

American Indian/Alaska Native



Iowa Special Emphasis Program

Who We Are

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture known worldwide for its accomplishments and innovations in conservation. We help the people take necessary steps to conserve soil, protect wildlife, restore water quality, promote good land use, and implement measures to conserve the Nation's natural resources for future generations.

NRCS formed during the Dust Bowl days of the 1930s - when dust storms ravaged the Nation's farmland - stripping away millions of tons of topsoil. Since that time, NRCS has helped farmers protect and conserve soil and other natural resources on America's private and tribal lands.

NRCS Special Emphasis Programs (SEP) are an integral part of our Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program. SEPs assist management in ensuring that EEO is present in all aspects of employment and program delivery.

How Our Program Helps

The American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) Special Emphasis Program strives to:

- » Increase the total number of American Indian and Alaska Native NRCS employees.
- » Provide a network of professional support for American Indians and Alaska Natives in NRCS.
- » Encourage the participation of American Indians and Alaska Natives in all NRCS programs and activities.
- » Establish and maintain effective relationships with American Indian and Alaska Native organizations and groups.
- » Promote cultural diversity awareness.
- » Enhance employment opportunities for the American Indian and Alaska Native community.



Meskwaki Nation
Photos Courtesy of Todd White Photography

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Former Iowa NRCS Tribal Liaison Clint Miller demonstrates a stream table to students from the Meskwaki Settlement School.

Iowa's AIAN Population

More than 14,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives live in Iowa, or slightly more than .04% of the population. About 1.6% of the Iowa NRCS workforce is AIAN. There are three Indian tribes in Iowa with land holdings, including the Omaha, the Sac and Fox/Meskwaki, and the Winnebago. The Sac and Fox/Meskwaki Settlement is the only one in Iowa with residents on tribal land, totaling 1,062 in 2010.

48%

Increase in Iowa AIAN population from 2000-2012

Farmer Assistance

NRCS offers conservation programs and technical assistance to American Indians and Alaska Natives, often through cooperative and contribution agreements. These relationships help to promote a seamless delivery system to conservation programs.

NRCS shares AIAN ancestral land stewardship values. As tribes move into more active roles of land management, NRCS works to increase the opportunities for them to benefit from our programs. AIAN farmers are classified as a Historically Underserved group and may be eligible for higher payment rates to install conservation practices on their farms. Historically Underserved groups include minorities, women, the disabled, limited resource farmers/ranchers, and small-scale farmers.

Career Opportunities

NRCS employs about 425 full-time workers in Iowa, second in the nation for most full-time NRCS employees.

Some jobs require a college degree, such as a soil scientist, soil conservationist, biologist, or an engineer. Others may require working knowledge and experience, such as a soil conservation technician.

For more information about Iowa NRCS, call 515-284-6655 or visit us online at www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov.

USDA-NRCS

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NRCS provided financial and technical assistance to the Meskwaki Nation when they reshaped degraded streambanks along the Iowa River. This project, located on Meskwaki's Powwow grounds, is reducing sediment delivery to the river, and helping to improve aquatic habitat and mitigate flooding.