Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Ralph E. Gonzales (202) 219-4150
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Ada E. Deer, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs announced that 177 federally-recognized tribes representing 18 tribal grantees are currently participating in a demonstration project that allows for the integration of the employment, training and related services provided by formula-funded programs from three federal agencies.

Since the enactment of this demonstration project job placements have significantly increased, and there has been a reduction in reporting requirements, in some cases, by approximately ninety-six percent. Federal funding in the amount of $17 million has been pooled by participating agencies for this demonstration project. "The 477 program, has been a great success and is an example of the Administration's efforts to make government more responsive and flexible," Ms. Deer said. This program is authorized under P. L. 102-477 and is entitled the Indian Employment, Training and Related Services Demonstration Act of 1992.

The General Accounting Office (GAO) identified 154 various Federal work force development programs in their 1994 report to the Congress. Many of the 154 programs provide similar services to the same populations. The GAO concluded that:

Conflicting eligibility requirements and differences in annual operation cycles are hampering the ability of programs to provide participants needed services... Differences in eligibility criteria make determining who is eligible for which program a complex process that confuses clients and frustrates administrators.

"The 477 demonstration program changes all that," Ms. Deer said. "Instead of operating 10 different federal programs, tribal governments now operate just one - commingling all federal funds. Instead of 10 separate tribal accounts, tribes only have one. Instead of 10 separate reporting requirements with 166 pages due quarterly, tribes now have only one annual reporting requirement."

"Some tribes initially expressed reservations due to funding transfer delays, or skepticism due to years of frustration. The same tribes now express their pleasant surprise because the 477 program has made it easier for staff at the tribal government level to do their jobs and to be more successful." Ms. Deer said. "The Cook Inlet Tribal Council increased their job placement from 500 the first year to 1,000 in the second year," Ms. Deer said.

All federally recognized Indian tribes are eligible to participate in this demonstration program that receives formula-funding for employment, training and related services from the Department of Labor's JTPA and Summer Youth Program., Department of Health and Human Services JOBS and Child Care programs, and BIA General Assistance, Tribal Work Experience, Adult Education, Adult Vocational Education, Johnson O'Mally and Direct Employment Programs.

For information about this program contact the Office of Economic Development, Division of Job Placement & Training, (202) 219-5270. Bureau of Indian Affairs, MS.-1458-MIB, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.