



Federal Employment Programs for American Indian/Alaska Natives

We all benefit when Native people are included in the recruitment, hiring, and development of the federal workforce:

- Native employees who contribute their talents in federal public service;
- Agencies that gain an important perspective from native employees who understand the unique needs of their communities;
- Families of native employees who also benefit from a competitive total compensation package; and
- Communities that flourish as these employees serve to fulfill their agencies' vision and mission.

Native people are vital to our success.

We hope this guidance will be yet another step in our efforts to connect with native people and nurture trust as we together build the workforce of the 21st Century.

—Kiran Ahuja, Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management

Indian Preference (IP)

USAJOBS.gov/Help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/native-americans

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). 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. To claim Indian Preference, submit **Form BIA 4432, Verification of Indian Preference**, with your application: BIA.gov/online-form/bia-4432-verification-indian-preference-employment-pdf

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. Also verify your form has not expired.

FAQs: Indian Preference

When can I apply to an agency that does not have Indian Preference?

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.

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

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

Indian Health Service: [IHS.gov/jobs/faq](https://www.ihs.gov/jobs/faq)

Bureau of Indian Affairs: [BIA.gov/jobs/Indian_Preference](https://www.bia.gov/jobs/Indian_Preference)

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.

[USAJOBS.gov/Help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/students](https://www.usajobs.gov/Help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/students)

Agency-specific internships and fellowships

Individual agencies offer a variety of internships and fellowships for students, recent graduates, professionals, and other job seekers. Visit specific agency websites for additional information.

FAQs: Students, Recent Graduates

Are there Indian Preference (IP) internships?

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.

When is the best time to apply for internships?

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. Apply then!

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, 2021-2022 OPM student volunteer

Will housing be provided?

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 offer affordable and convenient housing to students with summer internships.

Can an internship turn into a permanent position?

Upon successful completion and after meeting the required hours of the program, you may be converted to a permanent position. Learn more: [OPM.gov/policy-data-oversight/hiring-information/students-recent-graduates/#url=Program-Fact-Sheets](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/hiring-information/students-recent-graduates/#url=Program-Fact-Sheets)

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

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: [USAJOBS.gov/Help/faq/job-announcement/remote](https://www.usajobs.gov/Help/faq/job-announcement/remote)

Contact Us

Job seekers looking for more information on federal employment may visit [USAJOBS.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov) or email: outreach@opm.gov.

Career counselors, Tribal leaders, and other stakeholders looking for more information may email:

consultation@opm.gov.

[OPM.gov/news/tribal-consultation](https://www.opm.gov/news/tribal-consultation)