



United States
Department of
Agriculture

2018 USDA

TRIBAL YOUTH RESOURCE GUIDE





USDA Tribal Resource Guide

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) mission touches the lives of every American, every day, including Indian Country. USDA is strongly invested in supporting the next generation of agricultural producers, while simultaneously supporting Native youth in fulfilling their potential. As leaders of today, Native youth may have questions about how the Federal Government may partner with them directly.

The *USDA Tribal Youth Guide* seeks to help Native youth learn about some of the USDA programs and resources that are available to them. Native youth and organizations working with them are welcome to contact the USDA Office of Tribal Relations for more information on any of these tools. An overview of USDA resources is also available in the USDA Tribal Resource Guide posted on the Office of Tribal Relations website.

Office of Tribal Relations

Phone: (202) 205-2249

www.usda.gov/otr

Physical Activity

An active lifestyle promotes health by improving the energy balance between the calories we consume and those we use. USDA is in a unique position to promote outdoor activities on more than 193 million acres of Forest Service-managed national forests and grasslands. Through “Every Kid in a Park,” the USDA Forest Service works with other Federal agencies to inspire fourth graders in the discovery, education, and adventure of the outdoors. The goal is to reach 1 million students!

USDA supports physical activity in urban areas, too! The Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry program helps turn even a concrete jungle green by helping introduce trees and urban forests.



After School and Extracurricular Activities

As part of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps, USDA is working with other Federal agencies to provide thousands of youth and veterans with work-based learning opportunities in natural, cultural, and historic restoration and preservation projects on public lands. Through the Corps, the Forest Service has funded partner organizations to provide employment and training opportunities for 10,000 youth and veterans ages 15 to 35.

Examples of the work that participants do include:

- protect wildlife habitat and communities from wildfire
- preserve public lands and historic structures
- repair and rebuild recreation sites
- coordinate outreach and manage volunteer programs
- support hydrology programs and restoration efforts
- conduct research and needs assessments

USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture supports the 4-H program, the Nation's largest positive youth development program implemented by the extension land-grant universities that empowers over 110,000 American Indian / Alaska Native youth. 4-H is about having fun, learning, exploring, and discovering. In 4-H, young people make new friends, develop new skills, become leaders, and help shape their communities. The essential elements of the 4-H program include creating an environment where youth feel a sense of belonging, have an opportunity to master skills, practice independence, and develop a spirit of generosity.

For youth interested in agriculture, rearing an animal or starting a garden may be the next step. Youth between 10 and 20 years old looking to start and operate their own income-producing project could be eligible for up to \$5,000 from the USDA's Farm Service Agency's Rural Youth Loan. The Youth Loan application requires a recommendation from a project advisor who verifies that he/she will sponsor the loan applicant, has the correct training and experience to supervise the project, and is available to help whenever needed.



Summer Camps

In many national forests, the Forest Service has set up “cultural camps” for tribal youth. These camps promote careers in natural resource professions by blending traditional ecological knowledge with Western practices. Where these camps are held, local Tribes are able to provide input on curriculum, including how to involve tribal elders. In the summer of 2016, youth participated in the following camps:

- Inter-Tribal Youth Natural Resources Camp, with participants primarily from Tribes and national forests in Pacific Northwest, Intermountain, and Northern regions: Entering its 30th year, the camps brings together area tribal students for a weeklong, residential, hands-on experience with natural resource careers.
- Culture Camp OnjiAking, with participants primarily from Ottawa National Forest, Eastern Region, and Wisconsin: Last year (2016) marked the 8th year the forest co-hosted a camp with the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission.
- Kwiyauntsii, with participants primarily from Dixie National Forest, Intermountain Region, Utah: This camp, active for over 5 years, includes the Bureau of Land Management, National Parks Service, and local Tribes.
- Salish-Bitterroot Culture Camp, with participants primarily from Bitterroot National Forest, Northern Region, Montana: The forest, Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center, and the Flathead Tribes will host their third annual camp.



To learn more about these summer camps, contact the USDA’s Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations by email at OTR@fs.fed.us or by phone at (202) 205-1514.

The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Safeguarding Natural Heritage (SNH) program has also partnered with Native-serving colleges and universities to host 2-week youth camps for students age 14-17. Like the Forest Service’s cultural camps, participating colleges or universities have direct input in what these students will accomplish. Generally, students learn how to safeguard the natural world within and outside tribal boundaries. Agency experts, tribal elders, tribal professionals, and university professionals work with the students through hands-on labs, workshops, discussions, and field trips.



Students interested in attending SNH camps only have to cover the cost to get there! The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service pays the cost of tuition, room and board, and laboratory supplies. In 2016, four colleges and universities held SNH camps:

- Arizona: Dine College
- New Mexico: Navajo Technical University
- North Carolina: University of North Carolina Pembroke
- Oklahoma: Cherokee Nation Sequoyia School

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), through an agreement with the University of Arkansas School of Law, supports the *Indigenous Food and Agriculture Summer Leadership Summit*. The summit brings together tribal students (high school and early college aged) from Indian Country for focused learning, hands-on training, and technical assistance in topics essential to their future success as food and agriculture business owners, Indian landowners, and conservationists. It also prepares them for leadership on these issues within their own communities.

The summit is open to American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students who are passionate about and likely already engaged with their family, communities, and Tribes in food, agriculture production, subsistence, and conservation efforts. Students live on the campus throughout the summit and are taught by nationally recognized faculty on topics unique only to Native students and their unique land tenure status. USDA programs and services are included in the training curriculum.



Research Opportunities for High School and College

Two Forest Service Research Stations worked with tribal youth to study climate change effects in Alaska on traditional foods and to inventory traditional foods in California:

- In 2015, the Pacific Northwest Research Station began a coastal geomorphology and first foods study to explore coastal changes and their potential effect on Alaska Native and rural community foods. Researchers are working with high school students and adult mentors to identify cultural keystone species used by local residents and potential changes related to sea-level rise and other climate change-related effects.
- The Pacific Southwest Research Station partnered with the Yurok Tribe to inventory and map traditional foods to incorporate traditional cultural management practices and improve the yield of traditional foods.

The United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) in Bismarck, North Dakota, became one of the first tribal colleges in the Nation designated as an Arbor Day Foundation Tree Campus USA. UTTC was selected to replace hazardous and dying trees with a fruit orchard. This effort could mean the orchards could help feed members of the community, the college's Head Start program, and elder care services.

The Forest Service has two participating agreements that support tribal students engaging in research:

- The Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission funds a tribal youth internship program. In 2015, in partnership with the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest in Arizona, the Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission sponsored five students from the White Mountain Apache Tribe. The students gained a variety of natural resource experience in fisheries, wildlife, recreation, and forestry during a 2-month summer internship.
- The Wildlife Society offers research assistantships for students as part of the organization's professional development program for American Indians and Alaska Natives. The program helps provide mentoring opportunities with Forest Service Research and Development scientists and promotes student advancement and training for careers in natural resource and conservation-related fields. The program targets college juniors and seniors or advanced degree candidates interested in wildlife and forest resources.

The Forest Service Southern Research Station partnered with the Intertribal Timber Council to provide Native American Natural Resource Scholarships. Scholarship recipients receive a \$4,000 research scholarship and an additional \$1,000 to offset the costs of presenting a research poster at the Intertribal Timber Council Annual Timber Symposium.¹

The Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations may be able to provide information on these and other resources available to Native youth. Questions may be directed by email to OTR@fs.fed.us or by phone at (202) 205-1514.

¹ <http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/compass/2015/07/22/intertribal-timber-council-scholarships-connect-students-with-forest-service-scientists/>





Additionally, the NRCS is collaborating with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium to focus on climate change in Indian Country. Participating Tribal Colleges and Universities will help promote sustainable agricultural and natural resource management systems, helping protect culturally and economically important tribal lands and water resources. Four Tribes have been selected to help with the pilot programs: at these Tribal Colleges

- Salish Kootenai College, Montana
- Stone Child College, Montana
- Little Big Horn College, Montana
- College of Menominee Nation, Wisconsin

To read more about resources offered by NRCS, visit <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/people/outreach/tribal/>.



Internship Programs

USDA supports food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related topics based on public policy, the best available science, and effective management. Your voice matters, and if you're interested in serving your community through public service, USDA offers internship opportunities for almost every academic study.

Veterinary Technical Program

APHIS provides financial assistance to the Navajo Technical University Veterinary Technology Program in New Mexico, the only program of its kind among Tribal Colleges and Universities. The funding assists the University with enhancing curriculum and accreditation efforts and helps fund internships. In its third year of funding, APHIS is working with the Navajo Technical University to place more students in USDA facilities to expand their experience. The agency works to bring these interns to regional and national venues to provide presentations on their experiences.

TCU Internship Program

Since 2015, APHIS has provided internship opportunities to tribal youth. Funding through a cooperative agreement has been provided to the Navajo Technical University in New Mexico to work with Southwest Polytechnic Institute in New Mexico and Diné College in Arizona to recruit and place students in various 8-week internships with APHIS. The agency is committed to working with other USDA agencies and programs to expand the internship program as interest increases and funds are available.

For more information on APHIS internships plus who to contact, please visit APHIS website – Opportunities for Native Youth.



USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program

The USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program is an employment program that offers a combination of work experience and academic study leading to career positions within USDA. Students participating in this program may receive full tuition, a paid internship with employee benefits, books, and room and board each year for up to 4 years while they pursue a degree at a 1994 tribal land-grant institution that culminates in a bachelor's degree at a tribal college or other university.

The program is designed to integrate classroom study at 1994 land-grant institutions with paid work experience; to increase the number of students studying and graduating in food, agriculture, natural resources, and other related fields of study; and to develop the pool of scientists and professionals to annually fill 50,000 jobs in the food, agricultural, and natural resources system. For more information: <https://www.outreach.usda.gov/education/1994tlgcu/>

USDA Internship Program

The USDA Internship Program provides paid work experiences for students who are in high school or pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree in an accredited college or university (including home-schooling, certificate programs, and community colleges). Interns may work during the summer, fall, spring, or year round. Please apply at www.usajobs.gov - Students and Recent Graduates

USDA Recent Graduates Program

The USDA Recent Graduates Program provides individuals who have recently graduated from qualifying educational institutions or programs with developmental experiences in the Federal Government. These experiences are intended to promote possible careers in the civil service. Participants must have obtained a degree or completed a qualifying career or technical education program within the preceding 2 years. Veterans are eligible to participate in the program within 6 years of obtaining a degree or graduating from a qualifying program.

USDA Presidential Management Fellows Program

The USDA Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) program is a prestigious, competitive program that is managed by the Office of Personnel Management. The PMF program supports leadership development for recent graduates who have been pre-qualified or recommended by a network of graduate schools. Graduates are provided with a 2-year appointment at USDA that may lead to conversion to a permanent appointment.



