



United States
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Agriculture

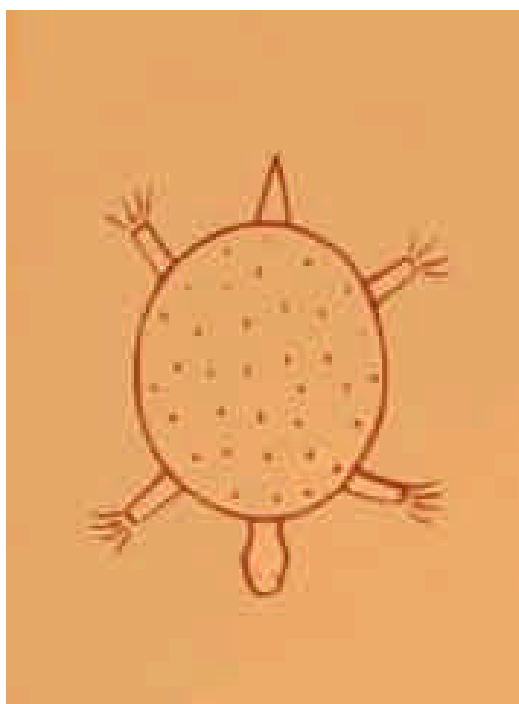
Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service



Tribal Scholars Program



Tribal Scholars Program



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The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

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NRCS Outreach Division Tribal Initiative

When you arise in the morning, give thanks for the morning light, for your life and strength. Give thanks for your food, and the joy of living. If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies with yourself.

Tecumseh, Shawnee

NRCS' mission is to provide leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

Our vision is harmony between people and the land.



Introduction

One of NRCS' priorities and concerns has been to increase the diversity of its workforce through the hiring of students from various colleges and universities. NRCS has been successful through the USDA 1890 Scholars Program and through the USDA Hispanic Partnership Program. The NRCS Outreach Division is working to assist the Agency in accomplishing its workforce diversity goals through the development and implementation of an NRCS 1994 Tribal Scholars Program.

About NRCS



NRCS has 70 years of experience assisting owners of America's private land with conserving their soil, water, and other natural resources. Local, State, and federal agencies and policymakers also rely on NRCS expertise. NRCS delivers technical assistance based on sound science suited to a customer's specific needs. Cost shares and financial incentives are available in some cases. Most work is done with local partners. NRCS' partnership with local conservation districts serves almost every county in the Continental United States, including the Caribbean and Pacific Basin territories. Participation in our programs is voluntary. You can find more information about NRCS at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov> or by contacting your local USDA Service Center located in the blue pages of the telephone directory.

The NRCS is making special efforts to provide conservation programs services to American Indians and Alaska Natives. Technical assistance is being provided by NRCS offices on several Indian Reservations. Working with the Inter-Tribal Agricultural Council, an estimated 30 full-time Tribal Field offices and 35 part time offices have been established to serve American Indian and Alaska Natives. In addition, 26 Tribal Conservation districts has been established in 11 States.

About AIHEC

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) is a unique and uniquely American Indian organization. It was founded in 1972 by the presidents of the Nation's first six Tribal Colleges, as an informal collaboration among member colleges. Today, AIHEC has grown to represent 34

colleges in the United States. Unlike most professional associations, it is governed jointly by each member institution.

AIHEC's mission is to support the work of these colleges and the national movement for tribal self-determination. Its



One cannot sell the earth upon which the people walk.

Tacunka Witco (Crazy Horse), Oglala Lakota

mission statement adopted in 1973 identifies four objectives: maintain commonly held standards of quality in American Indian education; support the development of new tribally controlled colleges; promote and assist in the development of legislation to support American Indian higher education; and encourage greater participation by American Indians in the development of higher education policy.

Tribal Colleges and Universities

Tribal Colleges were created in response to the higher education needs of American Indians, and generally serve geographically isolated populations that have no other means of accessing education beyond the high school level. Tribal Colleges are unique institutions that combine personal attention with cultural relevance, in such a way as to encourage American Indians especially those living on reservations to overcome the barriers they face to higher education.



Tribal Colleges are different from mainstream community colleges in their cultural identities, which are reflected in virtually every aspect of college life. Tribal Colleges are actively involved in a broad range of community efforts, including basic education, counseling services, and economic development initiatives that are specifically focused on communities that would otherwise be completely isolated from such resources. All parts of the colleges' curricula are designed from an American Indian perspective and the individual courses reflect this effort. The colleges offer courses in tribal languages that might otherwise disappear, as well as other traditional subjects. Furthermore, there are many American Indian role models at Tribal Colleges. In 1996-1997, 30 percent of full-time faculties at the colleges were American Indian/Alaskan Native.

The 1994 Land Grant Equity Act

The Morrill Act, the original Land Grant Act of 1862, and the Land Grant Act of 1890 established institutions of higher learning dedicated to the teaching of agriculture and the mechanical arts. Acknowledging that Tribal Colleges play a similar role on their reservations, Congress passed the “Equity in Education Land Grant Status Act of 1994.” This piece of Federal legislation designated 29 Tribal Colleges as the “1994 Institutions” to be considered land grant colleges in addition to those land grant institutions previously established in 1862, 1890, and the other land grant colleges designated under separate acts of Congress between 1968 and 1980. Three additional Tribal Colleges have also acquired land grant status since the initial act was passed in 1994.



Tribal Colleges and Universities

NOTE: Scholar selections will be made from the Tribal Colleges and Universities listed below in accordance with the 1994 Land Grant Equity Act and appropriate accreditation guidelines from the U.S. Department of Education.

Bay Mills Community College
12214 West Lake Shore Drive
Brimley, MI 49715

Blackfeet Community College
Post Office Box 819
Browning, MT 59417

Cankdeska Cikana Community
College
Post Office Box 269
Fort Totten, ND 58335

Chief Dull Knife College
Post Office Box 98
Lame Deer, MT 59043

College of Menominee Nation
Post Office Box 1179
Keshena, WI 54135

Crownpoint Institute of Technology
Post Office Box 849
Crownpoint, NM 87313

D-Q University
Post Office Box 409
Davis, CA 95617

Dine College
Post Office Box 126
Tsaile, AZ 86556

Fond du Lac Tribal & Community
College
2101 14th Street
Cloquet, MN 55720

Fort Belknap College
Post Office Box 159
Harlem, MT 59526

Fort Berthold Community College
Post Office Box 490
New Town, ND 58763

Fort Peck Community College
Post Office Box 398
Poplar, MT 59255

Haskell Indian Nations University
155 Indian Avenue, Box 5030
Lawrence, KS 66046

Institute of American Indian Arts
83 Avan Nu Po Road
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community
College
409 Superior Avenue
Baraga, MI 49908

Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa
Community College
13466 West Trepania Road
Hayward, WI 54843

Leech Lake Tribal College
Route 3, Box 100
Cass Lake, MN 56633

Little Priest Tribal College
Post Office Box 270
Winnebago, NE 68071

Northwest Indian College
2522 Kwina Road
Bellingham, WA 98226

Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College
2284 Enterprise Drive
Mount Pleasant, MI 48858

Sinte Gleska University
Post Office Box 490
Rosebud, SD 57570

Si Tanka University
Post Office Box 220
Eagle Butte, SD 57625

Southwestern Indian Polytechnic
Institute
Post Office Box 10146
Albuquerque, NM 87184

Tohono O'odham Community
College
Post Office Box 3129
Sells, AZ 85634

United Tribes Technical
3315 University Drive
Bismarck, ND 58504

Little Big Horn College
Post Office Box 370
Crow Agency, MT 59022

Nebraska Indian Community
College
Post Office Box 428
Macy, NE 68039

Oglala Lakota College
490 Piya Wiconi Road
Kyle, SD 57752

Salish Kootenai College
Post Office Box 117
Pablo, MT 59855

Sisseton Wahpeton Community
College
Post Office Box 689
Sisseton, SD 57262

Sitting Bull College
1341 92nd Street
Fort Yates, ND 58538

Stone Child College
RR 1, Box 1082
Box Elder, MT 59521

Turtle Mountain Community
College
Post Office Box 340
Belcourt, ND 58316

White Earth Tribal Community College
College
210 Main Street South
Mahnomon, MN 56557



Prayer unfolds in the stillness of the soul.

Unknown

NRCS Tribal Scholars Program

One of NRCS' priorities and concerns has been to increase the diversity of its workforce through the hiring of students from various colleges and universities.

The aim of the Tribal Scholars Program is to strengthen a partnership between NRCS and 1994 Institutions, increase the number of students studying in agriculture and Agency-related disciplines, and to offer employment opportunities.

Eligibility

All applicants must be:

- ✧ A United States Citizen
- ✧ Accepted for enrollment in a Tribal College or University as a degree seeking student in Agriculture, Natural Resources, or an NRCS related discipline



Academic Requirements

Scholars must maintain a full-time course load as specified by the institution. NRCS, in concert with the institution, may grant exception to the full-time course load requirements due to extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the scholar.

Scholars must maintain at least a 2.75 on a 4.0 scale cumulative GPA (or equivalent) for the first semester/quarter, and a minimum of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale cumulative GPA (or equivalent) for all subsequent semesters/quarters.

The Tribal Scholars Program Manager will work with the student's academic advisor and the Tribal Scholars Administrative Coordinator to ensure that the student maintains his/her eligibility by adhering to the grade point average requirement.

NRCS and the institution must approve changes of the major and/or credit hours prior to implementation.

Scholars enrolled in a two-year institution may be required to transfer to a four-year institution. NRCS will assist the Scholar in making the transition in order to meet all academic requirements and obligations of the Program.

Obligations & Responsibilities



Scholars must work for NRCS 1 (one) year for each year of financial support provided, unless otherwise agreed upon.

Scholars are expected to report to their assigned work site during the summer period, unless other arrangements are made by the Agency. The Student Career Experience Program provides work experience which is directly related to the student's academic program and career goals. Students can avail themselves to such flexibilities as year round employment and flexible schedules and assignments. Students participating in this program through the NRCS Tribal Scholars Program will gain exposure

to public service while enhancing their education and shaping their career choices. The Tribal Scholars Program is a formally structured program which requires a written formal agreement by all parties (NRCS, school, and student) as to the:

- Nature of work assignment;
- Schedule of work assignments and class attendance;
- Evaluation procedures;
- and
- Requirements for continuation and successful completion of the program.

Scholars must complete a minimum of 640 hours of career-related work before completion of, or concurrently with, the course requirements prior to conversion into the permanent workforce. Although students may earn 640 hours in one summer period, scholars are expected to work each summer period unless other arrangements have been made with the Agency.

Scholars desiring to change work site locations must notify the Tribal Scholars Administrative Coordinator and the National Tribal Scholars Program Manager.

Scholars are required to seek degrees in the following fields of study which are in place with the NRCS 2005-2008 Workforce Plan: Those fields of study are:

- Biological Sciences (Natural Resources Field)
- Soil Conservationist
- Soil Scientist
- Agricultural Engineer
- Civil Engineer

NRCS Tribal Scholar is required to:

- provide addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, etc. to the Tribal Scholars Administrative Coordinator and the National Tribal Scholars Program Manager to ensure accessibility;
- and report changes in school and work schedules;
- ensure timely submission of paperwork for tuition, books, fees, and supplies;
- maintain open lines of communication with the Tribal Scholars Administrative Coordinator and the National Tribal Scholars Program Manager;
- keep regularly scheduled meeting appointments;
- inform the Agency coordinator, tribal liaison, and supervisor of accomplishments, achievements, in addition to first signs of problems, issues, and concerns;
- complete Individual Development Plan, training plan, and other requested reports;
- sign and adhere to an Employment Service Agreement;
- and report to the assigned work site.

District Conservationist is required to:

- serve as the academic mentor and counselor;
- ensure the development of an individual development plan;
- ensure the development of performance standards and performance elements;
- and assist with work site logistics, office hours, and travel schedules.

NRCS Tribal Scholars Administrative Coordinator (State Office) is required to:

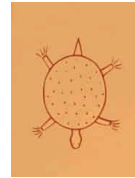
- ensure scholars are paid the appropriate salary;
 - ensure the necessary paperwork is prepared and submitted for timely payment of tuition, books, fees, and supplies;
 - ensure each scholar is assigned a work site mentor;
 - provide guidance in career planning and professional development, summer placement priorities, and Agency code of ethics and conduct;
-

- meet at least two times a semester/quarter with the scholar;
- conduct an exit interview with scholar;
- receive, distribute, and secure all computer and Agency equipment;
- and receive and maintain a copy of scholar's quarter/semester transcripts.

NRCS National Tribal Scholars Program Manager (National Headquarters) is required to:

- disseminate pertinent Agency and departmental information;
- ensure the Service Agreement is signed and copies disseminated to appropriate parties;
- coordinate administrative and operational activities with appropriate Agency officials;
- assure employment placement after graduation;
- serve as the USDA representative to resolve problems, issues and concerns (i.e. grades, work assignments, major, transfers, financial, etc.) with the institution;
- and serve as an advisor on the Agency's behalf.

Withdrawals & Terminations



Withdrawals

Scholars must submit a letter of resignation to the state Tribal Scholars Administrative Coordinator, with copies to the National Tribal Scholars Program Manager, informing them of their decision to withdraw from the Program prior to the actual effective date of withdrawal. All scholar withdrawals will adhere to the Agency guidelines on employee separation from service.

Terminations

Scholars who fail to adhere to the terms of the signed Service Agreement may be terminated from the Program, in addition to repayment of Agency funds.

Scholars who do not maintain the required grade point average may be terminated from the Program.

Violation of code of ethics and/or conduct may be grounds for termination from the program.

Program Provisions



Financial

The NRCS Tribal Scholars Program provides full tuition, fees, books, and supplies (i.e., paper, pencils, calculators, printer cartridges, etc.), use of a personal computer, software and printer, employment and employee benefits and room and board each year to students pursuing a two-year associates degree and/or a four-year bachelor's degree at one of the eligible institutions.

NOTE: Use of government funds for personal use is prohibited.

Tuition, Books, Fees and Supplies

NRCS shall provide full tuition, books, fees, and supplies to the scholar while they are in the program.

State Tribal Scholars Administrative Coordinator will submit to the National Tribal Scholars Program Manager a list of all costs incurred by the scholar (i.e., tuition, books, fees, labs, conferences, workshops, etc.) each semester/quarter.

Scholars should immediately contact the State Tribal Scholars Administrative Coordinator regarding tuition, books, fees, and supply concerns.

Computers

NRCS will issue a personal computer (preloaded), *printer (optional)*, and software to each scholar.

Scholars should contact the National Tribal Scholars Program Manager for additional software.

Scholars should place his or her computer equipment with the State Tribal Scholars Administrative Coordinator during extended periods of absence to maintain appropriate security (i.e. Christmas break, summer break, etc.). Scholars will abide by the Agency's policy regarding maintenance and security of assigned computers, property, and other equipment.

Scholars should contact the state Tribal Scholars Administrative Coordinator for technical support assistance for problems associated with the computer, printer, and software.

Scholars who withdraw or are terminated from the Program must return the computer, printer, and software to the state Tribal Scholars Administrative Coordinator.

NOTE: Computers are for the use of the scholar only.

Employment

Employment

Work sites and assignments will be determined by NRCS.

Scholars are expected to report to their assigned work site during the summer unless other arrangements are made by NRCS.

Scholars must notify the State Tribal Scholars Administrative Coordinator and the National Tribal Scholars Program Manager to change work site locations.

NRCS must provide positions and work experiences related to the scholars' academic/career goals.

Scholars must complete a minimum of 640 hours of career-related work before completion of or concurrently with the course requirements prior to conversion into the NRCS workforce.

Scholars completing their freshman year (30 credit hours or 45 quarter hours) are eligible for a GS-3 level, and a GS-4 level thereafter based on Office of Personnel Management guidelines.

Graduating scholars with a 3.0 GPA or better are eligible for a position that commensurate with their academic studies at a GS-7 level. NRCS may consider providing positions at two-grade intervals, with promotion potential beyond the entry level.

Position descriptions and performance standards are developed by NRCS.

Scholars will receive pay in accordance with established pay schedules during periods of work. Scholars will earn annual and sick leave under the appropriate schedule. Scholars may select health and life insurance. Scholars are covered by the Federal Employee Retirement System.

Requests for extended leave must be in writing with supporting documentation from a health official, parent, or other appropriate source. Periods of extended leave cannot exceed 12 months of cumulative leave without forfeiting the scholarship.

Scholars may be non-competitively converted into the permanent work force when they have completed all course requirements, completed at least 640 hours of career-related work, and met the qualification standards for the appropriate targeted position.

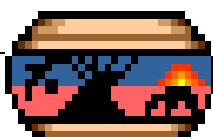
Housing and Transportation

NRCS may pay for lodging expenses for the scholar on a case by case basis.

The state Tribal Scholars Administrative Coordinator shall assist the National Tribal Scholars Program Manager with locating housing for the scholars.

NRCS may pay for transportation expenses and travel expenses related to training (i.e., Scholars orientation, conferences, workshops, etc.).

Scholars must complete and submit a travel voucher upon returning from government travel.



NRCS TRIBAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM





I see no seat for the eagles. We forget and we consider ourselves superior, but we are after all a mere part of the creation.

Oren Lions, Iroquios

Authorities

Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 USC 2000 (d) – 2000 (d)(1); P.L. 88-352

Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990; P.L. 101-624, Sec. 2501; S. 2830

Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002; P.L. 107-171; H.R. 2646

5 CFR, Parts 213 and 410

Executive Orders 12015 and 13270

Departmental Regulation 1340-006

Definitions

USDA – United States Department of Agriculture

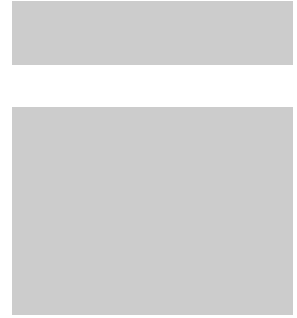
NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service

Scholar – student selected to participate in the NRCS Tribal Scholars program.

Service Agreement – document signed by the scholar, agency representative, and institution outlining the requirements and specifics of the program.

Work Site – scholar's official duty station or temporary work location.

Position Description (PD) – the official NRCS document detailing the scholar's specific duties and job responsibilities.



Performance Standards – the official NRCS document assessing the scholar’s work performance.

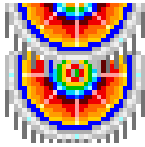
Individual Development Plan (IDP) – a NRCS document outlining requirements necessary for successful accomplishment of work duties and responsibilities, personal, professional, and career development.

Termination – the dismissal or separation of a student from participation in the NRCS Tribal Scholars program.

Resignation – the voluntary act of separation from the Tribal Scholars program by the scholar.

OPM – Office of Personnel Management

References & Other Sources



USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, www.nrcs.usda.gov

American Indian Higher Education Consortium, www.aihec.org

USDA 1890 National Scholars Program, www.usda.gov

Guide to USDA Program for American Indians and Alaska Natives, USDA, October 1997

USDA 1994 Land Grant Institution’ Presidential Forum, February 12, 2004

NRCS TRIBAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM



Application & Important Dates

<p>May 4, 2005</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Application Deadline</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This application must be received by May 4, 2005. You can submit your application by fax, email, or mail. If you submit your application by fax, you must mail your official transcript by May 4, 2005.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fax: 301-504-2248</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mail to: Tribal Scholars Program</p> <p style="text-align: center;">USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Outreach Division</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lesia Young</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5601 Sunnyside Ave., Stop 5474</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Beltsville, Maryland 20705</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Contact Telephone No: 301-504-0034 or 2229</p>
<p>May 9-13, 2005</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Rating Process</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NRCS will rate submitted applications through Tribal Scholars Program Rating Panel.</p>
<p>May 27, 2005</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Notification of Scholars</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Each selected scholar will be notified by agency</p>
<p>June 27 – July 1, 2005</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Orientation for Selected Scholars</p> <p style="text-align: center;">All selected scholarship recipients will be requested to attend an orientation in Polson, MT. The orientation is all expenses paid and will feature introduction into the NRCS, and mentorship from current American Indian Employees</p>

NRCS TRIBAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM

List any other schools you have attended in the last 4 years. List the schools in order of attendance with the one you attended most recently first.

Name of School	location (city & state)	dates of attendance

List any advanced or special programs, courses or summer courses you have taken. List the most recent first.

Course/ program	name of school	location (city & state)	dates of attendance	Hours per week

Name of Tribal Institution (see enclosed list of Tribal Colleges and Universities)

Address _____

Number/Street

City

State

Zip Code

What course of study (major) will you pursue?

1st Choice _____ 2nd Choice _____

Do you plan to go to graduate or professional school? _____ Yes ___X_ No

If yes, field of study _____

III. Activities

List any activities in which you have participated in or outside of school, i.e. sports, music, student government, clubs, church, civic, etc.

activity	dates of participation	offices held	special awards, honors, recognition

List volunteer services or jobs held in the last 3 years including summer employment.

Volunteer services/jobs	name of employer/organization	dates of service/employment	hours per week	special awards

IV. Leisure-Time Activities

1. What is most stimulating book or article, other than school assignments you have read in the last 6 months? Why did you find it stimulating?

2. What do you do for relaxation or fun?

VI. Secondary School Assessment

(Section to be completed by the counselor, teacher or principal.)

Legal Name of Student

Last

First

Middle

Are you confident that the student will/or have received a high school diploma during the current academic year? ___ Yes ___ No

If no, please explain.

Student's class rank _____ How many students in the class? _____

Student's cumulative grade point average? _____

Act Composite Score _____ SAT Combined Score _____

Does student meet academic requirements to transfer? (Applicable to transferees, only)

___ Yes ___ No

If yes, give total credit hours: ___ quarter or ___ semester hours

Describe the student's strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths:

Weakness:

N R C S T R I B A L S C H O L A R S P R O G R A M

Has the student shown exceptional talent or originality in agriculture, food, natural resource sciences and/or other related disciplines? _____ Yes _____ No

Please explain:

Additional comments.

Please attach an official secondary school transcript (with seal and signature).

I certify that I have completed this portion of the application and that all statements are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature Secondary School Official

Position

Date
