Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Department of the Interior has asked Congress to increase the authorized amount of annual appropriations for vocational training of adult Indians from $7.5 million to $12 million.

In its request, the Department said the number of Indians who are qualified and wish to participate in the training program greatly exceeds the number for whom funds are available. If the present limitation is retained, some of those who have applied in the past six months cannot expect to enroll in vocational training courses before June 30, 1964.

"As of the end of November 1962, there were 1,283 Indians in training throughout the country," the Department said. "There were 346 applicants waiting A5n registers at the various training destinations and 624 applications were in process at the reservation level. Many individuals who had been interested in filing have refrained from doing so in view of the long waiting period involved. Many of them are concerned that they will not be given an opportunity to participate."

Under the program, the Bureau of Indian Affairs provides the tuition costs and living expenses (including those for family dependents) for enrollment of young Indians, mainly from 18 to 35 years old, in vocational schools. It also contracts with industrial companies for on-the-job training of Indians, chiefly in plants on or near reservations.

The program has been increasingly popular with young Indian people, the Department added.

On the basis of present costs, the Department estimated, an appropriation of $7.5 million can be expected to finance 2,470 single individuals or family heads in school training and 1,370 such units in on-the-job training (in varying stages of training) during one fiscal year. Increasing the appropriation to $12 million, he said, will permit the enrollment of 3,906 trainees in schools and the continuing provision of on-the-job training for 1,500.

“Although this request is for $12 million authorization," the Department said, "it is not anticipated that the full amount will be absorbed immediately. In order to expand the program ••• without placing an undue strain on the present staff and facilities, we expect to phase out the proposed increase over the next three years."