

Supporting Statement

USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program

0503-0016

A. Justification

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

The purpose of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) 1994 Tribal Scholars Program is to strengthen the long-term partnership between USDA and the 1994 Land-Grant Institutions 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.

The USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program, within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration, Office of Advocacy and Outreach, is an annual, joint human capital initiative between USDA and the Nation's 1994 Land-Grant Institutions, also known as 1994 Tribal Colleges and Universities (1994 TCUs). This program offers a combination of paid work experience with a USDA sponsoring agency through an appointment under the Fellowship Experience Program (FEP). FEP will permit the recruitment and selection of

exceptional students majoring in agriculture related fields of study at USDA partner Colleges and Universities. Under the FEP, students will fill Excepted Service positions, receive mentoring, and be provided developmental assignments. These temporary appointments will be made using the Schedule A in 5 CFR § 213.3102 (r) and may not exceed 4 years based on defined criteria.

When students graduate, they will be eligible to compete for job opportunities at USDA. Additionally, the experience the students gain via classroom instruction in their respective degree paths, along with their USDA work experience, will make them strong candidates for opportunities in agriculture and agri-business related fields. The USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program is designed to integrate classroom study into a degreed college or university program such as agriculture and natural resources, which prepares the student for competing for positions in the sponsoring agency's future workforce and with paid tuition, fees, books, use of a laptop computer and Leadership training. The program is conducted in accordance with a planned schedule and a working agreement between USDA agencies and the student.

The USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program will offer scholarships and internships to U.S. citizens for a period of up to 4 years. The eligibility standards are:

1. Must be at least 16 years old.
2. Must be able to complete required occupation-related work experience (640 hours) prior to or concurrently with the completion of course requirements for the degree.
3. Must be a United States citizen or national (resident of American Samoa or Swains Island). If you are not a citizen, you may participate if you are legally admitted to the

United States as a permanent resident, and are able to meet United States citizenship requirements prior to completion of your degree.

4. Must be in good academic standing. Cannot be on academic probation. Must furnish course registration information at the start of each school term; must provide verification of academic status at the end of each academic term (grade report or transcript); must meet academic standards as set forth by the school they are attending; maintain satisfactory progress in completing academic requirements; and demonstrate satisfactory performance and conduct.
5. If selected, students must sign USDA Fellowship agreements.
6. Must be enrolled in, accepted, or plan to seek a Bachelor's or Associate's degree in an accredited 1994 Tribal Land-Grant College or University as demonstrated by a declaration of a major course of study.
7. Carry at a minimum, a half-time course load as defined by the institution.
8. Be enrolled in an academic major related to the occupation being considered.

USDA Tribal Scholarship recipients are required to study in the food, agricultural, and related sciences, as defined by the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103 (8)) as: basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching activities in food, agricultural, renewable natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences, including activities relating to the following: a) animal health, production, and well-being; b) plant health and production; c) animal and plant germ-plasm collection and preservation; d) aquaculture; e) food safety; f) soil and water conservation and improvement; g) forestry, horticulture, and range management; h) nutritional sciences and promotion; i) farm

enhancement, including financial management, input efficiency, and profitability; j) home economics; k) rural human ecology; l) youth development and agricultural education, including 4-H clubs; m) expansion of domestic and international markets for agricultural commodities and products, including agricultural trade barrier identification and analysis; n) information management and technology transfer related to agriculture; o) biotechnology related to agriculture; and p) the processing, distributing, marketing, and utilization of food and agricultural products.

The following are the statutory authorities for the USDA Tribal Scholars Program:

- 5 CFR 213.3402(a)(b), and (c) excepted service to hire students and recent graduates.
- 5 CFR Part 410—Training
- Equity in Education Land-Grant Status of 1994
- Executive Orders 12015, Executive Order 13562 and 13270
- Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990; P.L. 101-624, Sec. 2501, Sec. 2830
- Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002; P.L. 107-171; H.R. 2646
- Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996
- Executive Order Executive Order 13592 -- Improving American Indian and Alaska Native Educational Opportunities and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities.

2. Indicate how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

The purpose of the collections will be to determine the eligibility of applicants to the USDA Tribal Scholars Program.

Each applicant to the program will be required to apply to announcements of the USDA Tribal Scholars Program and submit an application with required documentation. The required documentation will include:

- A resume;
- Proof of acceptance or enrollment in school, a letter of acceptance, proof of registration, or letter from school official on official letterhead;
- A copy of the last high school or college transcript; and
- Two letters of recommendation

Note: Those applicants who are selected will sign a USDA Fellowship Agreement.

Students may work during the summer, spring, fall, or year round.

USDA Agencies' Human Resources Specialists will review the applications received to determine if the applicants meet the qualification requirements outlined. Those candidates who do meet the minimum qualifications will then be reviewed to determine if they are among the "qualified" or "best qualified" candidates. Once the "best qualified candidates"

are identified, a “certificate of eligible candidates” is prepared and sent to the supervisor (or selecting official) for the position. The supervisor will review the applications and determine who among the “best qualified” will be interviewed. Interviews are scheduled and conducted, reference checks are completed, and a final selection is made.

The USDA Tribal Scholars Program is an annual program. The recruitment cycle is continuous and applications are due each year on February 1.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

The USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program utilizes a fillable form that can be printed and mailed or sent to the USDA 1994 Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Program via email.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purpose described in item 2 above.

USDA is the only agency (Department) that collects this information.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

This collection does not impact small businesses or other small entities.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program would not be able to function consistently without this annual collection.

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 301) requires the Department of Agriculture to establish programs ensuring equitable participation of students enrolled in Tribal Colleges and Universities and American Indian/Alaska Natives in USDA sponsored employment programs and activities.

Not engaging 1994 Land-Grant Institutions in USDA scholarship programs may result in an increase in future discrimination lawsuits against the Department.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

- **requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
- **requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**
- **requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**
- **requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;**
- **in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;**
- **that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or**
- **requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secretary, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

This information collection is conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines established in 5 CFR 1230.5.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, soliciting comments on the

information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments.

On April 25, 2016, this was published in the Federal Register, page numbers 24052-24053. No comments were received from the public.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting form, and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

A USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Work Group, made up of both USDA and Tribal College and University members of the USDA and American Indian Higher Education Consortium, a USDA advisory group to the Secretary of Agriculture, developed the USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program Handbook with particular attention to developing an application form and information collection process with information elements requested and instructions that were clear.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

This information collection activity involves no payments or gifts to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

No additional assurance of confidentiality is provided with this information collection.

However, the confidentiality of information is protected under 5 U.S.C. 522a.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

This information collection activity will ask no questions of a personal or sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:

- **Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I.**
- **Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate**

categories.

The following describes how the annualized costs were determined for the USDA Tribal Scholars Program.

Respondents: USDA Tribal Scholarship Program Applicants

Estimated number of Respondents to complete all sections of application.....300

It is expected that approximately 100 people each year will submit an application and each application will have three respondents to include the applicant and two references for the application.

Estimated Average time to complete whole application.....3.50 hours

 Applicant section.....2.0 hours

 Teacher section.....0.5 hours

 Counselor section.....1.0 hours

Estimated Average time per respondent.....1.2 hours

Estimated number of respondents per application.....3

Estimated total Annual Response.....100

Estimated total Collection Burden.....360 hours

Respondent's Estimated Annual Cost for the hour

Burdens for collections of information.....\$15,300

(Basis: Estimated total Collection Burden (360 hours) x Burden cost for collection (\$42.50)
= \$15,300)

 Applicant section (\$10/hr @ 2.0 hours).....\$20.00

 Teacher section (\$15/hr @ 0.50 hours).....\$7.50

(Basis: \$15 hour in rural area secondary schools)

 Counselor section \$15.00/hr @ 1.0 hours.....\$15.00

Total burden cost for Tribal Scholarship respondents' inclusive of applicants, teacher, and counselor recommendations collection: \$42.50

13. Provide estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record

keepers resulting from the collection of information (do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in items 12 and 14). The cost estimates should be annualized over its expected useful life; and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component.

There are no capital or startup costs.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

Annual Federal Government Cost

	GS11/Step 1 Salary	Hourly Rate		Time per application		# of Applications		USDA Agencies	=	Total
HR Cost	\$64,650/171 3 hrs = hourly rate	\$37.413	x	0.5	x	100	x	17	=	\$31,571.55

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-1.

This is a reinstatement of a previously approved information collection resulting in a program change of 360 burden hours.

16. For collections of information whose results are planned to be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration has no plans to publish

information it collects in connection with this program.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration will display the date and OMB control number.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19 “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act.”

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration can certify compliance with all provisions in the Act.