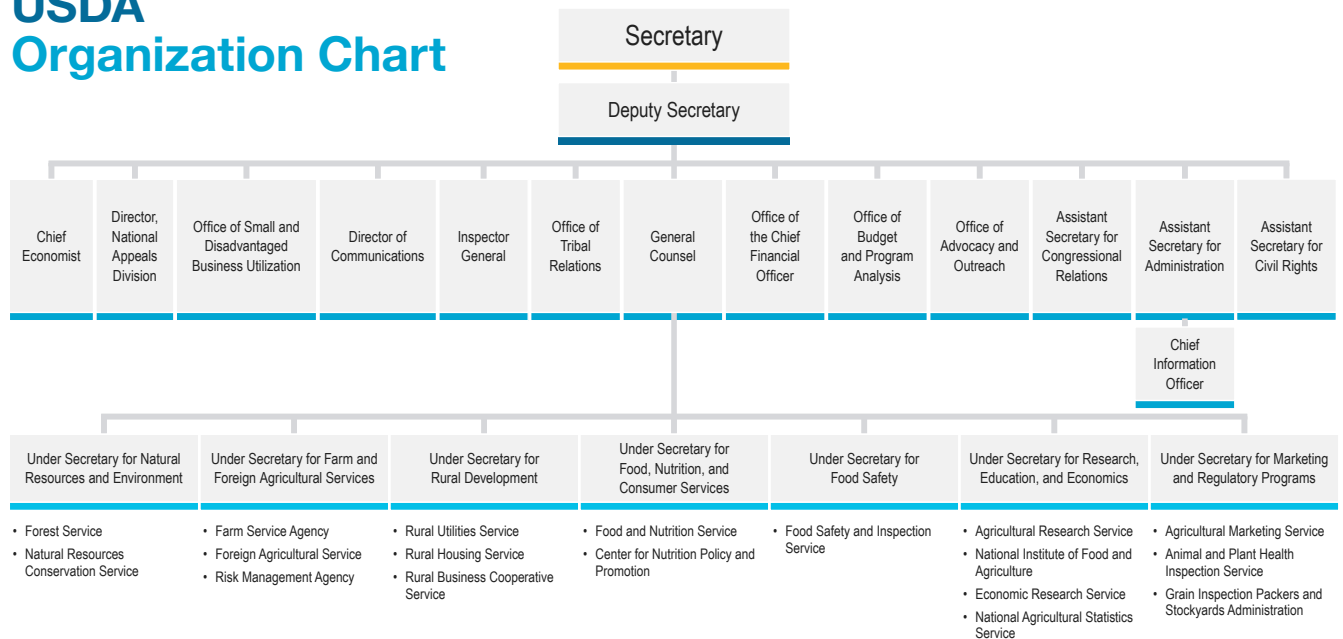
Appendices



United States Department of Agriculture

5.1 USDA Organization Chart

USDA Organization Chart



5.2 USDA AGENCIES

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) works to support the American agricultural economy to strengthen tribal and rural communities; to protect and conserve our natural resources; and to provide a safe, sufficient, and nutritious food supply for the American people. The Department's wide range of programs and responsibilities touches the lives of every American every day.

Here you will find information about some of USDA's agencies and offices, their missions, responsibilities, and services they provide, as well as committees and boards, and e-mail lists you can sign up for.

5.2.1 AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) administers programs that facilitate efficient, fair marketing of U.S. agricultural products, including food, fiber, and specialty crops. AMS identifies and promotes the development of marketing opportunities for the agricultural community by conducting and supporting research and providing information on farmer direct marketing activities. AMS programs promote a strategic marketing perspective that adapts product and marketing practices and technologies to the issues of today and the challenges of tomorrow.



AMS conducts quarterly consultation calls on topics ranging from grants related to agricultural marketing, local food, and food HUBS; free webinars; updates topics such as on livestock and procurement efforts; as well as, information on becoming an approved vendor for food distribution.

Contact: (202) 720-8998

Website: www.ams.usda.gov

E-mail: amsoutreach@usda.gov In the subject line type: Add to Tribal Consultation e-mail

5.2.2 AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE

The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) is the principal in-house research agency of USDA. ARS is charged with extending the Nation's scientific knowledge through the administration of its national programs, as well as by conducting research projects in animal and crop production and protection, human nutrition, food safety, bioenergy, the environment, and other topics that affect the American people on a daily basis.

Contact: (301) 504-1636

Website: www.ars.usda.gov

5.2.3 ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) makes a significant contribution to the value of the Nation's food supply by protecting U.S. agricultural resources from pests and diseases, managing wildlife damage, regulating genetically engineered organisms, and administering the Animal Welfare Act. APHIS programs integrate plant and animal disease surveillance, epidemiology, emergency response, and information delivery to ensure the marketability of U.S. agricultural products. APHIS also works to resolve and manage trade issues related to animal or plant health.

Contact: (844) 820-2234

Website: www.aphis.usda.gov, Wildlife Services State Office Directory https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/wildlifedamage/SA_Program_Overview/SA_Contact

5.2.4 CENTER FOR NUTRITION POLICY AND PROMOTION

The Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) establishes Federal nutrition policy through the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, sets priorities for nutrition research, sets nutrition standards, and disseminates dietary guidance. It maintains the MyPlate food guidance system.

Contact: (703) 305-7600

Website: www.cnpp.usda.gov

5.2.5 ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

The Economic Research Service (ERS) is a primary source of economic information and research in USDA. ERS conducts its research program to inform public and private decision making on economic and policy issues involving food, farming, natural resources, and rural development. ERS' economists and social scientists conduct research, analyze food and commodity markets, produce policy studies, and develop economic and statistical indicators. ERS staff disseminates economic information and research results through an array of outlets.

Contact: (202) 694-5000

Website: www.ers.usda.gov





5.2.6 FARM SERVICE AGENCY

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) ensures the well-being of American agriculture, the environment, and the American public through the following: 1) the administration of farm commodity programs; 2) farm ownership, operating, and emergency loans; 3) conservation and environmental programs; 4) emergency and disaster assistance; and 5) domestic and international food assistance. FSA programs are delivered through an extensive network of field offices in over 2,200 USDA County Service Centers and 51 State Offices. To find the FSA office nearest to you see

Website: <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>. For additional information on FSA see <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/>

5.2.7 FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers the USDA nutrition assistance programs that provide children and low-income people access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education. Programs include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly called the Food Stamp Program), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), School Lunch and Breakfast, among others.

Contact: (703) 305-2281

Website: www.fns.usda.gov, An online directory of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Regional Offices can be found at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-regional-offices>

5.2.8 FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE

Touching the lives of millions of people every day, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is the public health agency responsible for ensuring that the Nation's commercial supply of meat, poultry, and processed egg products is safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled and packaged. FSIS also manages the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline, which provides consumers with answers to their food safety questions.

Contact: (202) 720-9113

Website: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/home>





5.2.9 FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) works to improve foreign market access for U.S. products and administers market development and export financing programs. FAS helps U.S. exporters develop and maintain markets overseas for U.S. food and agricultural products. FAS helps developing countries improve their agricultural systems and build their trade capacity.

Contact: (202) 720-7115

Website: www.fas.usda.gov

5.2.10 FOREST SERVICE

The Forest Service (FS) manages 193 million acres of public lands in 155 national forests and 20 grasslands and is the largest forestry research operation in the world. The Forest Service provides technical and financial assistance to help rural and urban citizens, including private landowners, care for forest, watersheds, and rangelands in their communities.

Contact: (202) 205-1680

Website: FS Information: www.fs.fed.us

Regional Info.: <http://www.fs.fed.us/organization>

5.2.11 GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION

The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) facilitates the marketing of livestock, poultry, meat, cereals, oilseeds, and related agricultural products. The agency promotes fair and competitive trading practices for the overall benefit of consumers and American agriculture.

Contact: (202) 720-0219

Website: <https://www.gipsa.usda.gov/>



5.2.12 NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is the official Federal statistical agency for agriculture. The agency serves U.S. agricultural and rural communities with accurate, timely, and useful statistical products and services that are vital information to monitor the ever-changing agricultural sector and carry out farm policy. Every 5 years, NASS conducts the Census of Agriculture, which is the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the United States.

Contact: 1 (800) 727-9540

Website: www.nass.usda.gov

5.2.13 NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) impacts the lives of millions of Americans each day by supporting exemplary research, education, and extension that address many challenges facing our Nation through collaboration with historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and Tribal colleges. You are connected to NIFA through your nearest Extension office, which provides answers to concerns through educational materials and Web-based information.

Contact: (202) 720-7441

Website: www.nifa.usda.gov

5.2.14 NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) helps people help the land through scientifically based, locally led voluntary conservation efforts and improve natural resources on private lands. NRCS work results in productive lands and a healthy environment through reduced soil erosion; water and air quality; energy conservation; restored woodlands and wetlands; enhanced fish and wildlife habitat; and reduced upstream flooding.

Contact: (202) 720-3210

Website: www.nrcs.usda.gov, Use the USDA Service Center Locator to find the office nearest to you: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

5.2.15 RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY

The Risk Management Agency (RMA) administers the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) programs and promotes national welfare by improving the economic stability of agriculture through a secure system of crop insurance and risk management tools. Through a network of public- and private-sector partners, RMA creates crop insurance and risk management products, provides risk management education and outreach, and ensures program accessibility and integrity.

Contact: (202) 690-2803

Website: www.rma.usda.gov

5.2.16 RURAL DEVELOPMENT

USDA Rural Development (RD) is composed of three agencies: Rural Business-Cooperative programs, Rural Housing and Community Facilities programs, and Rural Utilities programs. RD offers rural communities a broad array of financial, technical, and educational resources in order to establish and grow rural businesses and cooperatives. RD provides financing for single family homes and multi-family housing developments, and essential community facilities. RD helps to



finance the development of electric, telephone, telecommunication, and water and wastewater infrastructures to create affordable utilities.

Contact: 1 (800) 670-6553

Website: www.rd.usda.gov

To receive information regarding Funding, Publications, Events, and Learning opportunities on topics relate to Community and Economic development.

E-mail RDCED@wdc.usda.gov, In the subject line type: Add to CED e-mail

5.3 USDA Departmental Staff Offices

(Partial list of staff offices. Only offices with direct impact to Tribes, TCUs, businesses, or organizations are listed.)

5.3.1 OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY (OSEC)

Assisted by the Deputy Secretary, the Subcabinet, and members of their immediate staffs, directs and coordinates the work of the Department. This involves providing policy direction for all areas of the Department and maintaining liaisons with the Executive Office of the President, Members of Congress, and the public.

5.3.1 OFFICE OF TRIBAL RELATIONS (OTR)

Serves as a single point of contact for Tribal issues and works to ensure that relevant programs and policies are efficient, easy to understand, accessible, and developed in consultation with the American Indians and Alaska Native constituents they impact.

OTR is responsible for:

- Government-to-government relations between USDA and tribal governments;
- Advising the Secretary of Agriculture on Tribal issues and concerns;
- Tribal Consultation;
- Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA);
- Issues impacting Tribal members; and
- Working cooperatively and collaboratively across USDA to build an integrated approach to issues, programs, and services addressing the needs of American Indians and Alaskan Natives.
- Council on Native American Farming and Ranching is conducted under the oversight of OTR.

The information provided includes the open grant portfolio that USDA offers at any point; USDA news; upcoming Tribal consultations; and other event listings.

To receive USDA OTR e-mails. Send an e-mail to tribal.relations@osec.usda.gov

In the subject line type: Subscribe to OTR e-mail list.

5.3.3 NATIONAL APPEALS DIVISION

The National Appeals Division (NAD) is responsible for providing hearings for program participants who receive adverse decisions from the Farm Service Agency, Risk Management Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Rural Development's Rural Business-Cooperative Development Service, Rural Housing Service, and Rural Utilities Service. Filing an appeal provides an opportunity to present the dispute, either face to face or on the telephone to a NAD Hearing Officer.

Contact: 1 (877) 487-3262

Website: <https://www.nad.usda.gov/>





5.3.4 OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CIVIL RIGHTS (OASCR)

OCR provides policy guidance, leadership, coordination, and training, and complaint adjudication and processing for the Department and its agencies. OCR's mission is to facilitate the fair and equitable treatment of USDA customers and employees and ensure the delivery and enforcement of civil rights programs and activities. Through its efforts, OCR strives to: (1) foster a positive civil rights climate at USDA; (2) process Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and program complaints in a timely, efficient, and cost-effective manner; (3) reduce and prevent EEO and program complaints through training and guidance; and (4) offer alternative dispute resolution services.

Contact: (202) 720-3808

Website: <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/>

5.3.5 OFFICE OF ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH (OAO)

OAO was established to increase the accessibility of USDA programs to underserved constituents. OAO activities include overseeing the Advisory Committees on Minority Farmers and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers; overseeing the activities of the Office of Small Farms Coordination and the Farm Worker Coordinator; managing the 1994, 1890, and Hispanic Serving Institutions Programs; and administering the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Grant Program.

5.3.6 USDA 1994 TRIBAL LAND-GRANT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (TCU) PROGRAM OFFICE

Questions or issues e-mail: 1994@osec.usda.gov

"Faculty and Staff" Listserv

Receive information regarding funding opportunities and informational resources available to TCUs:

- To subscribe to the TCU-Land Grant-Faculty Staff list send an e-mail to: listserv@newsbox.usda.gov





- In the body of the blank e-mail type: TCU-LANDGRANT-FACULTYSTAFF

“Student Coordinators” Listserv

Receive information regarding student opportunities and informational resources.

- To subscribe to the TCU-Student-Coordinators list send an e-mail to:
listserv@newsbox.usda.gov
- In the body of the blank e-mail type: TCU-Student-Coordinators

5.3.7 USDA OFFICE OF SMALL AND DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS UTILIZATION (OSDBU)

OSDBU is tasked with responsibility for fostering the use of small and small disadvantaged businesses as Federal contractors. OSDBU provides Department-wide leadership in the implementation and execution of programs under Sections 8 and 15 of the Small Business Act, as amended. OSDBU’s goal is to provide as much information, guidance, and technical assistance as possible in order to assist the small business community in increasing its competitiveness through increased participation in USDA’s procurement and program activities.

5.3.7.1 *Federal Contract Opportunities for Small and Small Disadvantaged Businesses*

Federal Small Business Set-aside Programs permit competition on certain solicitations among small businesses only, including the Section 8(A) Program, Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business Program, Small Disadvantaged Business Program, and others.

Contact: (202) 720-7117

Website: <https://www.dm.usda.gov/procurement/business/smallbiz.htm>

5.3.7.2 *Selling Agricultural Products to USDA*

USDA purchases a variety of 100% domestically produced and processed commodity food products. These purchases support American agriculture by providing an outlet for surplus products and encouraging consumption of domestically produced foods. The wholesome, high-quality products purchased by USDA—collectively called USDA Foods—are delivered to



tribal distribution organizations, schools, food banks, and households in communities across the country, and are a vital component of our Nation's food safety net.

Successful USDA Foods purchasing is a coordinated effort. The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) develops products and purchase program technical requirements, manages the Web-Based Supply Chain Management System (WBSCM), and conducts the procurements (solicitations, awards, and contract management) in accordance with Federal regulations and USDA policy. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) manages the food and nutrition assistance programs, including the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, National School Lunch Program and The Emergency Food Assistance Program, generating demand (orders) from qualified recipients for various USDA Foods and coordinating with AMS on the purchase planning and scheduling.

AMS issues solicitations and makes purchases for over 200 different USDA Foods on an ongoing basis. Approved USDA Vendors are invited to submit offers via WBSCM. We also host an annual meeting for contractors and suppliers.

For detailed information on the process and becoming an approved USDA vendor, please visit: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food>

Small business vendors who are interested in selling food to USDA should contact the New Vendor/Small Business Coordinator for assistance: Commodity Procurement Staff, Telephone: (202) 720-4237

5.4 Other

5.4.1 FOREST SERVICE WORKING WITH AMERICAN INDIANS AND NATIVE ALASKANS

The National Forest System shares nearly 4,000 miles of boundaries with tribal lands with the potential for cross-jurisdictional management issues. USDA's Forest Service (FS) offices such as the State and Private Forestry (S&PF) Office of Tribal Relations provides assistance to Tribal governments and private American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) landowners to help sustain national forests and protect communities and the environment from wildfires. Additionally, the FS Research and Development (R&D) component includes a variety of programs and projects that incorporate tribal perspectives and cooperation in the development of research projects to improve the health and use of national forests and grasslands.

National Forests and Grasslands often hold a historic connection to America's first stewards, and USDA is working to align its procedures with this unique relationship. In 2016, USDA's Forest Service published the final *Tribal Relations Directives* (Forest Service Manual 1563), which provide more consistency and efficacy in consultations with Tribal Nations and helps Forest Service employees understand the requirements, complexities, and opportunities of tribal relations. The Directives describe the Forest Service's responsibility to implement programs and activities consistent with, and respecting, Indian treaty rights and fulfilling the Federal Government's trust responsibility with Indian tribes.

In 2014, the Forest Service published *Start a Partnership with the USDA Forest Service or Obtain Federal Financial Assistance, a Guide for Tribal Governments*. The guide provides



tribal governments with a better understanding of how best to work in partnership with the Forest Service. It also covers 1) background on Forest Service grants and agreements; 2) a flowchart to get people started; 3) different programs available with real examples; and 4) step-by-step instructions on applying for grants and partnering with the Forest Service.

<https://www.fs.fed.us/spf/tribalrelations/documents/tools/StartPartnershipTribalGuide.pdf>

In addition, the Tribal Forest Protection Act provides a tool for Tribes to propose and enter into contracts and agreements with the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management that reduce threats from or on Federal lands that are adjacent to Indian trust land and Indian communities. USDA and DOI are authorized to give special consideration to these proposals. A tribe must propose a specific project that addresses a resource concern originating on Federal lands but impacting adjacent Tribal trust land or tribal communities. Projects can include, but are not limited to, on-the-ground restoration projects, technical assistance, and trainings. Resource concerns include fire, insect infestation, disease, or other threats.

For further information on specific opportunities, please refer to section 2.3 Conservation and Forestry

5.4.2 RURAL DEVELOPMENT WORKING WITH AMERICAN INDIANS AND ALASKA NATIVES

USDA's Rural Development places a high value on our relationship with American Indians and Alaska Natives, and we are committed to expanding outreach and services throughout Indian Country and Alaska. We are collaborating and partnering with Tribes to realize a brighter future for families, children, and communities. Through loans, grants, and technical assistance, Rural Development makes critical investments in infrastructure, housing, schools, health clinics, and economic and community development, to benefit Native families and communities across rural America.

Rural Development strives to support American Indians and Alaska Natives in holistic, sustainable, and culturally responsive ways. Every Tribal Nation has unique assets as well as distinct challenges. Maximizing the potential of these assets and addressing local challenges can only happen in an environment where relationships and trust provide a foundation for true partnership and collaboration.

Rural Development understands that the legal, regulatory, and governmental infrastructure, the methods of doing business, and culture are unique to each Tribal Nation. We recognize that Tribes are distinct. RD staff strive to understand those distinctions and tailor our services, loans, and grants to be responsive to each Tribe's circumstances and vision for development.

We are committed to Tribal-led community and economic development that respects Tribal sovereignty and honors Tribal self-determination to meet the needs of current and future generations. Priorities for our work with Tribes include:

- The well-being of individuals, families, children, and military veterans;
- Access to safe, affordable housing, including homeownership and home repair programs;
- Strong workforce development through sustainable economic development;
- Financing of essential community facilities, including public safety infrastructure, health and educational facilities;
- Access to clean water and sanitation systems; and
- The provision of affordable and reliable utilities, including electric, renewable energy, telecommunications and broadband





Through Rural Development's programs, American Indians and Alaska Natives are able to access capital, expand markets, start-up and grow businesses, and improve food production and distribution. These tools help Tribes create and sustain thriving communities, strong families, and healthy children who are well-prepared to contribute to their families, their community, and lay the foundation for future generations.

USDA Rural Development has experience in assisting Tribes and Tribal members within unique regulatory, legal, financial, and land tenure circumstances, such as:

- Collateral options for projects on Trust lands and a variety of revenue streams;
- Tribal legal and regulatory structures for business, infrastructure, and housing development, including commercial codes, foreclosure and eviction codes, land leases, and leasehold mortgaging; and
- Working alongside and supporting Tribal Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI), lending and investment institutions, and other Tribal stakeholders.

Although most of Rural Development's programs were not specifically designed for Tribes—and regulatory, budget, and staff limitations can be challenging—we strive to forge new strategic partnerships with Tribes to find creative solutions to such challenges, through ongoing collaboration, strong working relationships, thoughtful dialogue, consultation, and planning.

To learn more about USDA Rural Development's programs and to find local and national office contact information, direct your browser to www.rd.usda.gov. We look forward to hearing from you!

5.4.3 EXTENSION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Cooperative Extension Service offices are conveniently located in courthouses, post offices, or other local government buildings to improve the quality of people's lives by providing research-





based knowledge to strengthen the social, economic, and environmental well-being of families, communities, and agriculture enterprises. Extension experts focus on, among other subjects, food safety and quality, the plight of young children, revitalizing rural America, sustainable agriculture, and waste management.

5.4.3.1 Federally Recognized Tribal Extension

Extension Agents provide Extension education programs on the Indian Reservations and Tribal jurisdictions of Federally recognized Tribes. Priorities reflect the following national critical needs areas: 1) Development of sustainable energy; 2) Increased global food security; 3) Adaptation/mitigation of agriculture and natural resources to address global climate change; 4) Reduction of childhood and adolescent obesity; and 5) Improved food safety.

Contact your local 1862 or 1890 Land-Grant University to find out if a FRTEP Agent serves your region.

5.4.3.2 1994 Land-Grant Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUS) Extension

Tribal College Extension supports informal, community-based learning such as farmer education, youth development, and rural entrepreneurship. Each of the 35 1994 TCUs provide Extension education programs.

5.4.3.3 Intertribal Agricultural Council Technical Assistance Network

Through collaboration between the U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of Tribal Relations and the Intertribal Agriculture Council, the Technical Assistance Network was established to



increase access and use of USDA programs and services by Indian producers and Tribes.

(406) 259-3525

info@indianaglink.com

<http://www.indianaglink.com/>

5.4.4 TRIBAL YOUTH

5.4.4.1 *The USDA Tribal Youth Guide*

The USDA Tribal Youth Guide provides information on USDA programs and resources available that directly impact Tribal Youth. The USDA Tribal Youth Guide is available as a .pdf online at <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/staff-offices/office-tribal-relations-otr>.

Please direct questions about the guide to:

USDA Office of Tribal Relations

(202) 205-2249

tribal.relations@osec.usda.gov

<https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/staff-offices/office-tribal-relations-otr>

5.4.4.2 *Internship and scholarship opportunities for 1994 Land-Grant Tribal College and University students.*

Faculty and staff interested in developing opportunities for their students at USDA please contact:

USDA 1994 Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Program

(202) 720-7265

1994@osec.usda.gov

<https://www.outreach.usda.gov/education/1994tlgcu/>

5.4.5 INVOLVEMENT IN USDA BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

You can be the native voice on USDA Advisory Boards and Committees. Even when Boards and Advisory Committees are not actively seeking new members, you can apply at any time to be eligible for consideration when the next position is available.

5.4.5.1 *USDA Advisory Boards and Committees*

This comprehensive list of **USDA Boards and Advisory Committees**, as well as, links to the Federal Advisory Committee's Database for USDA committees, and the database for Federal Advisory Committees across the Federal Government can be found at <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/staff-offices/office-executive-secretariat-oes/advisory-committees>

5.4.5.2 *How to Submit a Nomination for Advisory Committee Membership*

USDA is seeking nominations for all of its committees. Over 4,000 opportunities to serve on advisory committees are routinely available as the term of each member expires. We are interested in a wide range of professionals including scientists, representatives of interest groups, educators, and business leaders. Individuals and organizations who wish to nominate experts for any USDA advisory committee should submit a letter to the Secretary listing these individuals' names and business address, phone, and e-mail contact information. These individuals may be contacted to determine their interest in serving as a committee member.



Candidates who wish to be considered for any committee should submit an Application for Advisory Committee Membership (can be found online at this website) and resume to the Secretary of Agriculture. Cover letters should be addressed to the Secretary of Agriculture.

All nomination materials should be mailed in a single, complete package to: Thomas Vilsack, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250.

For more information about USDA's Advisory Committees, contact:

Cikena Reid
White House Liaison Office
Phone: (202) 720-2406
cikena.reid@osec.usda.gov

5.4.5.3 Farm Service Agency County Committees

The Farm Service Agency provides a financial safety net for America's farmers and ranchers, helps sustain economically viable agricultural production, and assists with expanding stewardship of America's natural resources. Farmers and ranchers who are elected to serve on FSA County committees apply their judgment and knowledge to help with the decisions necessary to administer FSA programs in their counties, ensuring the needs of local producers are met.

FSA County Committee Election information can be found at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/newsroom/county-committee-elections/>

Nomination forms can be requested at the local USDA Service Center or found online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>

5.4.5.4 Natural Resources Conservation Service: A Seat at the Table for Conservation Policy

How Can I Participate?

Do you have an interest in soil, water, air, plants, wetlands, wildlife, and agriculture? Do you want to support voluntary natural resource management by landowners and managers on private lands? Are you willing to work with natural resource experts from around the State? Then consider serving on a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Technical Committee to help guide national conservation programs that address local needs.

Individuals and groups can receive more information on serving as a State Technical Committee member by writing to the NRCS State Conservationist for that State and describing their qualifications for membership. NRCS State Conservationists determine who will serve on the Committee. Individuals and groups can participate by providing input to the conservation district through their local conservation needs assessment process. Conservation districts gather this feedback not only to direct their own programs, but also to share with their Local Work Group.

What Are State Technical Committees and Local Work Groups?

The 1985 Farm Bill (Food Security Act) established State Technical Committees to advise NRCS in making technical decisions related to the implementation of the Act's conservation provisions. The role of the committees was expanded by the 1996 Farm Bill (Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act). These Committees offer an opportunity for interested individuals and groups to advise NRCS on how best to locally implement conservation programs.



“Their [State technical committee] involvement can help NRCS assure that limited financial and technical assistance is targeted to priority natural resource concerns and the conservation needs of people at all levels are considered.” NRCS State Conservationist and State Technical Committee Chair

Local Work Groups make recommendations to the State Technical Committee on local technical and conservation issues. These recommendations are based on resource needs assessments that are developed by conservation districts through community and stakeholder input. Local Work Groups support districts’ locally led efforts by coordinating USDA programs to help provide an integrated solution to addressing natural resource concerns. In keeping with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, Local Work Group membership is limited to Government representatives. Community and stakeholder input, however, is open to all interested citizens.

What Are the Roles of State Technical Committees and Local Work Groups?

State Technical Committees serve as an advisory body to the NRCS State Conservationist. They provide recommendations on technical aspects of Farm Bill conservation programs, including:

- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)
- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)
- Conservation Security Program (CSP)
- Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

They also may provide guidance on other technical matters, such as practices not already described in NRCS field office technical guides, criteria for evaluating and ranking projects, cost share and incentive payment levels, and measures related to achieving a program balance regardless of agricultural sector or farm or ranch size. Committee input also is sought on information and outreach strategies. NRCS State Conservationists determine specific items and/or issues for Committee reviews and recommendations. Local Work Groups ensure that a conservation needs assessment is developed, submit priorities and funding requests to the State Technical Committee, and conduct Civil Rights impact analyses for all funding requests and program implementation.

Can You Be a Member of the State Technical Committee?

State Technical Committee meetings are open to the public, and members of the public are welcome to attend and offer their input. Usual membership, however, includes one representative from the following Federal agencies:

USDA:

- NRCS
- Farm Service Agency
- FSA State Committee
- Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
- Rural Development
- Forest Service

Department of the Interior:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs



- Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- U.S. Geological Survey
- Bureau of Land Management

Department of Defense:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Committees also include members from State agencies such as a State's Department of Natural Resources (as identified by the NRCS State Conservationist) and each Federally recognized tribal government that encompasses 100,000 acres or more in a State.

Membership also may include private interests such as individuals with conservation expertise, agricultural producers, non-profit organizations, persons knowledgeable about conservation techniques and programs, and representatives from agribusiness. NRCS also seeks members with natural resource conservation experience specific to historically underserved groups and individuals, e.g., minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and socially and economically disadvantaged groups. NRCS State Conservationists determine the formal composition of the Committee.

What Is Expected of a State Technical Committee Member?

Committee members are expected to attend all meetings, which typically range from quarterly to annually. Many are scheduled based on need as determined by the NRCS State Conservationist. Members also may be asked to participate in subcommittees for a more in-depth study of programs, processes, and resource issues. Committees range in size from 14 to more than 200 individuals. The most successful Committees follow a meeting agenda, listen as well as voice their opinions, and recognize that the Committee serves to provide advice to the NRCS State Conservationist who makes his or her decisions as the designated Federal authority. Although the Committee has no implementation or enforcement authority, NRCS gives serious consideration to Committee advice. Committee members are volunteers and receive no reimbursement for their participation.

Where Can I Find Information About My State Technical Committee?

Many State Web sites provide information about their State Technical Committee. Contact information is available on State Web sites at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/organization/regions.html>

What are Tribal Conservation Districts?

The primary objective of the tribal conservation districts is to support tribal efforts to provide for the utilization, protection, conservation and restoration of reservation lands for the benefit of the community in a partnership effort with USDA and NRCS. Tribal conservation districts provide a local voice in leadership efforts to address natural resources needs and concerns by providing assistance to land owners/users and managers in the conservation and wise use of land and natural resources. They also provide leadership for intra-tribal coordination between tribal governments, tribal natural resource managers and coordinate assistance from NRCS



and other Federal, state, local, and private sources. Working with the Intertribal Agricultural Council (IAC) and Indian Nations Conservation Alliance (INCA), NRCS has assisted with the establishment of 33 Tribal Conservation Districts.

5.5 Applying for Federal Grants

5.5.1 THE GRANTS.GOV PROGRAM PROVIDES A CENTRALIZED LOCATION FOR GRANT SEEKERS TO FIND AND APPLY FOR FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:

You, a prospective applicant, can use the Search Grants function to navigate through opportunities and settle on the right Funding Opportunity Announcement for you. Once you select on a funding opportunity to apply for, there are two high-level steps, in addition to your own application development processes, to work on before submitting your application in Grants.gov:

1. Register to apply for grants
2. Complete your application

Registering to Apply

Registering to apply for grants on Grants.gov includes several steps and types of registration, including DUNS, SAM.gov, and Grants.gov accounts. Grants.gov has pages dedicated to walking you through the Organization Registration and Individual Registration processes under the Applicants tab. It's not a highly complex process, but it can take 1 to 3 weeks to complete, so please register as early as you can. Do not allow yourself to miss the application deadline because you waited until the last week to try to register.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/outreach/about-grants-gov.html>

5.6 Policies relevant to USDA and Tribal Nations

5.6.1 MEMORANDUMS

5.6.1.1 *Presidential Memorandum on Tribal Consultation. November 5, 2009.*

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/memorandum-tribal-consultation-signed-president>

5.6.2 DEPARTMENTAL REGULATIONS (DR)

5.6.2.1 *USDA DR 1350-002 - Tribal Consultation, Coordination, and Collaboration. January 18, 2013.*

http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/tribalrelations/documents/policy/consultation/Final_DR.pdf

5.6.3 EXECUTIVE ORDERS (E.O.)

5.6.3.1 *E.O. 13007 - Indian Sacred Sites – Advisory Council on Historic Preservation*

<http://www.achp.gov/EO13007.html>



5.6.3.2 E.O. 13175 - Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments. November 6, 2000.

Executive Order 13175 - Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2000-11-09/pdf/00-29003.pdf>

5.6.3.3 E.O. 13592 - Improving American Indian and Alaska Native Educational Opportunities and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities. December 2, 2011.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/02/executive-order-13592-improving-american-indian-and-alaska-native-educat>

5.6.3.4 E.O. 13647 - Establishing the White House Council on Native American Affairs. June 26, 2013.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/26/executive-order-establishing-white-house-council-native-american-affairs>

5.7 Additional Resources

- **BusinessUSA:** This is a centralized, one-stop platform designed to make it easier than ever for businesses to access services to help them grow and hire. <https://business.usa.gov/>
- **Local and Regional Food Systems:** <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/local-regional/food-sector>
- **Native One Stop:** <https://www.nativeonestop.gov/> NativeOneStop.gov is a one-stop shop for American Indians and Alaska Natives to access resources available from the U.S. Government.
- **New Farmers:** <https://newfarmers.usda.gov/>
- **Start a Partnership with the USDA Forest Service or Obtain Federal Financial Assistance, a Guide for Tribal Governments.** <http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/tribalrelations/documents/tools/StartPartnershipTribalGuide.pdf>.
- **Urban Agriculture Toolkit:** <http://www.usda.gov/documents/urban-agriculture-toolkit.pdf>
- **Writing a Successful Grant Proposal (Purdue University Extension Guide)**
<https://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/ec/ec-737.pdf>

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