USDA/1994
Tribal Scholars Handbook

Revised July 2009
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OVERVIEW

The USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program offers scholarships to U.S. citizens who are seeking a bachelor's degree at one of the thirty-two currently operating 1994 Land Grant Institutions in any field of study in agriculture, food, natural resource sciences or other related disciplines. Scholars are required to study in the following or related disciplines:

- Agriculture
- Agricultural Business/Management
- Agricultural Economics
- Engineering (Agricultural, Engineering, Mechanical, Civil/Electrical
- Agricultural Production and Technology
- Agronomy or Crop Science
- Animal Sciences
- Botany
- Farm and Range Management
- Fish, Game, or Wildlife Management
- Food Sciences/Technology
- Forestry and Related Sciences
- Home Economics/Nutrition/Human Development
- Horticulture
- Natural Resources Management
- Soil Conservation/Soil Science
- Other related disciplines, (e.g., non-medical biological sciences, pre-veterinary medicine, computer science, finance, accounting)

The purpose of the USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program is to:

- Strengthen the long-term partnership between USDA and the 1994 Land Grant Universities
- Increase the number of students studying agriculture, food, natural resources sciences or other related disciplines at the 1994 Universities
- Offer career opportunities to USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars at the U.S. Department of Agriculture

The USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program will provide full tuition, employment, employee benefits, fees, books, use of a laptop, printer, and software while on scholarship and room and board each year for 4 years, to students pursuing a bachelor's degree at the following 1994 Tribal Colleges and Universities.

- Bay Mills Community College
- Blackfeet Community College
- Cankdeska Cikana Community College
- Chief Dull Knife College
- College of Menominee Nation
- Diné College
- Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
- Fort Belknap College
- Fort Berthold Community College
- Fort Peck Community College
- Haskell Indian Nations University
- Ilisagvik College
- Institute of American Indian Arts
- Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College
- Leech Lake Tribal College
- Little Big Horn College
- Little Priest Tribal College
- Navajo Technical College
- Nebraska Indian Community College
- Northwest Indian College
- Oglala Lakota College
- Saqinaw Chippewa Tribal College
- Salish Kootenai College
- Sinte Gleska University
- Sisseton Wahpeton College
- Sitting Bull College
- Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute
- Stone Child College
- Tohono O’odham Community College
- Turtle Mountain Community College
- United Tribes Technical College
This handbook will serve as a resource guide for current USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program participants. Scholars should refer to this document for information regarding the Program expectations related to their award, academic progress, work period planning, and full-time employment preparation. This document does not replace the service agreement signed by each scholar, their Sponsoring Agency and University. Scholars should follow established communication protocol when addressing concerns regarding the USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Handbook.
I. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are provided to clarify common terminology used in the USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program agreements, handbooks, and other documents.

1. **1994 TCUs or 1994 Institutions** - any of the 1994 Land Grant Universities. These are also known as Tribal Colleges and Universities.

2. **Academic year** -- An academic year is computed as follows:
   - At the undergraduate level, successfully completed education that has not led to possession of a degree is credited based on its relationship to 120 semester hours or 180 quarter hours. For example, 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours is comparable to 1 year of undergraduate education. Four years of progressive study or 120 semester hours meets the degree requirements. Additional credit cannot be given for duplicate course work.
   - For study at a business or technical school, 36 weeks of study (20+ classroom hours per week) is comparable to 1 academic year above high school.

3. **Agency Coordinator** - an agency employee who has been designated to coordinate all administrative activities for their respective scholar.

4. **Extended Leave** - prolonged absence from academic studies and/or work assignment, with prior approval

5. **Individual Development Plan (IDP)** - An annual plan developed jointly by the employee and supervisor that identifies the employee’s short- and long-term learning and developmental goals. This plan may contain approved elective and required training, education, and developmental activities to acquire the competencies required to meet the organization’s goals and/or employee’s career goals.

6. **Leave without Pay (LWOP)** - is a temporary non-pay status and absence from duty that, in most cases, is granted upon an employee’s request. Scholars are placed in this status when in school.

7. **Mentor** - a senior colleague who can contribute positively to the student's academic and/or professional development.

8. **Tribal Scholars Program Director** - an individual who is responsible for directing, managing and providing guidance, oversight, and leadership to the USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program.

9. **Noncompetitive Conversion** - the transfer of a student into the permanent work force without competition.

10. **OPM** - Office of Personnel Management
11. **Performance Plan** - all of the written, or otherwise recorded, performance elements that set forth expected performance. A plan must include all elements, critical and non-critical elements if used, and their performance standards.

12. **Performance Standard** - the management-approved expression of the performance threshold(s), requirement(s), or expectation(s) that must be met to be appraised at a particular level of performance. A performance standard may include, but is not limited to, quality, quantity, cost-efficiency, timeliness, and manner of performance.

13. **Position Description (PD)** - the official USDA document that details specific duties and job responsibilities of an employee.


15. **Scholar/student** - a student selected to participate in the USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program.

16. **Service Agreement** - the document signed by the scholar, agency representative, and 1994 institution, outlining the requirements and specifics of each party's responsibility during the student's participation in the program.

17. **Sponsoring Agency** - the USDA agency sponsoring the scholar in the USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program.

18. **Temporary Duty Assignment (TDY)** - travel that is to one or more places away from an official duty station to perform duties for a period of time.

19. **Termination** - the dismissal or separation of a student from participation in the USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program.

20. **USDA** - the United States Department of Agriculture.

21. **USDA Tribal College Liaison (TCL)** - a USDA employee, located on the campus of an 1994 TCU or assigned that a school that coordinates the activities of the scholars from the university, and USDA's perspective, including, but not limited to, recruitment, counseling, and academic program development.

22. **Work Experience** - the work assignment provided by the sponsoring agency, and that, which is related to the student's academic studies.

23. **Work Site** - the student's official duty station (ODS) or temporary work location.
II EDUCATION

B. Academic Requirements

1. The USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program requires Scholars to
   
   - Maintain a full-time course load (as specified by the institution). The sponsoring agency in consensus with the institution may grant exception to the full-time course load requirement due to extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the scholar.
   
   - Achieve and maintain a minimum of 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale cumulative GPA (or equivalent) overall and each semester. The sponsoring agency will place the scholar on academic probation if his/her GPA goes below 3.0.\(^1\)

2. The Tribal College Liaison will work with the scholar’s academic advisor and USDA agency coordinator to ensure that the student maintains his/her eligibility by adhering to the grade point average requirement.

   **Note:** The sponsoring agency and Institution must approve and agree upon any changes of major and or credit hours, before any changes can be made.

B. Commitments

The USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program requires Scholars to committee to service during and after their undergraduate students to fulfill the goal of the USDA/1994 initiative of recruiting and hiring of students studying and working in careers in agriculture, food science, natural resources, and related disciplines. To meet this obligation, Scholars are expected to:

1. 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 up to 640 hours in one summer period, students are still expected to work each summer period unless other arrangements have been made with the sponsoring agency.

2. Report to their assigned work site during the summer period, unless other arrangements are made by the sponsoring agency and agreed upon by both parties.

3. Work for the sponsoring agency 1 (one) year for each year of financial support provided, unless otherwise agreed upon.

4. Must achieve satisfactory work performance as designated by the Sponsoring Agency.

\(^1\)Full-time course load typically consists of a minimum of 12-15 semester or quarter hours. Scholars should use the university’s course load schedule to determine the minimum number of hours that constitutes full-time.
C. Financial Provisions

1. The sponsoring agency shall provide full tuition, books, and fees (excluding room deposits and other deposits required by the university, graduation fees and personal items where applicable).

2. Tribal College Liaisons will submit a list of all costs (receipts) incurred covered by the Scholars (e.g., tuition, fees, books, labs, conferences and workshops, etc.) to the sponsoring agency’s coordinator each semester.

3. Scholars receiving financial assistance from other government sources may see a reduction in their scholarship award, due to regulations prohibiting duplicate payment from a federal source (e.g. Federal Pell grants).

Note: Scholars should contact the USDA Tribal College Liaison regarding tuition, books, and fee issues and concerns. The use of government funds for personal use is prohibited.

D. Room and Board

1. There are currently no provisions for room and board from this scholarship.

E. Laptop Computers

The Department of Agriculture may issue a laptop computer (pre-imaged), printer and customary software to each scholar. Scholars that are issued laptops must:

1. Agree and sign the equipment accountability form
2. Contact their sponsoring agency for additional software.
3. Notify the Liaison Officer and contact the technical support for problems associated with the computer and/or software.
4. Adhere to all USDA policies regarding the proper use of government equipment.
5. Return the laptop computer, printer, and peripherals to the respective USDA Liaison Officer or individual specified within one (1) business day of leaving the program when withdrawing or are terminating from the Scholars Program

Note: Laptop computers and printers are for the use of the scholar only.
III. WORK EXPERIENCE

The USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program incorporates educational and work experience opportunities to prepare the Scholar for full-time employment. Typically, during each summer break from school, Scholars are assigned to a work experience assignment with their sponsoring agencies, or may be assigned to work with another agency or entity. The work experiences are an opportunity to introduce the Scholar to their new organization, to learn the duties and responsibilities of their future position, and to apply relevant academic knowledge.

The sponsoring agency must provide work experiences related to the scholar’s academic/career goals. It is expected that students accepted into the USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program will either be working at their sponsoring agency, enrolled in classes or both. A student may work in USDA or a non-USDA work-related position during the school year; however, the scholar must maintain the required minimum grade point average and credit hours for this program. The length and location of each work experience varies; however Scholars are expected to complete a minimum of 640 hours of career-related work before completing their bachelor degree.

Note: Scholars typically have preferred start and ending dates for each work experience. The dates will be accommodated as much as possible, however Scholars may be asked to begin their assignments at the beginning of a pay period, as to accommodate human resources processing. Please contact the Sponsoring Agency’s Coordinator for information on the pay period calendar.

A. Work Experience Location (Work Site)

Work sites and assignments will be determined by the sponsoring agency. Assignments are typically identified within 30 days of the scholar’s start date. Students are expected to report to their assigned work site during the summer period, unless other arrangements are made by the sponsoring agency. Students desiring to change work site location must notify the sponsoring agency coordinator. If a new work site is found to be in the best interest of the student and agency, the agency will facilitate the process.

Note: Scholars desiring to change work site location must request the change with the agency coordinator in writing to the Sponsoring agency’s coordinator for approval.

B. Housing

1. Payment methods

The sponsoring agency may pay for lodging expenses for a Scholar during their work experience and training opportunities. Housing may be paid by the sponsoring agency through two methods – 1) Prepaid or 2) Reimbursement.
Prepaid housing is paid by the agency through direct payment to the housing vendor. Scholar does not incur any upfront costs other than miscellaneous fees not covered by the USDA.

Reimbursement is the process of Scholar recouping the funds from the sponsoring agency for covered expenses paid upfront by the Scholar. Reimbursement is typically made through the scholar’s bi-weekly salary check.

Scholars should inquire with their Sponsoring Agency’s Coordinator and/or supervisor to learn more about their responsibilities related to housing matters preferably more than 30 days before reporting to the work experience location.

Note: According to Federal law, housing payments are considered income and maybe subject to taxes. Scholars should inquire with their sponsoring agency’s human resources department for tax liability information.

2. Additional Fees

Scholars should be prepared to pay any out-of-pocket expenses related to housing such as deposits, amenity fees, parking, insurance, and etc.

3. Housing restrictions

Scholars are typically assigned to furnished corporate housing or hotels in the immediate commuting area of the work experience. In rare occasions, non-traditional housing is provided, such as renting rooms, subletting apartments, or living in a local university dormitory. Scholars are typically housed with a roommate from other summer programs; therefore Scholars should not have outside guests or relatives residing with them in the housing. Visitations are acceptable, however arrangements must be agreed upon with the roommates, if applicable).

Note: USDA/1994 Liaison Officers shall assist agency coordinators with locating housing for scholars, when necessary.

C. Travel and Transportation

Scholars are expected to travel to and from their work experiences and during their work experiences by car, air, or other modes of transportation, since some work experiences are not located in the Scholar’s immediate area of their residence or school. Scholars should inquire with their Sponsoring Agency’s Coordinator and/or supervisor to learn more about their responsibilities related to travel and transportation, preferably more than 30 days before reporting to the work experience location.
1. Travel to and from work experience

The sponsoring agency may pay for transportation expenses associated with traveling to and from their work experience. However, scholars should be prepared to pay travel costs when traveling to and from their work experience, such as gas, which may be reimbursed by the agency. Sponsoring agencies may also pay for travel expenses related to training (e.g., Tribal scholar’s orientation, conferences, workshops, etc.); however, Scholars must communicate requests with the appropriate Agency representative for approval.

2. Local Transportation

While participating in their work experience, Scholars may need a personal vehicle or local transportation resources to travel daily to and from the work site, as well as for temporary duty travel.

Use of personal vehicle during the work experience period to commute to and from the official duty station is not reimbursable; however, temporary duty and local work-related travel in a personal vehicle is reimbursable at the mileage rates, identified according to General Services Administration, established rates.

3. Transit Benefits Subsidy Program

Local mass transportation, such as bus, subway, carpool/vanpool, and train may be paid in full or partially by the sponsoring agency through the employee transit benefits program. Scholars should inquire with their local supervisor or administrative office for more information.

4. Government-owned Vehicle (GOV)

Scholars working in locations inaccessible to public transportation may be provided a GOV to commute to and from their work location and for local and temporary duty travel assignments. Scholars that are assigned a GOV must adhere to regulations pertaining to GOV use, which may include taking a defensive driver safety course, meeting minimum age, and state driver’s license requirements.

Note: All Scholars must complete and submit a travel voucher upon returning from temporary duty government travel (see your supervisor for instructions).

D. Pay and Benefits

Scholars will receive pay in accordance with established pay schedules, during periods of work. Additional benefits may include:

- Annual and sick leave;
- Health and life insurance;
- Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS);
- Transit subsidy benefits (in some areas)
1. **Electronic Reimbursement**

All federal government employees are paid and reimbursed for expenses via electronic funds transfer. Therefore, Scholars must have an established checking or savings account to receive payments. The Sponsoring Agency will provide the Scholar with necessary documents to report banking information, such as the bank name, checking/savings account number, and routing number.

2. **Salary Payments**

Salary payments are made biweekly each pay period. Scholars must report time and attendance (T&A) on a hardcopy form or through the electronic time and attendance system at the end of the pay period. Each work experience period, the first pay check for the scholar will arrive approximately the fourth week of work experience, and bi-weekly thereafter; therefore scholars should bring money to sustain themselves during this period.

3. **Promotions**

Students are **eligible** for promotions during the program based on work performance success, experience and/or education. Promotions are approved at the discretion of the supervisor, and Scholars must submit a current transcript and current resume **prior** to each work experience to the Sponsoring agency coordinators before returning to work so an appropriate grade level can be determined. Eligibility for grade determinations is typically determined by the following Office of Personnel Management (OPM) eligibility chart:
Qualifying Education or Training

Eligibility for grade determinations are *typically* determined by the following Office of Personnel Management (OPM) eligibility chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>QUALIFYING EDUCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GS-1</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS-2</td>
<td>High school graduation or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS-3</td>
<td>1 academic year above high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS-4</td>
<td>2 academic years above high school, or Associate's degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS-5</td>
<td>4 academic years above high school leading to a bachelor's degree, or Bachelor's degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS-7</td>
<td>Bachelor's degree with Superior Academic Achievement for two-grade interval positions, or 1 academic year of graduate education (or law school, as specified in qualification standards or individual occupational requirements)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Scholars are encouraged to discuss promotion and grade level matters with their supervisor and Sponsoring Agency Coordinator *prior* to reporting to their work experience.
E. Performance Management

The overall goal of performance management is to ensure that the organization and all of its subsystems (processes, departments, teams, employees, etc.) are working together in an optimum fashion to achieve the results desired by the organization. In order to measure the effectiveness of an employee’s performance, the USDA uses performance standards, performance plans, and development plans to guide the employee through their job function. Each USDA employee works under the guidance of a position description that explains their responsibilities and duties. A performance plan with elements and standards explain to what degree these responsibilities are executed by the employee at their respective grade level.

Each work experience period, a scholar will be issued a position description and performance plan. This information will be used to communicate the goals the sponsoring agency expects the scholar to achieve during the work experience. It will also serve as a resource in determining the level of achievement the scholar has accomplished, ultimately determining their future responsibilities within the organization. Performance standards are developed annually to reflect the student’s position description. The sponsoring agency will establish and provide a performance plan with measurable results. Discussions regarding performance standards and job expectations should occur at the following times during their work period—1) Review upon reporting; 2) Midway evaluation; 3) Final evaluation.

Scholars are responsible for:
- Participating in discussions with their rating officials (typically your supervisor) concerning their progress reviews and performance appraisals;
- Ensuring they have a clear understanding of their performance expectations and how performance relates to the mission of the organization and requesting clarification from the rating official, if necessary;
- Taking responsibility to improve their own performance, performing at their full potential, supporting team endeavors, and continuing professional development; Identifying work problems and cooperating to resolve them with rating officials; and
- Seeking performance feedback from their rating official and, as appropriate, from internal and external customers.

Note: Scholars who do not meet the minimum performance expectations may be dismissed from the program. Scholars will not be evaluated at the same level of a full-time employee.

Individual Development Plan (IDP)

Scholars should have an IDP established by the supervisor in conjunction with the mentor. The IDP should outline a course of career development for successful integration into the permanent work force. The IDP supports performance enhancement and should not replace the actual performance plan and standards.
IV. CONVERSION TO FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT

A. Non-competitive conversion

Upon successfully graduating from a four-year, bachelor degree program, the scholar may be converted to full-time employment with the sponsoring agency within 120 days of graduating. The conversion to full-time employment is non-competitive, that is, the scholar will automatically enter a full-time permanent position closely related to their bachelor degree of study. In addition to the bachelor degree, the scholar must have:

- Completed at least 640 hours of career-related work; and
- Met qualification standards for the targeted position.
- Achieved a 3.0 or above overall grade point average on a 4.0 scale. Failure to graduate with a 3.0 or better may result in a lower grade level or different position series.

Note: Students not meeting requirements or adhering to established guidelines governing the program may be terminated.

B. Pay and Benefits

Scholars meeting all of the abovementioned criteria may converted to full-time, permanent position at the GS-7 grade level, and into a two-grade interval position with promotion potential. The maximum or full performance level (FPL) will vary by job series and/or agency. Scholars should inquire with the sponsoring agency in advance to learn more about their new position and FPL.

C. Performance

Converted scholars will be issued new position descriptions and performance standards commensurate with their new job series and grade level, typically within 30 days of conversion to full-time employment. As full-time, permanent employees, converted scholars may be expected to participate in discussions with their rating officials (typically your supervisor) concerning the development of performance elements, standards and measures and participating in their progress reviews and performance appraisals. As scholars progress in their careers, updated or new position descriptions will be issued proportionate with promotions and will reflect increased levels of responsibilities.

Note: Converted Scholars are rated annually (October 1-September 30) based on established performance standards and should request to review their performance elements at the start of the new full-time position. For information on the USDA Performance Management System, you may refer to Directive 4030.30.

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4 Scholars are typically converted to full-time employment within the sponsoring agency within 120 days after receiving their bachelor degree, however on some occasions, such as reduction in force, reorganizations, or other human capital matters, the scholar will not be converted to full-time. In these cases, scholars will be dismissed from the program without obligation to the Agency.
V. LEAVE, WITHDRAWAL, TERMINATION, and GRADUATE SCHOOL

A. Leave

A scholar, who needs extended time off due to health, personal matters, or other extenuating circumstances that are non-academic or non-disciplinary related, may be allowed to resume their studies anytime within a 12-month period. Periods of extended leave cannot exceed 6 months of cumulative leave, without forfeiting the scholarship.

Requests for extended leave must be in writing to their Sponsoring Agency Coordinator and Supervisor with supporting documentation from a health official, parent, or other appropriate source. The agency may use their discretion in either approving or denying a break in the program. The approval must be granted in writing prior to the scholar taking any action.

Note: Students in this program are in the excepted service tenure group II for purposes of a reduction-in-force, and are accorded the same rights as others in this group.

F. Withdrawal

Scholars have the option to voluntarily withdraw from the USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program at anytime during their participation. Scholars must submit a written notice indicating the intention to resign, to their sponsoring agency coordinator when withdrawing from the Program.

A scholar may be sent a prorated bill for expenses paid (excluding salary) from the agency and/or university.

C. Termination

The USDA Sponsoring Agency and University have the right to terminate the Scholar from the USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program at anytime. Scholars are typically terminated from the program when failing to adhere to the terms of the signed Service Agreement, including meeting GPA and performance requirements. Scholars may also be terminated from the program for violating the code of ethics and/or conduct (USDA and 1994 institutions) and Civil Rights and harassment policies.

All final termination notices will be communicated in writing by the sponsoring agency and/or the USDA/1994 Programs. All financial support provided by the agency and university will be discontinued on the date of termination.
D. Graduate School

The USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program presently does not have a graduate school component. Scholars may attend graduate school with his/her sponsoring agency’s advanced approval; however, the expectation of the program is for scholars to complete their undergraduate education in 4 years and convert to full-time employment within 120 days after graduating with a bachelor degree. If you have intentions

Scholars approved to attend graduate school may be converted (full-time employee) and then placed in a leave without pay status while attending school and are expected to return to their sponsoring agency to begin employment immediately after leaving graduate school.
VI. ETHICS, CONDUCT, CIVIL RIGHTS

A. Ethics

All Federal employees are expected to adhere to Federal and Agency Ethics Rules and Regulations. Under 5CFR2635.101(b), fourteen principles are identified, however employees should familiarize themselves with the full directives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>14 Principles of Ethics</th>
<th>PRINCIPLE</th>
<th>TRANSLATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws and ethical principles above private gain.</td>
<td>Loyalty to government above private gain.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duties.</td>
<td>Be careful not to have your hands in too many financial pies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Employees shall not engage in financial transactions using nonpublic Government information or allow the improper use of information to further any private interest.</td>
<td>You may not use “inside information” to line your pockets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. An employee shall not solicit or accept any gift or other item of monetary value from any person or entity seeking official action from, doing business with, or conducting activities regulated by the employee's agency, or whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance or non-performance of the employee’s duties. Exception: subpart B.</td>
<td>Be especially wary when anyone wants to give you something just because “you are you”.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Employee shall put forth honest effort in performance of their duties.</td>
<td>Be a “fully successful” employee.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Employees shall not knowingly make unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the Government.</td>
<td>Most of us can't, but if you can, don't.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Employee shall not use public office for private gain.</td>
<td>You may not use “inside information” to line your pockets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.</td>
<td>Never play favorites. Be a straight shooter.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Employees shall protect and conserve Federal property and shall not use it for other than authorized activities.</td>
<td>Never steal, sell, or otherwise misuse Government property.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Employees shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with official Government duties and responsibilities.</td>
<td>You can increase personal income via outside employment, but your second employment must not conflict with your Government job.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Employees shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities.</td>
<td>Blow the whistle on anyone who wastes Government resources, commits fraud in performing his/her duties, abuses his/her position, or is otherwise corrupt. You are protected by law—the Whistleblower Protection Act (WPA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Employees shall satisfy in good faith their obligations as citizens, including all just financial obligations, especially those—such as Federal, State, or local taxes that are imposed by law.</td>
<td>Pay your debts on time, and fully.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Employees shall adhere to all laws and regulations that provide equal opportunity for all Americans regardless of race, color, religion, sex, Tribal origin, age, or handicap.</td>
<td>Do not discriminate or retaliate. Adhere to EEO laws, rules, and regulations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Employees shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards set forth in this part.</td>
<td>Follow the rules.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Information from table is courtesy of the US Forest Service Human Capital Management-2009.
B. Conduct

As a Federal employee, you are expected to conduct yourself and interact with others with dignity, respect, and common courtesy. The Federal government uses directives and laws to identify employee responsibilities and acceptable and prohibited conduct practices. USDA employees use Departmental Regulation (DR)-4070-735-001; however employees may also adhere to Agency directives and notices.

1. Employee Responsibilities

All employees must:
- Maintain high standards of honesty, integrity, and impartiality;
- Adhere to rules;
- Comply with lawful supervisory direction;
- Comply with work-related laws, regulations, and policies.

2. Prohibited Activities

All employees are prohibited from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Employees are prohibited from:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engaging in criminal, infamous, dishonest, immoral, or notoriously disgraceful conduct, or other conduct prejudicial to the Government at any time</td>
<td>Gambling while on Government-owned or leased property, or while on official duty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using an intoxicating substance on Government-owned or leased property, or transporting or using an intoxicating substance in a Government-owned or leased vehicle</td>
<td>Harassing employees by word or action, or knowingly making false accusations against employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring telephone conversations, recording telephonic conversations by device, or authorizing or permitting others under their administrative control to do so</td>
<td>Utilizing any device to monitor or record non-telephonic conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soliciting for the sale or any article, or selling any article, including candy, Girl Scout cookies, Avon, etc., in or around Government-owned or leased property, unless authorized by law or regulation</td>
<td>Engaging in sexual misconduct, including but not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing to take appropriate action on complaints or proven acts of sexual harassment</td>
<td>Displaying discourteous conduct or disrespect to a coworker, another Federal employee, or a member of the public when acting in an official capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing to wear or use specified safety equipment, or failing to report obvious unsafe conditions while on official</td>
<td>Making threats against other employees, members of the public, or Government property</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Information from table is courtesy of the US Forest Service Human Capital Management-2009.
C. EEO/Civil Rights (CR) and Anti-Harassment

The USDA is committed to affording every employee and customer fair and equitable treatment without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. All scholars are expected to adhere to all equal employment opportunity (EEO) and Civil Rights (CR) policies and laws.

In addition, the USDA considers harassment in any form is inappropriate and unacceptable conduct, and will not be tolerated. It is considered illegal, undermines employee relationships, interferes with productivity, and threatens the mental, emotional and physical well-being of employees.

Slurs, derogatory remarks, obscene materials, and other verbal or physical conduct constitute harassment when this conduct:
1. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; and
3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Scholars experiencing harassment should inform the alleged harasser to cease the inappropriate comment or action. Studies have shown this is the most effective means for addressing inappropriate behavior. Employees should also inform their managers and supervisors of inappropriate activity. Managers and supervisors are responsible for acts of harassment in the workplace where the managers or supervisors knew or should have known of the conduct. They are expected to take immediate and appropriate corrective action when harassment occurs.

Scholars should obtain a copy of applicable policies from their sponsoring agency’s Civil Rights Program or Staff and for further information.
VII. COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

As previously mentioned, the USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program offers numerous resources to scholars that will enhance the scholar's educational and professional development. Many of the resources are provided by a network of people that have differing responsibilities within the USDA and University; therefore it is important for the scholar to familiarize themselves with the stakeholder that can provide the best assistance and or guidance.

Each stakeholder—scholars, Tribal College Liaison, agency coordinator, university, and sponsoring agency, are to constructively facilitate the goals of the program, ensuring the Scholar's success in the program. Below are some of the responsibilities of each stakeholder.

A. USDA/1994 Tribal Scholar is required to:

- provide addresses, telephone numbers, email address, etc., to Tribal College Liaison (TCL), Agency Coordinators and mentors to ensure accessibility;
- report changes in course schedules;
- maintain open lines of communication through meetings, phone calls, e-mails, and etc.;
- capitalize on opportunities;
- attend regularly scheduled meetings appointments with TCL, academic advisor, and instructors;
- inform Tribal College Liaison, Sponsoring Agency Coordinator, and mentor of accomplishments and achievements, impeding problems, issues, and concerns;
- sign an "Employment Service Agreement";
- report to assigned work site;
- Report mid-term and final grades to TCL within 5 days of issuance by the university.

B. USDA/1994 Tribal College Liaison is required to:

- ensure that the scholar has access to an academic mentor;
- serve as a mentor and counselor;
- receive, distribute, and secure computer equipment;
- ensure the timely submission of paperwork for tuition and fees;
- meet at least 3 times a semester with the scholars;
- conduct an exit interview with graduating or dismissed scholars;
- serve as USDA's representative on the Institution's campus to resolve all scholar issues and concerns (e.g., grades, work assignments, change of major, transfers, etc.).

C. Agency Coordinators is required to:

- ensure scholars are paid the appropriate salary;
- serve as an advisor on the agency's behalf;
- ensure of performance standards and elements are developed;
- ensure the necessary paperwork is prepared for payment of tuition and fees;
• assure employment placement after graduation;
• ensure the Service Agreement is signed and copies disseminated to all appropriate parties;
• ensure each scholar has access to work site mentor.

D. University and Academic Mentor are required to:

• provide guidance in understanding the relevance of courses to career development goals;
• provide guidance in developing good study habits provide guidance in time management to obtain a balance between academics and social interactions at the college level;
• serve as a liaison between a scholar and academicians when appropriate;

E. Sponsoring Agency (Work Site Supervisor and/or Mentor) is required to:

• provide guidance for professional development;
• serve as a teacher by imparting various organizational skills;
• instruct the scholar in the power and political framework of the organization;
• provide tips on organizational culture, behavior, and social grace;
• attempt to build self-esteem and self improvement;
• promote and influences visibility of the scholar;
• ensure the scholar is taking the appropriate classes for his/her major;
• disseminate pertinent organizational information;
• assist with career planning and goal setting; preparing resumes; completing job application; sharpening interviewing skills; and developing the IDP;
• convene regular meetings with scholar;
• provide office hours and travel schedules;
• assist with work site logistics
• develop performance standards and elements (Supervisor) and discuss with scholar at the start of work cycle, midway, and end of work period.

Based on the identified responsibilities of each stakeholder, it is recommended that the communication is directed to the appropriate stakeholder, excluding entities that do not add value to the resolution process and free of disparaging or offensive statements to the recipient or mentioned parties. In addition, the communication should be

• Submitted in writing or verbally when necessary;
• Clear and accurately states the issue, concern, or question; and
• Submitted timely
VIII. GOVERNMENT COMPUTER USE

Each USDA/1994 Tribal Scholar is provided a government-issued computer and printer for use while in school and for some work period assignments. The computer and printer are considered to be government property; therefore scholars must adhere to departmental and agency policies regarding the use and handling of the equipment. More importantly, as an employee of the United States Department of Agriculture, you have a duty to protect and conserve Government property and shall not use such property, or allow its use, for other than authorized purposes.

A. Prohibited Activities:

Scholars using the government issued computer and laptop are prohibited from using the equipment in an unethical and/unlawful manner, including:

- Accessing prohibited websites (i.e.: pornography) you should not attempt to access these sites using government equipment. Note: Most government computers are equipped with web filtering systems which block users from accessing these sites.
- Gambling
- Internet Games
- Viewing, downloading, storing, processing, displaying, or sending offensive or obscene material such as threatening, sexually explicit, harassing, or hate literature.
- Using Internet Chat Services such as AOL, MSN, Yahoo, and MySpace instant messaging systems.
- Posting on personal homepages, blogs, or social networking sites including: MySpace, Facebook, Xanga, or any like site.
- Downloading or loading freeware or shareware software onto your government computer. Napster, Morpheus, LimeWire, BitTorrent, Blubster, or any like program.
- Using government computers for personal gain, including: Ebay, Craigslist, or conducting personal business for profit.
- Attempting to strain, test, circumvent or bypass computer-network or security controls
- Viewing, changing, damaging, deleting, or blocking access to another user’s files or communications.
- Installing software or hardware onto your government computer that is not work related and approved by IT personnel.
- Forwarding official mail to non-official accounts or devices.
- Writing or Forwarding chain or hoax e-mail messages.

B. Handling Government Equipment

Scholars will be issued a new or previously used computer and printer while in school and possibly work period assignments. Therefore, scholars will need to handle the computer and printer with care when transporting it on campus, away from campus, etc.
Below you will find some tips for handling the computer and equipment:

- Store the computer in a safe, dry place at all times
- Secure the computer when it is not in use
- Clean the keyboard and screen according to the manufacturers instructions
- Call the manufacturers help desk for tech support and for repairs (all computers have a 4-year extended warranty)
- Do not lend your computer to friends, relatives, or even other scholars—EVER
- Return the laptop and computer to the 1994 Tribal College Liaison within one (5) business days if dismissed or withdrawing from the USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program.

C. Frequently asked questions about the use of government equipment

1. Why are these activities prohibited, isn’t the purpose of the computer to help me get work accomplished while in school?

The purpose of the computer and printer is to provide the scholar with immediate access to equipment that will assist them in completing school related work. The equipment will tremendously reduce the amount of time the scholar will have to spend in computer labs and the library. Further, the scholar can perform their work virtually anywhere and do not have to be confined to a building or space.

2. What if I need to check my Gmail, hotmail, or yahoo mail account to get a critical document for school, is this permitted?

Yes. The use of your personal e-mail account may be the primary source of communicating while at school. The Federal government understands that scholars may need to download attachments from these accounts. Scholars should be mindful of sources of the files and ensure anti-virus software is updated to catch any potential viruses. In addition, scholars are still prohibited from downloading and saving inappropriate content.

3. What if I Google information and inadvertently choose a site that is prohibited—will I be reprimanded?

Possibly. Scholars that unknowingly visit, download or open prohibited content should report the incident immediately to their sponsoring agency coordinator, who will contact the IT department. The IT department may ask the scholar to return the computer to the sponsoring agency, so any content can be removed from the equipment to avoid any future issues. Scholars that fail to report the content and it is discovered later, the scholar may be held accountable for the content, if it cannot be disproved that the scholar did not intentionally visit the site.

4. My roommate used my computer and downloaded explicit information from an adult website—what do I do?

See response to question #3. In addition, the scholar should secure the equipment at all times, even when residing with roommates. Securing may be physical or virtual, such as storing the computer in a locked desk or closet (physical) or password protecting the computer screen with a password only the scholar knows (virtual). If the scholar fails to secure the equipment, he/she may lose the privilege of having the equipment.
5. I left my computer in my car and it was broken into and the computer was stolen.

Scholars should report the incident to the local or campus police immediately and obtain a report. Scholars should also contact their sponsoring agency coordinator immediately. Each laptop has “LoJack” installed, which will disable the computer from future use when reported stolen. Due to inventory concerns, scholars may not receive a replacement computer.

6. I was on vacation with my family and my sister spilled soda on it, now the computer will not turn on.

Call the manufacturer immediately with the issue. The manufacturer will inform you if this incident is covered under the warranty. If the incident is not covered, the scholar will need to return the equipment. Unfortunately, the scholar may not be issued another computer. It is important for the scholar to handle the computer with extreme care at all times.

7. My computer only has Microsoft Office software and I would like to have additional programs added, such as Dreamweaver, CAD, etc. added. Can I purchase the software and add it to the computer?

No. Scholars needing additional software should request the product through their sponsoring agency. The agency will determine if the software is essential to the scholar’s academic progress (or work progress) and will purchase and install the software. Note: All requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis and scholars should not add any software without consulting with the sponsoring agency.

8. With so many restrictions, I would prefer not to have a government issued laptop and printer. Is this possible?

Yes. Scholars may opt not to receive a computer or may return the computer at anytime. Equipment should be returned to the 1994 Tribal College Liaison assigned to your university.

9. I graduated and forgot to return my computer to the 1994 Tribal College Liaison. Where can I return the equipment?

If the scholar unintentionally leaves the campus with the computer, he/she has a few options to return the equipment, including:

If the scholar lives near the 1994 Institution, he/she should return the computer to the 1994 Tribal College Liaison

If the scholar has reported to their duty station or has enrolled in graduate school, the scholar should adequately package the equipment and ship it via FedEx or UPS to the USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program (contact the program director for an account number)
### IX. USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Agency Coordinators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>AGENCY</th>
<th>E-MAIL ADDRESS</th>
<th>PHONE #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Todd Birkenruth</td>
<td>AMS</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Todd.Birkenruth@usda.gov">Todd.Birkenruth@usda.gov</a></td>
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</tr>
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<td>202-720-6161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken E. Johnson</td>
<td>APHIS</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ken.johnson@usda.gov">ken.johnson@usda.gov</a></td>
<td>301-734-5353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivian Brooks</td>
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<td>202-720-6087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loretta Miller</td>
<td>ERS</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lmiller@ers.usda.gov">lmiller@ers.usda.gov</a></td>
<td>202-694-5379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mondina McClain</td>
<td>FSA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mondana.mcclain@wdc.usda.gov">mondana.mcclain@wdc.usda.gov</a></td>
<td>202-401-0515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken Hockenberry</td>
<td>FNS</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Ken.Hockenberry@fns.usda.gov">Ken.Hockenberry@fns.usda.gov</a></td>
<td>703-305-2463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Garrett</td>
<td>FSIS</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Patricia.Garrett@fsis.usda.gov">Patricia.Garrett@fsis.usda.gov</a></td>
<td>202-720-2195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hubert Hamer</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:hubert.hamer@usda.gov">hubert.hamer@usda.gov</a></td>
<td>202-720-8092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivian Dickson</td>
<td>NRCS</td>
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<td>202-720-1872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernadette Miller</td>
<td>RD</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bernadette.miller@usda.gov">bernadette.miller@usda.gov</a></td>
<td>202-692-0199</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
X. USDA/1994 Tribal College Liaisons Directory

WESTERN REGION 1994 TCUs CONTACT INFORMATION

Velma Real Bird
Tribal College and University Liaison Specialist – WESTERN REGION 1994 Program
United States Department of Agriculture
Little Big Horn College
PO Box 370
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FAX (406) 638-3169
Email: Velma.Realbird@ascr.usda.gov and realbirdv@lbhc.cc.mt.us

WESTERN REGION 1994 TCUs INSTITUTIONS

Blackfeet Community College: PO Box 819, Browning, MT 59417
www.bfcc.org; Financial Aid, TEL: 406-338-5421

Chief Dull Knife College: PO Box 98, Lame Deer, MT 59043
www.cdke.edu; TEL: 406-477-6215

Diné College, Arizona/New Mexico campuses, PO Box 126, Tsaile, AZ 86556
www.dinecollege.edu; Admissions, TEL: 918-724-6630; Email: registrar@dinecollege.edu

Fort Belknap College: PO Box 159, Harlem, MT 59526

Fort Peck Community College: PO Box 398, Poplar, MT 59255
www.fpcc.edu; Financial Aid, TEL: 406-768-6327; Email: lclark@fpcc.edu

Ilisagvik College: PO Box 749, Barrow, AK 99723
www.ilisagvik.cc; TEL: 907-852-3333

Institute of American Indian Arts: 83 Avan Nu Po Rd., Santa Fe, NM 87508
www.iaia.edu; Admissions, TEL: 505-424-2332

Little Big Horn College: PO Box 370, Crow Agency, MT 59022
www.lbhu.edu; Admissions, TEL: 406-638-3116; Email: tina@lbhc.cc.mt.us

Navajo Technical College: PO Box 849, Crownpoint, NM 87313
www.navajotech.edu; Admissions, TEL: 505-786-4107, Ext. 14107. Financial Aid, TEL: 505-786-4183, Ext. 14183

Northwest Indian College: 2522 Kwina Rd., Bellingham, WA 98226
www.nwic.edu; Admissions, TEL: 360-392-4269. Financial Aid, TEL: 360-392-4206

Revised June 2009
CENTRAL REGION 1994 TCUs CONTACT INFORMATION

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FAX: (701) 854-3403
Email: Lisa.Yellow@ascr.usda.gov and lisay@sbsi.edu

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Cankdeska Cikana Community College: PO Box 269, Fort Totten, ND 58335
www.littlehoop.edu; TEL: 701-766-4415; Email: info@littlehoop.cc

Fort Berthold Community College: 220 8th Avenue North, PO Box 490, New Town, ND 58763
www.fbcc.bia.edu; Admissions, TEL: 701-627-4738, Ext. 286. Financial Aid, TEL: 701-627-4738, Ext. 245

Haskell Indian Nations University: 155 Indian Ave., PO Box 5030, Lawrence, KS 66046-4800

Leech Lake Tribal College: PO Box 180, Cass Lake, MN 56633
www.lltc.edu; Admissions, TEL: 218-335-4222; Email: veronica.veauz@lltc.edu. Financial Aid, TEL: 218-335-4200

Little Priest Tribal College: PO Box 270, Winnebago, NE 68071
www.lptc.bia.edu; Admissions, TEL: 402-878-3360; Email: darlaw@lptc.bia.gov

Nebraska Indian Community College: College Hill, PO Box 428, Macy, NE 68039
www.theniccc.edu; Admissions, TEL: 402-837-5078

Oglala Lakota College: 490 Piya Wiconi Rd., Kyle, SD 57752
www.olc.edu; Admissions, TEL: 605-455-6033; Email: lnesteth@olc.edu. Financial Aid, TEL: 605-455-6037; Email: bhornbeck@olc.edu

Revised June 2009
Sinte Gleska University: 101 Antelope Lake Circle, PO Box 105, Mission, SD 57555
www.sintegleska.edu; TEL: 605-856-8100

Sisseton Wahpeton Community College: Agency Village Box 689, Sisseton, SD 57262
www.swc.tc; Financial Aid, TEL: 605-698-3966, Ext. 1182; Email: jmanylightnings@swc.tc

Sitting Bull College: 1341 92nd St., Fort Yates, ND 58538
www.sittingbull.edu; TEL: 701-854-8000; Email: info@sbc.edu

Turtle Mountain Community College: PO Box 340, Belcourt, ND 58316
www.tm.edu; Admissions, TEL: 701-477-7862

United Tribes Technical College: 3315 University Dr., Bismarck, ND 58504;
www.uttc.edu; Admissions, TEL: 701-255-3285

White Earth Tribal & Community College: 210 Main St. South, PO Box 478, Mahnomen, MN 56557
www.wetcc.org; Financial Aid, TEL: 218-936-5731

EASTERN REGION 1994 LAND-GRANT TCUs CONTACT INFORMATION

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EASTERN REGION 1994 LAND-GRANT TCUs

Bay Mills Community College: 12214 West Lakeshore Dr., Brimley, MI 49715
www.bmcc.edu; TEL: 906-248-3354

College of Menominee Nation: PO Box 1179, Keshena, WI 54135,
www.menominee.edu; Admissions, TEL: 1-800-567-2344. Financial Aid, TEL: 715-794-6226

Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College: 1720 Big Lake Rd., Cloquet, MN 55720
www.fdltc.edu; Admissions, TEL: 218-879-0808; Email: admissions@fdltc.edu. Financial Aid;
TEL: 218-879-0816; Email: dsutherland@fdltc.edu

Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College: 13466 West Trepania Rd., Hayward, WI 54843
www.lco.edu; TEL: 715-634-4790

Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College: 2274 Enterprise Dr., Mount Pleasant, MI 48858,
www.sagchip.edu; TEL: 989-775-4123

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USDA/1994 Programs
1400 Independence Ave., SW, STOP 9478, Washington, DC 20250
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Website: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/1994programs.html

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