Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
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WASHINGTON – Interior Associate Deputy Secretary James E. Cason today announced that the Indian Affairs Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (IEED) will be competitively awarding grants of up to $25,000 to federally recognized tribes interested in participating in DOI's employment and training initiative known as the 477 Program. The IEED is seeking to encourage non-participating tribes to consider the using the 477 Program through grants that will help them develop plans for implementing the program in their communities.

"The 477 Program has proven to be a great tool for tribes seeking to decrease administrative costs, enhance budget flexibility and support their economic development and job creation efforts," Cason said. "This grant opportunity will allow tribes not currently 477 participants to take another look at how the program can help them meet their economic development, employment and job training needs."

Established in 1994 under Public Law 102-477, the Indian Employment, Training and Related Services Act, the 477 Program has enabled approximately 240 tribes to use federal funds more effectively to educate and train an estimated 44,000 children, youth and adults. There are fewer tribal participants from the lower 48 states due to the lack of resources to help them decide if the program would work in their communities.

Cason formally notified tribal leaders of the grant competition on March 14, 2006. The Department published a notice in the Federal Register on June 7 containing details about the grant application process. The deadline for submitting applications is July 7, 2006.

The act allows federally recognized tribes to combine funds from up to 12 federal employment, training and welfare reform programs administered by Interior and the Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services into a single, tribally operated program with a single reporting system. In addition, tribes can devote up to 25 percent of their total funding for economic development projects that provide employment opportunities for their members.

The 477 Program is built around three basic elements: a single plan for delivering services in an integrated manner, a single budget which commingles all funds and a single reporting system replacing 12 different reports. Federal programs which can be included in a tribal 477 program are DOL Work Force Investment Act adult and youth programs; HHS Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Native Employment Works and Child Care Development Fund (both mandatory and discretionary) programs; and DOI General Assistance, Tribal Work Experience, Higher Education, Adult Education, Johnson-O'Malley, Job Placement and Training programs. The program has been highly rated under the Office of Management and Budget's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) for meeting Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) standards for accountability and efficiency.

The Interior Department has estimated that in Fiscal Year 2006 over $100 million will have been integrated under tribal 477 programs.

To be eligible for a 477 participation planning grant, a tribe must be able to document that it has

undergone successful single audits for the past two years. Awardees will be selected based on need, i.e., that the tribe lacks the resources necessary to prepare an implementation plan; the extent to which tribal staff responsible for implementing the program has been or will be involved in preparing the plan; and the extent to which job creation activities are planned and obstacles to employment are addressed.

The Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development was established to provide high-level support for the Department's goal of serving communities by providing access to energy resources and by stimulating job creation and economic development. The Office assists economic development on Indian lands by identifying economic opportunities, assisting development of workforce capacity, providing low cost loans for business development and facilitating partnerships between tribes and the Federal or private sector. The Office also supports the President's National Energy Policy by fostering development of domestic energy resources to reduce this country's dependence on foreign energy sources.

For additional information, please contact Lynn Forcia, Chief, Division of Workforce Development, Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, U.S. Department of the Interior, at (202) 219-5270. To view the Federal Register notice, visit https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/ieed