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Subject: Your campaign USDA Office of Tribal Relations News has been sent
Date: Friday, March 22, 2024 2:06:41 PM

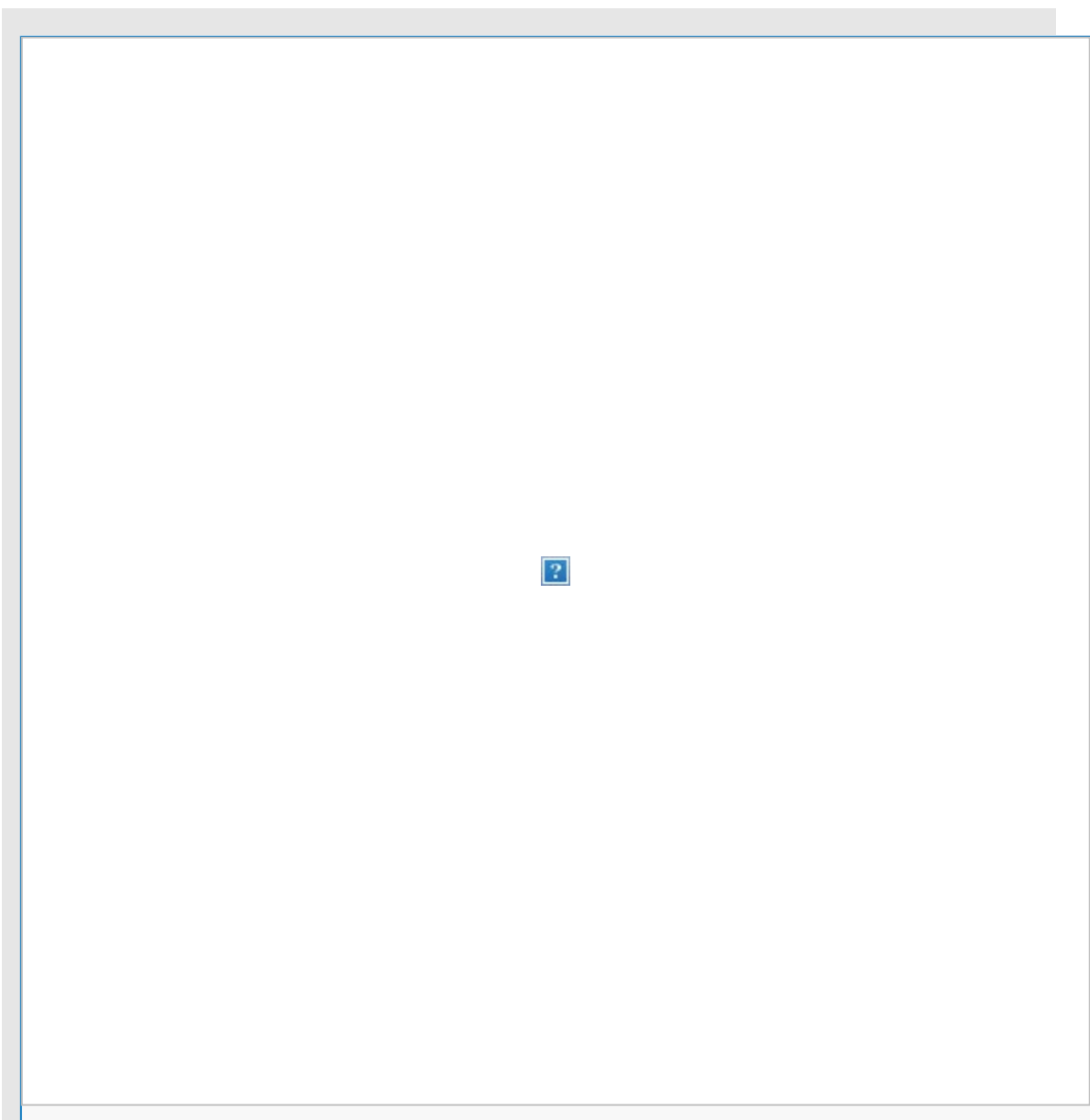


Dear Peter Rhee,

Your campaign '**USDA Office of Tribal Relations News**' was sent on 3/22/2024 around 2:02 PM EDT.

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Subject: USDA Office of Tribal Relations News



USDA's Office of Tribal Relations Newsletter

If you are not subscribed to this newsletter, [sign up at this link](#).

Message from the Director

Hihanni waste, greetings.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of Tribal Relations' (OTR) focus for the month is to continue to strengthen our nation-to-nation relationships, identify barriers in our key mission areas of the USDA, and educate students who are interested in assisting Indian Country.

As we continue to strengthen our nation-to-nation relationship, we are pleased to announce that OTR held its first **Tribal Advisory Committee** meeting virtually on February 23, 2024. The 2018 Farm Bill required the Secretary of Agriculture to establish and maintain a Tribal Advisory Committee to provide advice and guidance on Tribal and Indian affairs. Please **save the date** for the second meeting, which will be both in person in Washington, DC and on Zoom on **May 29 – May 30, 2024**. If you would like to submit written public comments or register to deliver verbal comments during the meeting, please send an email to Tribal.Relations@usda.gov.

Since 2021, OTR has hosted an **Annual USDA Tribal Barriers Consultation and Listening Session** in partnership with the Mission Areas of USDA on the identification of barriers limiting access to or participation in USDA programs by Tribal communities. As shown in [USDA's Tribal Accomplishments for 2023](#), we have made great strides over the last few years in reducing, or even eliminating, these barriers. However, we know there is still work to do. This year's consultation will be held virtually during the **week of April 22, 2024 on the topics of Education and Research; Forestry and Public Lands Management; Farming, Ranching, and Conservation; Economic Development; and Food Safety & Trade**. Tribal leader invitations will be sent shortly. More details, including a formal invitation, agenda, and framing paper, will be posted in the coming weeks.

The Tribal Colleges and Universities Program is interviewing candidates to participate in the **USDA Office of Tribal Relations Summer Internship Program** (Future Leaders in Public Service Internship) for the summer of 2024. This exciting opportunity places students into internships at OTR and with our partner agencies to focus exclusively on Tribal policies. We are pleased to support these young leaders' learning about federal policy for Tribal agriculture and food policy programs.

The entire OTR team and the dedicated staff of the USDA look forward to identifying opportunities to support your goals and objectives. If you need anything, please contact OTR at 202-205-2249 or via email at Tribal.Relations@usda.gov. Please also visit our website at www.usda.gov/tribalrelations.

[Heather Dawn Thompson](#), 202-205-2249, Director, Office of Tribal Relations

[Betsy Rakola](#), 202-205-2249, Deputy Director, Office of Tribal Relations

[Lawrence Shorty](#), 202-870-8035, Director, Tribal Colleges and Universities Program

[Lisa Yellow Luger](#), 202-845-5646, Deputy Director, Tribal Colleges and Universities Program

[Josiah Griffin](#), 202-720-1999, Policy Advisor on Economic Development and Food Systems

[Jeff Harris](#), 202-768-0812, Policy Advisor on Food, Research, Consultation, Youth, Indigenous Food Sovereignty Initiative

[Taylor Schad](#), 202-875-9236, Policy Advisor on Forest Service and Natural Resources

[Jim Wabindato](#), 202-805-2208, Special Advisor on Tribal Agricultural Lands

[Elena Krajeski](#), 771-216-2277, Administrative Officer

[Ariel Williams](#), 202-934-8337, Administrative Assistant

Lila wopila (much thanks), for your guidance, advocacy, and hard work!

Heather Dawn Thompson (Cheyenne River Sioux)
Director, USDA Office of Tribal Relations

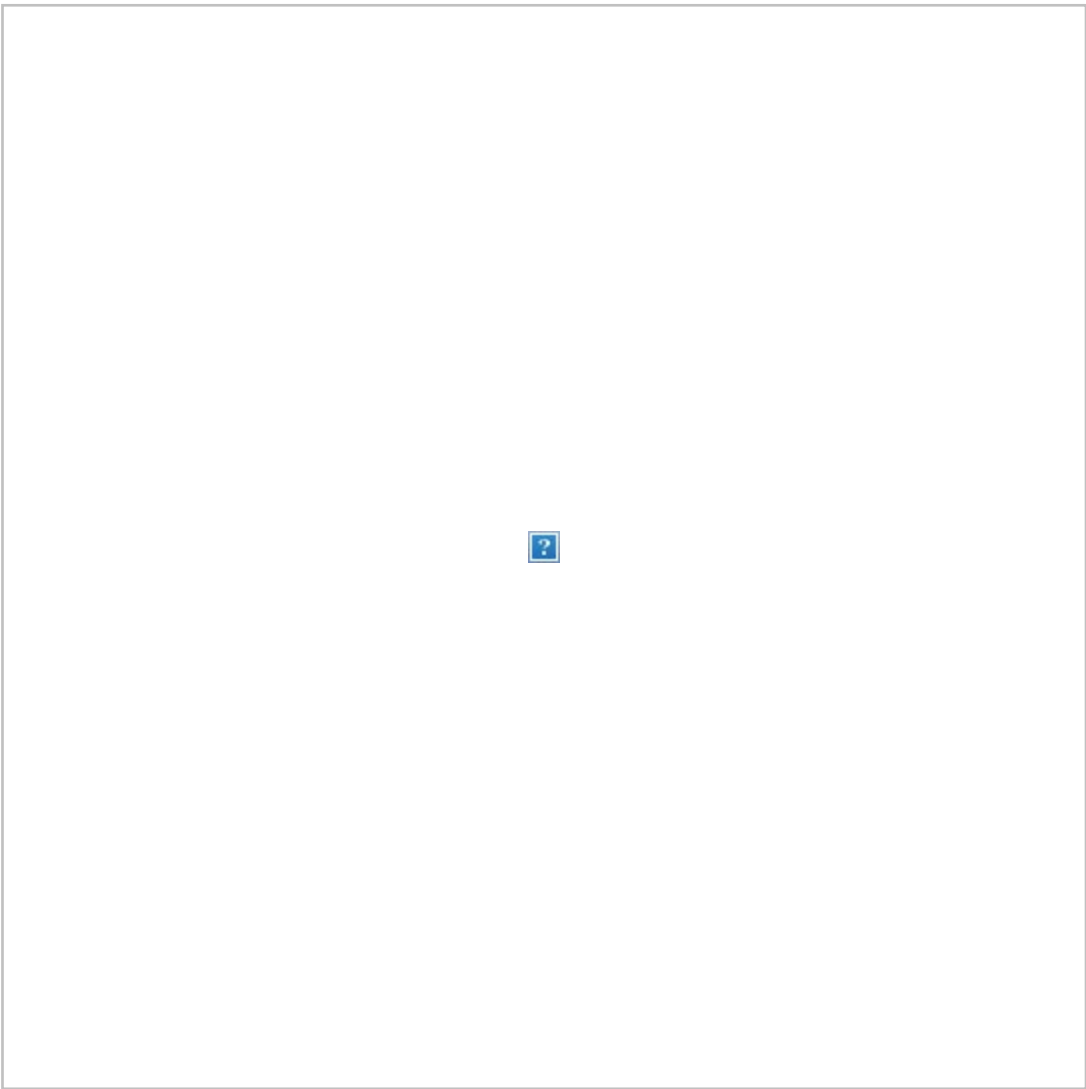
Tribal Barriers Removed at USDA

One of the significant topics USDA Secretary Vilsack discussed with Tribal and economic development leaders at his keynote at the Reservation Economic Summit (RES) this month was the major systemic barriers to accessing USDA that we have been working on. Thank you for raising these concerns and barriers with us in our annual USDA Tribal Barriers Consultations and Listening Sessions. The next USDA Barriers Consultation will be April 22-26, 2024. Here is what we have accomplished together so far:

- **Tribal Trust Lands Determined Eligible:** The U.S. Forest Service clarified that Tribal trust lands are not to be classified as “federal” lands and are eligible to serve as “base property” to qualify for Forest and National Grasslands grazing permits. This change finally gives Tribal producers the same fair chance as all producers at permits.
- **Tribal Government Consent Required:** Rural Development clarified that the permits and approvals for large infrastructure projects - broadband and electric - that are required before financing includes tribal government approvals when building on Tribal lands through a Tribal resolution of consent.
- **Tribal Government-Owned Entities Determined Eligible:** Rural Development clarified Tribal-owned entities (arms and instrumentalities) are eligible for economic development programs like Community Facilities and Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) programs.
- **Indigenous Animals Eligible:** The Farm Service Agency (FSA) ensured that bovine tuberculosis (*M. bovis*) in bison was eligible for the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). AMS created the Indigenous Animals Meat Processing Grant (IAG) to acknowledge the unique Indigenous animals and processing methods in Indian Country.
- **Indigenous Foods Included:** The Food and Nutrition Service ensured Indigenous starchy vegetables - like timsila (prairie turnips) – can now be used instead of grain requirements. School lunch guidelines have been updated to clarify that Indigenous foods are eligible, and foods like buffalo and salmon are included.
- **Tribal Homelands Honored:** The U.S. Forest Service has signed more than 180 agreements with Tribal nations under the Joint Secretarial Order (JSO) on Co-Stewardship increasing Tribal participation and decision making in their original homelands that are now with the USFS.

USDA at the Reservation Economic Summit (RES)

USDA senior leaders were out in force at the Reservation Economic Summit (RES), held March 11-14 in Las Vegas, Nev. RES is the largest national gathering for Indian Country economic development. Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack delivered a keynote address on the second day of the conference, highlighting USDA’s progress in removing barriers to Tribal participation in the Department’s programs. He also announced new [USDA investments to provide high-speed internet, clean drinking water and modern infrastructure to Tribal communities](#).



Secretary Vilsack, Heather Dawn Thompson, Director Office of Tribal Relations (Cheyenne River Sioux), and Rudy Soto, Director of External and Intergovernmental Affairs (Shoshone Bannock) then met with Tribal leaders and economic development experts to hear their perspectives on challenges and opportunities for USDA and Indian Country.



Rural Housing Service Administrator Joaquin Altoro plus an incredible 13 State Directors from USDA's Rural Development (Alaska, Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, and Wyoming) also participated in RES, meeting with Tribes from their States to deepen connections. Administrator Altoro, State Directors, and Rural Development's Tribal liaison team presented a standing-room-only panel on their grants and loans for electric programs, housing, community facilities, and rural business development.

The Office of Tribal Relations hosted a booth and distributed its [Resource Guide for American Indians and Alaska Natives](#). Finally, OTR Deputy Director Betsy Rakola presented on a panel about export financing. It was a great opportunity to connect with stakeholders new and old. We look forward to attending next year.

USDA Hall of Tribal Nations

USDA Requests your Tribal Flag for the Hall of Tribal Nations

In recognition of the diplomatic nation-to-nation relationship, between Tribes and the federal government, USDA is proud to host a Hall of Tribal Nations, akin to our sister agency, the Department of Interior – Bureau of Indian Affairs. Agriculture Secretary Vilsack shared a [video dedicating this new space](#) during the November 2021 White House Tribal Nations Conference.

USDA invites more Tribal nations to contribute flags to this growing collection. Please contact Tribal.Relations@usda.gov to learn more or send your 3ft. x 5ft. tribal flag to:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Attention: Tribal Flags/Office of Tribal Relations
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Room 200A J.L. Whitten Building
Washington, D.C. 20250

White House & USDA Initiatives

WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVES AND EXECUTIVE ORDERS

- NEW: [Historic Executive Order to Usher in the Next Era of Tribal Self-Determination](#), Reforming Federal Funding to Better Embrace our Trust Responsibility and Tribal Self-Determination (Dec. 6, 2023)
- [Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#)
- [Executive Order on Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies](#)
- [White House Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships](#)
- [White House Memorandum on Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge \(ITEK\) and Federal Decision Making](#)
- [Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Interagency Coordination and Collaboration for the Protection of Tribal Treaty Rights and Reserved Rights](#)
- [Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Interagency Coordination and Collaboration for the Protection of Indigenous Sacred Sites](#)
- [Memorandum of Agreement on Native Languages \(Inter-Agency\)](#)

USDA INITIATIVES

- [USDA Food Sovereignty Initiative](#)
- [USDA Tribal Self Determination Initiative](#)
- [USDA-Department of Interior \(DOI\) Joint Secretarial Order on Tribal Homelands](#)
- [USDA-DOI Tribal Treaty Database](#)

Employment/Board Opportunities

Office of Trust Services and the Bureau of Indian Affairs: [Realty Specialist](#) - Key federal position for Indian Country producers. Handles leases, natural resources, etc. Over 70 positions available throughout Indian Country. Application Deadline: May 20, 2024

Consultations, Listening Sessions, Webinars, and Other Notices

For current information on Tribal consultations, visit [OTR's Tribal Consultation page](#).

[Indigenous Food Sovereignty Emerging Leaders Program \(IFSELP\) Q&A Session Webinar](#)

Date: Thursday, March 28, 2024

Time: 3:00 p.m. ET

[Register](#)

In partnership with North Dakota State University, with funding from USDA Office of Tribal Relations, the Indigenous Food Sovereignty Emerging Leaders Program is a three-week summer program dedicated to creating opportunities for students from across the nation

interested in Indigenous food sovereignty and public health in Native American Tribal communities. The program will be held at North Dakota State University in Fargo, N.D. and will feature a variety of topics, speakers, and events to educate and hone skills for a potential career in these fields.

[Tribal Consultation and Listening Session on Public Access to USDA-Funded Research](#)

Date: Thursday April 11, 2024

Time: 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. ET

This USDA Tribal consultation and listening session will discuss changes to the public access requirements to USDA-funded research results. Specifically, topics will include equitable access to the results of USDA-funded research, Indigenous data sovereignty, and potential outreach and training partnerships.

SAVE THE DATE

USDA Annual Tribal Barriers Consultation and Listening Session

Monday, April 22 – Friday April 26, 2024

- Monday, April 22 - Education and Research
- Tuesday, April 23 - Forests and Public Lands Management
- Wednesday, April 24 - Farming, Ranching, and Conservation
- Thursday, April 25 - Economic Development
- Friday, April 26 - Food, Safety, and Trade

More details to come.

Grant/Loan/Program Opportunities

[Supporting the Use of Traditional Indigenous Foods in the Child Nutrition Programs Cooperative Agreement Request for Applications](#)

Application due date: April 8, 2024

USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) released a Request for Applications (RFA) for the [Supporting the Use of Traditional Indigenous Foods in the Child Nutrition Programs Cooperative Agreement](#) which will be open through April 8, 2024. Through this cooperative agreement, FNS will engage organizations led and primarily staffed by members of federally recognized Tribes and/or Native Hawaiians to provide regionally focused training and technical assistance to school nutrition professionals on procurement, preparation, and crediting of traditional Indigenous foods as part of the Child Nutrition Programs. The cooperators, with FNS guidance and approval, will also develop culturally relevant nutrition education materials for students to accompany the traditional Indigenous foods that are served, and the cooperators will train school nutrition professionals and other school staff on providing nutrition education to students.

[Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production \(UAIP\) Competitive Grants Program](#)

Application due date: April 9, 2024

The primary goal of the UAIP projects is to support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production. UAIP grants support planning and implementation activities. Planning activities will initiate, develop, or support the efforts of farmers, gardeners, citizens, government officials, schools, members of tribal communities, and other stakeholders in areas where access to fresh foods are limited or unavailable. Implementation activities will accelerate existing and emerging models of urban and/or innovative agricultural practices that serve multiple farmers or gardeners. Innovation may include new and emerging, as well as Indigenous or non-traditional agricultural practices.

[Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants \(DLT Program\)](#)

Application due date: April 29, 2024

DLT Program provides financial assistance to enable and improve distance learning and telemedicine services in rural areas. DLT grant funds support the use of telecommunications-enabled information, audio and video equipment, and related advanced technologies by students, teachers, medical professionals, and rural residents. These grants are intended to increase rural access to education, training, and health care resources that are otherwise unavailable or limited in scope.

[GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program](#)

Application due date: May 14, 2024

NIFA requests applications for the [GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program](#) to support and evaluate projects intended to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables by providing incentives at the point of purchase among income eligible consumers participating in the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the United States Virgin Islands, in addition to income-eligible consumers participating in the USDA Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) in Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

[Regional Food Systems Partnerships \(RSFP\)](#)

Application due date: May 14, 2024

This grant program supports partnerships that connect public and private resources to plan and develop local or regional food systems. The RSFP focuses on building and strengthening local or regional food economy viability and resilience, and this includes pandemic response and recovery. Applicants will work with their partners to catalyze the development of local or regional food systems, such as regional food sovereignty assessments and inter-tribal trade planning.

[Farmers Market Promotion Program \(FMPP\)](#)

Application due date: May 14, 2024

This grant program funds projects that develop, coordinate, and expand direct producer-to-consumer markets to help increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products, including activities like agri-tourism and food boxes.

[Local Food Promotion Program \(LFPP\)](#)

Application due date: May 14, 2024

This grant program funds projects that develop, coordinate, and expand local and regional food business enterprises that engage as intermediaries in indirect producer to consumer marketing to help increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products, including activities like food hubs and connecting C-stores to local food businesses.

[The Rural eConnectivity Program](#)

Application due date: May 21, 2024

The Rural eConnectivity Program (ReConnect) Program provides loans, grants, and loan/grant combinations to facilitate broadband deployment in rural areas. In facilitating the expansion of broadband services and infrastructure, the program will fuel long-term economic development and opportunities in rural America.

News

USDA Indian Country Blogs

Learn more about USDA's work in Indian Country through [USDA blogs](#) and OTR's [Video and Radio page](#).



Department of Agriculture | 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20250

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