

## Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations

### Office of Congressional Relations

The Office of Congressional Relations (OCR) serves as the Department's liaison with Members of Congress and their staffs. OCR works closely with Members and staffs of various House and Senate Committees including the House Agriculture Committee and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry to communicate USDA's legislative agenda and budget proposals.

### Office of Intergovernmental Affairs

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (OIA) is USDA's liaison with State, local, and tribal governments and national organizations representing these constituents. OIA responds to inquiries and requests from these officials either directly or through the appropriate government agencies. OIA facilitates meetings between these individuals and USDA officials and serves as a clearinghouse for information related to USDA's operations and services.

### Native American Programs

President Clinton's Executive Memorandum on Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments (see appendix) and USDA's Policies on American Indians and Alaska Natives (see appendix) govern USDA's interaction with Indian tribes. USDA's policies on American Indians and Alaska Natives provide that the Native American Programs Office has the primary responsibility for coordinating USDA programs serving American Indians and Alaska Natives.

The Director of Native American Programs, located in the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, is USDA's primary contact with tribal governments and their members. The Director is responsible for:

- Serving as the principal adviser and representative on all matters related to USDA policies and programs which affect and are available to American Indians and Alaska Natives.
- Meeting with tribal representatives regarding policy, program delivery, and services to Indian tribes; facilitating opportunities for tribal representatives to meet with the Secretary and other USDA officials; and providing appropriate staff assistance.
- Working with the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, the USDA mission areas, and the Office of Communications to develop materials and communicate information about USDA programs and services directly to all federally recognized Indian tribes, intertribal organizations, and the American Indian and Alaska Native media.
- Chairing USDA's Native American Working Group, which reports to the Secretary and provides advice, support, and other assistance to the Director in order to coordinate and guide USDA policies and programs which affect Indian tribes. Departmental Regulation 1020-5, Native American Working Group, establishes the purpose, responsibilities, and operations of the Working Group.
- Participating in meetings, conferences, and events conducted by Indian tribes, national and regional intertribal organizations, USDA and other Federal Government departments.
- Participating in subgroups of the Working Group on American Indians and Alaska Natives which President Clinton established as part of the White House Domestic Policy Council. The purpose of the working group is to share and coordinate information on Indian tribes and programs, provide a forum for resolution of issues among Federal agencies, ensure the implementation of Presidential directives on American Indian policy, and promote initiatives to better serve Indian tribes and their members. USDA's under secretary for rural development is a member of the working group.

**Whom To Contact:** Director of Native American Programs, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Room 346-A, 14th 14th Street and Independence Avenue S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250. The Director's telephone number is (202) 720-3805 and fax number is (202) 720-6972.

**Available Assistance:** Information and assistance regarding all matters related to USDA policies, programs, and services which affect American Indians and Alaska Natives and are available to them.

**Printed Information Available:** Information about USDA programs and services which are available to American Indians and Alaska Natives is provided in this *Guide to USDA Programs for American Indians and Alaska Natives*. The *Agriculture Fact Book 1997* provides a summary of highlights of recent activities and programs in USDA mission areas which serve Indian tribes and their members.

**Administering Agency:** Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Room 219-A, 14th Street and Independence Avenue S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250. The telephone number is (202) 720-6643