

What should American Indian/Alaska Natives know about federal employment?

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT (OPM):

WELCOME to this fact sheet for American Indian/Alaska Native job seekers pursuing careers with the federal government. We offer it with the confidence that it will motivate Native people to apply and open the door to public service for this key population.

Everyone benefits when Native people are included in the recruitment, hiring and development of the federal workforce: the employees who contribute their talents in mission driven jobs; the agencies that gain an important perspective from qualified employees who understand the unique needs of native communities; employees' families who also benefit from a competitive total compensation package and the communities that flourish as these valued employees serve to fulfill their agencies' vision and mission. Native people are vital to our success. While challenges remain, our hope is that this guidance will be yet another step in our continuing efforts to connect with native people and nurture trust as we work together to build the workforce of the 21st Century.

INDIAN PREFERENCE (IP)

With Indian Preference, American Indian/Alaska Native applicants may receive preference over non-Indian applicants when applying to jobs with the Indian Health Service (IHS) and Indian affairs (including the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) and some positions within the Office of the Assistant Secretary--Indian Affairs.)

Preference in filling vacancies is given to qualified Indian candidates in accordance with the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (Title 25, USC, Section 472). If you're claiming Indian Preference, you must submit form BIA 4432--Verification of Indian Preference with your application. Those eligible for Indian Preference who are not currently employed in federal service may be appointed under the Excepted Service Appointment Authority Schedule A, 213.3112(a)(7). We will consider non-Indian applicants if there are no job seekers who are qualified under Indian Preference.

[Learn more about Indian preference.](#)

BIA FORM 4432

If you're claiming Indian Preference, you must submit form BIA 4432--Verification of Indian Preference with your application. The time to complete will vary based on your tribe's process, so it is best to complete this step first if you want to use Indian Preference. You will also need to ensure that your form has not expired.

[Download form BIA 4432.](#)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQS) on Indian Preference

Q: Does Indian Preference apply at every agency?

A: No, IP only applies to jobs within the IHS and Indian Affairs (including the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Indian Education and some positions within the Office of the Assistant Secretary--Indian Affairs.) Refer to the job announcement to find out if it applies.

Q: When can I apply to an agency that does not have IP?

A: An employee with Indian Preference must complete a two-year probationary period. Upon successful completion they will need to serve one additional year to convert to competitive status. Competitive status will allow you to compete under merit promotion (MP) procedures.

"My time as a student volunteer gave me the opportunity to make meaningful, long-lasting, positive changes on behalf of my home community. It inspired me to continue my education to continue to give back to my people."

--Faith Tyson

(Native Village of Shishmeraf and descendant of Bering Straits Native Corporation)

2021-22 OPM student volunteer

Q: Can I transfer from Department of Interior (DOI) or BIA to or from IHS?

A: Hiring plans differ so it is best to speak with the agency or the human resources point of contact.

[Read the IHS FAQs.](#)

[Read the BIA FAQs.](#)

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND RECENT GRADUATES

If you're a current student or recent graduate, you may be eligible for federal internships and job opportunities through the Pathways and other student programs.

[Learn more about opportunities to join the workforce.](#)

Contact Us

Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20415

Email: consultation@opm.gov

For questions about outreach

Email: outreach@opm.gov

Website: <https://www.opm.gov/news/tribal-consultation/>

Agency-specific internships and fellowships

Individual agencies offer a variety of internships and fellowships for students, recent graduates, professionals and other job seekers who want to connect with agency missions and employ their unique education, background and skill sets in service to the nation. Visit specific agency websites for additional information.

Frequently asked questions (FAQS) for students and recent graduates

Q: When is the best time to apply for internships?

A: It will depend on when you would like to intern. Internships happen year-round so it is best to work on developing and maintaining your resume, USAJOBS profile, transcripts and documents to make sure that you are always prepared when an opportunity becomes available.

Q: Will housing be provided?

A: You are responsible for finding your own housing unless otherwise stated. Your internship coordinator or the local site can help you find arrangements. Many universities also offer safe, affordable and convenient housing to students with summer internships.

Q: Can an internship turn into a permanent position?

A: Upon successful completion and after meeting the required hours of the program, you may be converted to a permanent position. [Learn more about this.](#)

Q: Are there Indian Preference (IP) internships?

A: Indian Health Service (IHS), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Udall Foundation and White House Initiative for American Indian and Alaskan Native Education all offer IP opportunities, which can be found on their websites and through USAJOBS.

Q: How do I find opportunities that allow me to work remotely?

A: Under the Location header in the **Overview** section of the job announcement, the remote job location will be listed as Anywhere in the U.S. (remote job). [Learn more about remote jobs.](#)