

<b>TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE</b>	<b>NO.</b> 40-10
	<b>DATE</b> May 16, 2011

**TO:** ALL WIA SECTION 166 INDIAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN GRANTEES

**FROM:** JANE OATES /s/  
Assistant Secretary

**SUBJECT:** Joint Letter in Support of Indian and Native American Youth Work Experiences on Public and Tribal Lands

1. **Purpose.** To encourage the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) Section 166-Indian and Native American Youth Program grantees to partner with public and tribal land management agencies within the U.S. Departments of Interior and Agriculture in an effort to increase work experience opportunities for Indian and Native American youth on public and tribal lands.
2. **Background.** The attached joint letter reflects the efforts of the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of the Interior (hereinafter, the Departments) to identify and explore areas of collaboration that will expand meaningful work and learning opportunities for Indian and Native American youth on public and tribal lands.

The Departments implemented a pilot project during the summer of 2010 that aimed to increase work experience opportunities for youth served by the publicly-funded workforce investment system by placing them in conservation corps, internships, and other summer employment opportunities at national parks and forests, grasslands, conservation areas, historic sites, and tribal lands. Building on the initial efforts of this pilot, the Departments encourage WIA Section 166 grantees and public and tribal land management agencies to work together to explore partnership opportunities and ways to leverage resources to increase employment opportunities for Indian and Native American youth during the summer of 2011 and beyond.

The need for these partnerships comes at a critical time. The overall teen employment rate remains devastatingly low, dropping to levels not seen in 60 years. The current recession eliminated many employment opportunities for youth. According to the 2009 American Community Survey, the unemployment rate for Native American/Alaska Natives was 27.3%. Work experience opportunities help young people develop valuable skills, and serve as critical stepping stones on the path to a career. The American Recovery and Reinvestment

Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) provided approximately \$18 million in funds for WIA Section 166-Indian and Native American Supplemental Summer Youth Program activities and placed over 5,000 youth in employment during the summers of 2009 and 2010.

With Recovery Act funds nearly expended, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) aims to support WIA Section 166 grantees in identifying partnerships that can expand their capacity to provide as many work opportunities as possible. Through these partnerships, WIA Section 166 grantees and public and tribal land management agencies are encouraged to be creative and innovative as they leverage capacity and resources for the purpose of providing Indian and Native American youth with meaningful work experience on public and tribal lands.

3. **Inquiries.** Questions concerning this Training and Employment Notice should be directed to the appropriate regional office.

4. **Attachments.** See attached joint Dear Colleague letter and Attachments A, B, C, and D.

Attachment A: Contact information for ETA – six regional offices, all state workforce investment agencies, and local workforce investment board

Attachment B: Contact information for the U.S. Department of Interior – Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service

Attachment C: Contact information for the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Forest Service, National and Regional Directors POC

Attachment D: Contact information for WIA Section 166 Indian and Native American Program Grantees Directory