Indian Energy and Economic Development

Respecting Tradition... While on the Path to Prosperity

Workforce Development

Who We Are...

The Division of Workforce Development manages a wide variety of job placement and training activities to promote job training and employment opportunities. Our training programs have resulted in numerous well-paying jobs for Indians. The Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development is also the lead federal agency for implementing Pub. L. 102-477 authorizing the Division to assist tribes in developing education, employment, training, and social services.

Serving tribal communities under tribal leadership for self-determination and self-governance

What We Do...

Our professionals:

- Coordinate federal employment and training resources with the Department of Labor and Health and Human Services for comprehensive tribal programs administering Public Law 102-477
- Work with the national Building Trades Association involving 13 different skilled construction trades to provide employment and training opportunities nationwide. This is the first ever agreement between the Department of the Interior and the Trades Association.
- Provide highway construction training and employment through a Department of Transportation Federal Highways Administration grant
- Manage the National Indian Ironworker Training Program
- Administer Job Placement and Training Program
- Provide training for economic development opportunities towards job creation
- Serve over 50,000 Indian individuals per year
- Partner with the Council for Tribal Employment Rights for native construction career projects

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

The Division administers the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) as it relates to Indian affairs in job creation, green energy, training, and employment projects nationwide.

Tribal members on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota install a solar panel.
File Photo

We are working with the national Building Construction Trades Association using ARRA funds to provide apprentice trade training and job placement opportunities. A variety of training programs are available offering opportunities such as electricians, roofers, and painters. An eight-week training program with the brickmasons in Maryland, 16 weeks of training with the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters in Chicago, Ill., and 20 weeks with the energy audit training program in Bismark, N.D., are just a few examples. Graduates of all the skilled trades establish careers with good salaries and excellent benefit packages.

Indian Employment, Training and Related Services Act (Public Law 102-477)

Through Public Law 102-477, the division distributed more than $100 million to tribes to provide employment, training, education, childcare, welfare reform, economic development, and related services that assists the economically disadvantaged, unemployed, or underemployed.

Under the Law, enacted in 1992, Indian tribal governments are given authority to integrate a variety of education, employment, training, and social services under a single plan, single budget, and single reporting system. Federal programs that are covered under P.L. 102-477 include any program which provides services to Indian youth or adults that helps such persons succeed in the workforce, encourages self-sufficiency, familiarizes youth or adults with the workplace environment, facilitates the creation of job opportunities, allows tribes to use a portion of the funds for economic development, or provides services related to any of these goals.

A tribe wishing to participate under P.L. 102-477 initially submits an integrated service plan and budget to the division which serves as the lead organization. Following an interagency review of the plan and budget, the Secretary of the Interior approves the plan and all affected agencies transfer their funds for the tribe to the division for award to tribal governments under contracts and compacts. The tribe then implements its services under the approved plan and budget.

Training Programs

Our tribal programs serve over 50,000 clients each year in training, education, welfare reform, job placement, childcare services, and supportive work services such as transportation. The Division provides funding and support for the National Ironworkers Training Program and the Native American Hybrid-Welding Program. Both programs have seen a high success rate in placing Indians in good jobs earning high wages.

Skilled trade workers in a training session.
File Photo

The Division, in partnership with Pub.L. 102-477 Tribal Work Group, developed a Case Management Training Program to provide tribal case managers the opportunity to better assist unemployed tribal members find jobs. Graduates of the four-week course obtain college credit and are able to help the unemployed and underemployed become job ready, provide counseling, share best practices, and develop a network of tribal case managers.

Moreover, tribal employment and training directors will be assuming nationwide responsibility for many of the new employment initiatives including the skilled trades training. For example, the Menonimee Tribe of Wisconsin is taking leadership in the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters program. The Citizen Potawatomi Nation is the tribal leader of the economic development for job creation effort, and the United Tribes Technical College is providing leadership on the Energy Auditor II project. These are just a few examples of how tribes and tribal organizations play a key role in management and in providing tribal consultation for employment and training efforts within the Division of Workforce Development.

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