



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA

NATIVE YOUTH RESOURCE GUIDE 2022



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Introduction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) mission touches the lives of every American, every day, including Indian Country. USDA is strongly invested in supporting the next generation of agricultural producers, community leaders, and innovators in fields around science, technology, and economic development while simultaneously supporting native youth in fulfilling their potential. As the leaders of tomorrow, native youth may have questions about how the USDA functions, what programs it has for youth, and what partnership opportunities there are.

The USDA Native Youth Guide provides information to help Tribal youth learn about USDA programs and resources. Native youth, and organizations working with them, are welcome to contact the USDA Office of Tribal Relations (OTR) for more information on any of these tools. An overview of USDA resources is also available in the USDA Tribal Resource Guide posted on the OTR website. OTR serves as the point-of-contact for Indian Country to USDA and is available to answer any questions you have.

Office of Tribal Relations

Phone: (202) 205-2249

tribal.relations@usda.gov

www.usda.gov/tribalrelations

Research, Loan, and Scholarship Opportunities

[Children, Youth and Families at Risk \(CYFAR\)](#)

CYFAR marshals the resources of the land-grant and cooperative extension systems to offer research-based educational programs that equip at-risk families and youth with the skills to lead positive, productive, and contributing lives. Programs are based on the principle of working across the lifespan in the context of the family and community.

[Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission Tribal Youth Internship Program](#)

Since 2015, the Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission has facilitated the funding of a native youth internship program. These agreements have supported internships for young tribal members from a variety of tribes to gain natural resource experience in fisheries, wildlife, recreation, and forestry. They have resulted in full time employment for some in natural resources fields.

For more information about this program or others related to native youth and forestry, contact the Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations by email at OTR@fs.fed.us or by phone at (202) 205-1514.

[Wildlife Society Research Assistantships](#)

The Wildlife Society offers research assistantships for students as part of the organization's professional development program for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

The program helps provide mentoring opportunities with Forest Service Research and Development scientists and promotes student advancement and training for careers in natural resource and conservation-related fields. The program targets college juniors and seniors or advanced degree candidates interested in wildlife and forest resources.

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Native American Natural Resource Scholarships

The Forest Service Southern Research Station partners with the [Intertribal Timber Council](#) to provide Native American Natural Resource Scholarships. Scholarship recipients receive a \$4,000 research scholarship and an additional \$1,000 to offset the costs of presenting a research poster at the Intertribal Timber Council Annual Timber Symposium.

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Adel A. Malak Scholarship

This opportunity is for students interested in food inspection and safety. Some field work includes: assisting with the examining of livestock for diseases that make it not fit for consumption, assisting in ensuring that animals are handled and treated humanely, and observing conditions in meat processing plants to ensure that they follow sanitary condition requirements. For more information, email Adel.A.MalakScholarship@fsis.usda.gov.

Youth Loans - Farm Loan Program

USDA makes loans to individual young people to start and operate income-producing projects of modest size in connection with their participation in 4-H clubs, FFA, a Native youth group, or similar agricultural youth organization - providing an opportunity for the young person to acquire experience and education in agriculture-related skills.



For youth interested in agriculture, rearing an animal or starting a garden may be the next step. Youth between 10 and 20 years old looking to start and operate their own income-producing project could be eligible for up to \$5,000 from the USDA's Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Rural Youth Loan. The Youth Loan application requires a recommendation from a project advisor who verifies that he/she will sponsor the loan applicant, has the correct training and experience to supervise the project, and is available to help whenever needed.

For more information, please contact your [local service center](#).

Internship Programs

USDA supports food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related topics based on public policy, the best available science, and effective management. Your voice matters, and if you're interested in serving your community through public service, USDA offers internship opportunities for almost every academic study.

Agriculture offers a diverse range of job opportunities in almost every field of study. Some of these fields include, but are not limited to electrical engineering, veterinary science, conservation, forestry, agribusiness, and finance management. More information on specific careers and their responsibilities, qualifications, and job outlook can be found on the [AgCareers Career Profiles Portal](#).

[OneUSDA Internship Program](#)

The OneUSDA internship program is a comprehensive developmental program intended to provide students with experience in a dynamic work environment that will enhance their educational goals and shape their career choices. As part of the Federal Pathways Program, the OneUSDA Internship will provide students a way to explore serving their country through a career in government while gaining work experience in agriculture, natural resources, rural development, and other career fields. For more information, visit <https://www.usda.gov/youth/career>.

[USDA Pathways Recent Graduates Program](#)

The USDA Recent Graduates Program provides individuals who have recently graduated from qualifying educational institutions or programs with developmental experiences in the Federal Government. These experiences are intended to promote possible careers in the civil service. Participants must have obtained a degree or completed a qualifying career or technical education program within the preceding 2 years. Veterans are eligible to participate in the program within 6 years of obtaining a degree or graduating from a qualifying program. For more information, visit <https://www.usda.gov/youth/career>.

[USDA Presidential Management Fellows Program](#)

The Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) program is a prestigious, competitive program that is managed by the Office of Personnel Management. The PMF program supports leadership development for recent graduates who have been pre-qualified or recommended by a network of graduate schools. Graduates are provided with a 2-year appointment at USDA that may lead to conversion to a permanent appointment. For more information, visit <https://www.usda.gov/youth/career>.

Animal Care Program (AC)

APHIS' Animal Care (AC) program provides externships to students to gain unpaid work experience from 1-4 weeks in the fall, spring, and summer. Opportunities may be available throughout the United States, depending on a student's area of interest and the availability of AC personnel.

To read more about APHIS internships, visit Opportunities for native youth - <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/tribalrelations/native-youth>.

Contact APHIS National Tribal Liaison Terry Clark at (301) 440-4388, Terry.W.Clark@usda.gov, or APHIS National Tribal Liaison Deputy Carl Etsitty at (970) 494-7573, Carl.Etsitty@usda.gov.

Saul T. Wilson, Jr. Internship

This internship provides opportunities to aspiring veterinarians. Some field work includes assisting with veterinary technician duties, attaching animal identification tags, and drawing blood samples for laboratory testing.

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William F. Helms Internship Program

This internship provides opportunities for students interested in botany, plant pathology, and other biological sciences. Some field work includes inspecting plants for pests or disease, conducting crop and commodity surveys, and assisting in plant health emergency response efforts.

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Veterinary Technical Program

APHIS provides financial assistance to the Navajo Technical University Veterinary Technology Program in New Mexico, the only program of its kind among Tribal Colleges and Universities. The funding assists the University with enhancing curriculum and accreditation efforts and helps fund internships. In its sixth year of funding, APHIS is working with the Navajo Technical University to place more students in USDA facilities to expand their experience. The agency works to bring these interns to regional and national venues to provide presentations on their experiences.

To read more about APHIS internships, visit Opportunities for native youth - <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/tribalrelations/native-youth>.

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Native American-Serving Institutions Internship Program

Since 2015, APHIS has provided internship opportunities to native youth. Funding through a cooperative agreement has been provided to the Navajo Technical University in New Mexico to work with Southwest Polytechnic Institute in New Mexico and Diné College in Arizona to recruit and place students in various 8-week internships with APHIS. The agency is committed to working with other USDA agencies and programs to expand the internship program as interest increases and funds are available.

To read more about APHIS Internship, visit Opportunities for Native youth - <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/tribalrelations/native-youth>.

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USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program

The USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program seeks to increase the number of American Indian and Alaska Native students studying agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, and related disciplines.



USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program is an employment program that offers a combination of work experience and academic study leading to career positions within USDA. Students participating in this program may receive full tuition, a paid internship with employee benefits, books, and room and board each year for up to 4 years while they pursue a degree at a 1994 tribal land-grant institution that culminates in a bachelor's degree at a tribal college or other university.

The program is designed to integrate classroom study at 1994 land-grant institutions with paid work experience; to increase the number of students studying and graduating in food, agriculture, natural resources, and other related fields of study; and to develop the pool of scientists and professionals to annually fill 50,000 jobs in the food, agricultural, and natural resources system. For more information, you can contact the USDA Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement at 202-720-6350 or 1994@usda.gov.

Wallace-Carver Fellowship

Wallace-Carver Fellowship and the World Food Prize Foundation partner to create the Wallace-Carver Fellowship to inspire the next generation of American scientific and humanitarian leaders. The prestigious Wallace-Carver Fellowship offers exceptional college students the opportunity to collaborate with world-renowned scientists and policymakers through paid fellowships at leading USDA research centers and offices across the United States.

Summer Camps

USDA Forest Service Culture Camps

In many national forests, the USDA Forest Service has set up “cultural camps” for native youth. These camps promote careers in natural resource professions by blending traditional ecological knowledge with Western practices. Wherever these camps are held, local Tribes are able to provide input on curriculum, including how to involve tribal elders. Youth have participated in the following camps:

- Inter-Tribal Youth Natural Resources Camp, with participants primarily from Tribes and national forests in Pacific Northwest, Intermountain, and Northern regions: The camps bring together area tribal students for a weeklong, residential, hands-on experience with natural resource careers.
- Culture Camp OnjiAking, with participants primarily from Ottawa National Forest, Eastern Region, and Wisconsin: The Forest Service co-hosted a camp with the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission.
- Kwiyamuntsii, with participants primarily from Dixie National Forest, Intermountain Region, Utah: This camp includes the Bureau of Land Management, National Parks Service, and local Tribes.
- Salish-Bitterroot Culture Camp, with participants primarily from Bitterroot National Forest, Northern Region, Montana: The forest, Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center, and the Flathead Tribes will host their third annual camp.

To learn more about these summer camps, contact the USDA’s Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations by email at OTR@fs.fed.us or by phone at (202) 205-1514.

Safeguarding Natural Heritage (SNH)

The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Safeguarding Natural Heritage (SNH) program has also partnered with Native American-serving colleges and



universities to host 2-week youth camps for students age 14-17. Generally, students learn how to safeguard the natural world within and outside tribal boundaries. Agency experts, tribal elders, tribal professionals, and university professionals work with the students through hands-on labs, workshops, discussions, and field trips.

Students interested in attending SNH camps only have to cover the cost to get there! APHIS pays the cost of tuition, room and board, and laboratory supplies. In 2020, APHIS partnered with six colleges and universities:

- Arizona: Diné College
- New Mexico: Navajo Technical University
- North Carolina: University of North Carolina at Pembroke
- Minnesota: Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
- Montana: Salish Kootenai College
- Wisconsin: College of Menominee Nation

To read more about APHIS Safeguarding Natural Heritage program, visit Opportunities for triballyouth - <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/tribalrelations/native-youth>.

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Indigenous Food and Agriculture Summer Leadership Summit

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), through an agreement with the University of Arkansas School of Law, supports the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Summer Leadership Summit. The summit brings together tribal students (high school and early college aged) from Indian Country for focused learning, hands-on training, and technical assistance in topics essential to their future success as food and agriculture business owners, Indian landowners, and conservationists. It also prepares them for leadership on these issues within their own communities.

The summit is open to American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students who are passionate about and likely already engaged with their family, communities, and Tribes in food, agriculture production, subsistence, and conservation efforts. Students live on the campus throughout the summit and are taught by nationally recognized faculty on topics unique only to Native students and their unique land tenure status. USDA programs and services are included in the training curriculum.

For more information, please contact your [local service center](#).

AgDiscovery

AgDiscovery is a two- to four-week summer outreach program to help middle and high school students explore careers in plant and animal science, wildlife management, and agribusiness. Students stay on a college campus and learn about agriculture from university professors, scientists, and administrative professionals in a variety of fields. Students gain experience through hands-on labs, workshops, field trips, and team-building activities.

To read more about APHIS internships, visit Opportunities for native youth - <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/tribalrelations/native-youth>.

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After School and Extracurricular Activities

21st Century Conservation Service Corp (21CSC)

The 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) is a public-private partnership that employs young adults, veterans, and emerging professionals to strengthen infrastructure, boost local economies and multiply returns on our country's most valuable assets – its unmatched landscapes and people. As a Public Lands Corps program, 21CSC projects support conservation priorities, develop the next generation of conservation stewards and provide pathways to hire. 21CSC participants serve in crews and internships to help protect wildlife habitats and communities from wildfire; preserve public lands and historic structures; repair and rebuild recreation sites; coordinate outreach and manage volunteer programs; support hydrology programs and restoration efforts; conduct research and needs assessments, among many other things.

21CSC minimum standards and requirements include:

- Must be U.S. citizen, national, or permanent resident, age 15–30 or veteran up to age 35
- Focused outreach to underserved, low income, and disadvantaged populations
- Restricted engagement of not more than 3,500 hours in a two- year period
- Paid opportunities that connect participants to the great outdoors, and develop job and professional skills
- Foster a service ethos and increase understanding of natural and cultural resources.

4-H Program

USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) supports the 4-H program, the Nation's largest positive youth development program implemented by the extension land-grant universities that empowers over 110,000 American Indian / Alaska Native youth. 4-H is about having fun, learning, exploring, and discovering. In 4-H, young people make new friends, develop new skills, become leaders, and help shape their communities. The essential elements of the 4-H program include creating an environment where youth feel a sense of belonging, have an opportunity to master skills, practice independence, and develop a spirit of generosity.

4-H is USDA's flagship positive youth development and education program. The unique partnership with the Cooperative Extension System through land-grant universities and the National 4-H Council empowers young people to lead for a lifetime. 4-H uses experiential learning—learning by doing—as a primary teaching approach to learn life skills such as leadership, citizenship, community service, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education, and public speaking. Membership is open to all youth beginning at age 8 or 4th grade. Land-grant university extension 4-H offices deliver local programs. Additionally, military 4-H clubs offer quality educational experiences that allow youth to continue their 4-H work wherever they move when their parents are deployed.

Join or start a 4H club by [contacting your local 4-H office](#).

Future Farmers of America (FFA) – USDA Partnership to Promote Ag Education Nationwide

The National FFA Organization is a national youth organization of more than 650,000 student members and more than 8,500 local FFA chapters in all 50 States, Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands. FFA seeks to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education.

The USDA and National FFA are collaborating on initiatives to motivate and prepare young people, connect them with opportunities in agriculture, food, and natural resource systems, and build appreciation for the reach and importance of agriculture.

Earth Team Volunteers

Available to anyone 14 and older, Earth Team volunteers work with conservation professionals on private lands to improve soil quality, conserve water, improve air quality and enhance wildlife habitat. Opportunities include full- or part-time; outdoor or indoor activities; and as an individual or part of a group.

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)

HACU represents more than 470 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the United States, Puerto Rico, Latin America, and Spain. HACU maintains more than 30 formal Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Partnership Agreements with federal agencies, offices, and business organizations.

First American Land-Grant Consortium (FALCON)

FALCON is a nonprofit, professional association, sanctioned by motion of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium's Board of Directors, that represents administrators, faculty, and staff at 1994 Land-Grant Institutions (Tribal Colleges and Universities). The FALCON portal shares information, fosters partnerships, promotes professional development, and serves as a resource center for its members.

Every Kid Outdoors Program

An active lifestyle promotes health by improving the energy balance between the calories we consume and those we use. USDA is in a unique position to promote outdoor activities on more than 193 million acres of Forest Service-managed national forests and grasslands. Through Every Kid Outdoors Program, the USDA Forest Service works with other Federal agencies and partners to inspire 4 million fourth graders in the discovery, education, and adventure of the outdoors. The Forest Service provides "Every Kid Outdoors" passes to 4th grade students and up to three adults for free admission to public lands and waters.

For more information about this program or others related to native youth and forestry, contact the Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations by email at OTR@fs.fed.us or by phone at (202) 205-1514.

Educational Resources

[High School Financial Planning](#)

USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) recommends the [High School Financial Planning Program \(HSFPP\)](#) run through the [National Endowment for Financial Education \(NEFE\)](#).

[Agriculture in the Classroom \(AITC\)](#)

USDA NIFA's Agriculture in the Classroom Program (AITC) helps improve agricultural literacy, awareness, knowledge, and appreciation among pre-K through 12th-grade teachers and their students. AITC serves nearly 5 million students and 60,000 teachers annually through workshops, conferences, field trips, farm tours, and other activities. Visit the AITC's curriculum website for K-12 standards-based lesson plans and companion resources in science, social studies, health and nutrition, and career and technical education.

[Forest Service – Conservation Education](#)

Conservation education helps people of all ages understand and appreciate our country's natural resources and learn how to conserve those resources for future generations. Through structured educational experiences and activities for varying age groups and populations, conservation education helps people realize how natural resources and ecosystems affect each other and how resources can be used wisely. Learn more about formal and non-formal educational opportunities provided by the Forest Service.

[Census at School Food Preference Survey](#)

The Food Preference Survey lesson teaches students in grades 5-8 about statistical concepts. Students participate in the Census at School program, complete an online questionnaire and compare results with their class, school, U.S. students and beyond. The lesson addresses common core standards in math, language arts, nutrition, social studies, and family and consumer sciences. The lesson was developed by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and the American Statistical Association (ASA) with guidance from the National Agriculture in the Classroom organization.

[Discover the Forest](#)

This campaign aims to inspire tweens (aged 8-12) and their parents to re-connect with nature, experiencing it first-hand. The campaign brings to life the joy and excitement kids have when they discover the wonders of nature, helping create interest in their environment and a lifelong relationship with it. A dynamic website is supplemented with radio and TV public messages. The program also has an active Spanish language component.

[Every Kid in a Park](#)

This Federal public land youth initiative helps fourth graders and their families discover America's wildlife, resources, and history. Fourth graders may visit the site to download a free pass good at 2,000+ Federal lands and waters sites. Learn more about this and other programs for kids at the USDA Forest Service website.

Forest Service – Various Youth Education Resources

The Forest Service offers a range of resources to engage young people. The Junior Forest Ranger program helps children ages 7-13 enjoy and appreciate nature. The Team Smokey website provides wildfire prevention materials for educators and youth. Woodsy Owl helps the youngest children learn the value of conservation through coloring books, songs, and more.

FSNatureLIVE

The USDA Forest Service, Prince William Network and other partners offer a collection of virtual field trips on topics such as rainforests, climate change, pollinators, wetlands, shorebird migration and more. Each distance learning adventure website offers resources including lesson plans, topic videos, webinars, and citizen science projects. Programs and resources were prepared to help teachers meet national science education standards.

Hungry Pests

The USDA fights invasive pests on three fronts—abroad, at the border, and across the United States and its territories. Hungry Pests is USDA’s signature outreach initiative to raise awareness of the issue of invasive pest threats and provide the public with tools to help protect America’s natural beauty and agricultural bounty. Educator resources and youth activities help raise awareness of invasive species and the damage they cause.

MyPlate

MyPlate is a reminder to find your healthy eating style and build it throughout your lifetime. Parents and teachers are invited to use the MyPlate Kids’ Place Resources for Parents and Educators for teachable moments that will influence children’s choices at home and at school.

NatureWatch, Interpretation and Conservation Education (NICE)

The NICE database is a searchable clearinghouse of Forest Service education and outreach programs across the United States. Most activities are planned and implemented at the field level, with strategic guidance and support from the national office.

