

# Tribal Colleges and Universities VISTA Program



## **Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute— Albuquerque, NM**

**Build capacity** in Tribal communities to enable their long-term stability.

**Strengthen** educational and economic opportunities in a distressed community.

**Serve** to protect, enhance, and sustain the natural resources on tribal land.

**Enhance** community involvement through communication and outreach.

**Learn** about Indian Country today.

**...Develop** your professional skill set.

## **Join the TCU/VISTA Team to foster Economic Development, Healthy Futures, and Environmental Stewardship in Indian Country**

Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) serve the most persistent poverty communities in the nation. TCUs were created in response to the higher education needs of American Indians and generally serve geographically isolated populations that have no other means of accessing education beyond the high school level.  
[American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 2014]

TCUs received land-grant status in the year 1994, which further positions them as core drivers of economic and community development. This project supports Tribal land-grant institutional development in the areas of Economic Development, Healthy Futures, and Environmental Stewardship. TCU/VISTAs will work with a Land-Grant Tribal College or University to address the needs of the Tribal communities served by that institution.

### **Applications are due by February 10, 2014**

Apply to be a TCU/VISTA online at [my.americorps.gov](http://my.americorps.gov) OR  
e-mail: [doivista@coalcountryteam.org](mailto:doivista@coalcountryteam.org) for more info.

TCU/VISTA Project Start Date: April 21, 2014

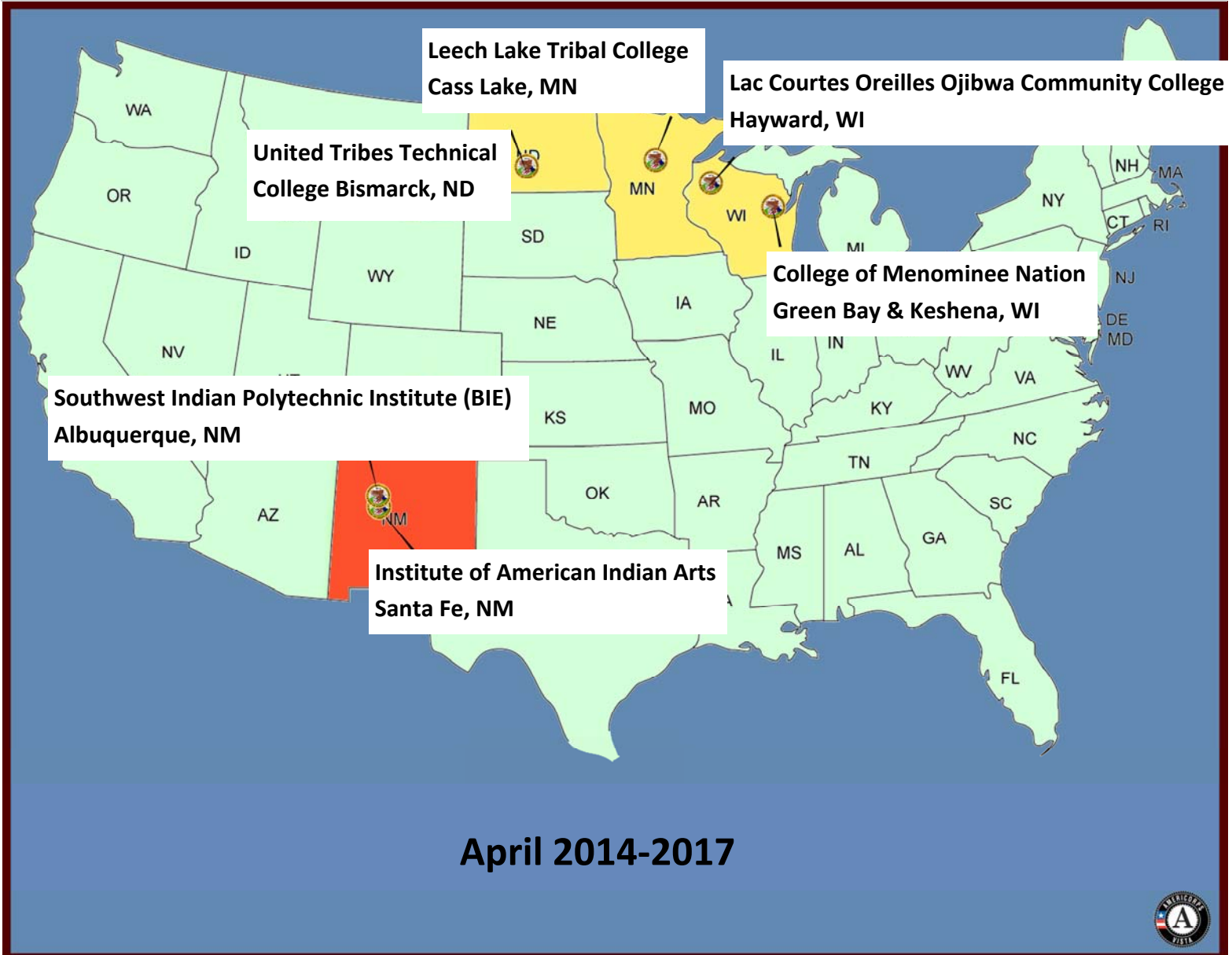
The Tribal Colleges and Universities Land-Grant Development Initiative represents a partnership between the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to secure TCU/VISTAs to support the needs of Land-Grant TCUs in the areas of Economic Development, Healthy Futures, and Environmental Stewardship.



# TCU/VISTA

## Tribal Colleges & Universities Land-Grant Development Initiative

Leveraging DOI and USDA Federal Resources to Expand Educational Capacity through Economic Development, Healthy Futures, and Environmental Stewardship



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## Tribal Colleges and Universities in Indian Country

The Tribal Colleges and Universities Land-Grant Development Initiative (TCULGDI) represents a partnership between the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Corporation for National and Community Service, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) to secure college-trained VISTAs to assist in building the capacity of Land-grant Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) in the areas of Economic Development, Healthy Futures, and Environmental Stewardship. The volunteers are known as TCU/VISTAs.

Tribal Colleges and Universities serve some of the most persistent poverty communities in the nation. TCUs were created in response to the higher education needs of American Indians and generally serve geographically isolated populations that have no other means of accessing education beyond the high school level. [American Indian Higher Education Consortium, website, 2014.]

TCUs received land-grant status in the year 1994, which further positions them as core drivers of economic and community development. The six participating TCUs (there will eventually be 8) are utilizing their college-trained VISTA Volunteer to create and explore the potential of new programs, expand existing ones, carry out community needs assessments and surveys, and improve and modernize existing systems to better address the high-poverty communities they serve. In addition, VISTA's will explore new partnerships, help to better coordinate existing resources, strengthen recruiting and retention for local volunteers and do outreach in their communities to promote the programs they are developing.

### *Collaborators and their Respective Contributing Bureaus, Mission Areas, Agencies, or Offices, and Non-Profit Partners:*

#### **Department of Interior**

- Office of the Secretary
- Bureau of Indian Education
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Office of Surface Mining

#### **U.S. Department of Agriculture**

- 1994 Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Program Office (*coordinator*)
- Rural Development
- Office of Advocacy and Outreach
- Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Research Education and Environment
- Economic Research Service

#### **National Corporation for Community Service**

- Volunteers in Service to America

#### **Non-Profit Sponsor**

- Conservation Legacy, formerly known as the Southwest Conservation Corps



# Advisory Working Group

## Tribal Colleges and Universities Land-Grant Development Initiative

The Tribal Colleges and Universities Land-Grant Development Initiative (TCULGDI) is a pilot program that represents a partnership between the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Corporation for National and Community Service, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) to secure college-trained VISTAs to assist in building the capacity of Land-grant Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) in the areas of Economic Development, Healthy Futures, and Environmental Stewardship. The volunteers are known as TCU/VISTAs.

TCULGDI Advisory Working Group: The TCULGDI Advisory Working Group are coordinated through the USDA 1994 Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Program Office, however, agency input and support is essential to the success of the project. The advisory working group is made up of program professionals within USDA and DOI and is called upon to provide recommendations and assistance to ensure that this initiative is a success. Their expertise is utilized in areas that include reviewing and refining goals and objectives of the initiative; providing feedback and recommendations to Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) regarding their applications, project plans, Volunteer Assignment Descriptions (VADs); assisting in recruitment of VISTAs; assisting in development of training agendas and securing respective agency resources; collaborating with the USDA 1994 TLGCU Program and DOI to plan and support the long term sustainability of the project.

Mission: To develop with Tribal Colleges and Universities their Land-Grant capacities to benefit rural Tribal economies and the US' food security.

Our goals:

- **Organizational Capacity Building:** To work with TCU Land-Grants to build the capacity of their institutions, enabling their long-term stability and success through accessing USDA and DOI services and programs.
- **Economic Development:** To assist tribal rural communities to create prosperity so that they are self sustaining, repopulating, and economically thriving.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** To assist in the protection, enhancement, and sustainability of natural resources on tribal lands.
- **Healthy Futures:** To improve access to healthy food and increase awareness of and access to nutrition and wellness resources.
- **Outreach and Education:** To enable TCU/VISTAs to assist their Sponsoring Institution in enhancing community awareness and involvement through education and outreach that integrates awareness and understanding of local history and culture.
- **VISTA Professional Development:** To support the TCU/VISTAs in developing themselves as valuable Team members, broadening their ability to engage with community development issues, and enhancing their opportunities for future employment.

Project Duration: This is a three-year pilot project.

Project Start and End Dates: Dates are still being determined but TCU/VISTAs will likely be placed during April 2014 through March 2017. The TCULGDI Advisory Working group started work several months prior to the TCU/VISTA start date in order to provide feedback and guidance to TCU/VISTA Supervisors regarding the development of their VISTA applications, project plans, and VISTA activity descriptions (VADs).



# TCU/VISTA Project Abstracts Spring 2014

## Participating TCUs

College of Menominee Nation, Green Bay, WI (Green Bay & Keshena Campus')

Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe, NM (housing TCU/VISTA lead)

Lac Courtes Oreilles Ojibwa Community College, Hayward, WI

Leech Lake Tribal College, Cass Lake, MN

Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute, Albuquerque, NM

United Tribes Technical College Bismarck, ND

## Project Title

*Building Native Agricultural Entrepreneurship: Developing Opportunities for Menominee and Oneida Communities*

*Strengthening Land-Grant Planning Efforts: To Set the Foundation for a Dynamic Continuing Education Program in Business Development, Entrepreneurship, and Food and Nutrition Education*

*Developing a Beginner Producer Program: Hands On Training for Tribal Agricultural Entrepreneurs at the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College Sustainable Agriculture Research Station*

*Implementing a Community Health and Vitality Program: Resource Coordination and Curriculum Development at Leech Lake Tribal College*

*Assisting New Mexico Tribes in Agriculture/Land Conservation: to Build Community Knowledge, Skills and Employment Opportunities*

*Strengthening UTTC Land-grant Program Systems: For Improved Efficiency In Program Delivery*



# College of Menominee Nation, Green Bay & Keshena, WI

## *Building Native Agricultural Entrepreneurship: Developing Opportunities for Menominee and Oneida Communities*



Across the state of Wisconsin the Menominee ranks 72 out of 72 for poor health. In addition, there is severe economic distress: over 30% of the population lives in poverty. The median household income is \$32,017, which is \$20,000 less than the State of Wisconsin. In addition, Menominee County/Reservation faces considerable challenges and barriers to food sovereignty. There are less than a handful of locations to purchase healthy food throughout the entire Menominee County/Reservation.

There is only one grocery store in the entire county and the majority of its items are processed foods. These circumstances result in many families purchasing cheap convenient processed foods rather than fruits, vegetables, and lean meats.

The College of Menominee Nations (CMN) does not have agriculture or food related programs and will utilize the TCU/VISTA to expand agricultural outreach in both the Menominee and Oneida Reservation communities. Poverty related outcomes include increasing Native agricultural-based entrepreneurs and building a stronger agricultural economic base in both reservation communities. Improving access and visibility of locally grown and produced foods to ultimately decrease food prices (no transportation or third party inflation costs); offering reservation community members a wider array of healthy food choices, and supplement family incomes.



On behalf of the CMN Department of Continuing Education (DoCE) the TCU/VISTA will explore and develop partnering opportunities with the Oneida Tribe Farm to leverage their farm resource with the DoCE's educational resources to offer continuing education courses to members of the Menominee community and expand the community's agricultural potential. In the short term, the TCU/VISTA will explore combining the Oneida Farm facilities and experts with the CMN established educational institutional resources to develop interest in the community and ultimately provide training on the Oneida farm. These efforts will support the development of native agricultural entrepreneurs. Additionally, the TCU/VISTA will work with the CMN community to assess interest and support to develop space on campus to build a community garden where related workshops can be offered.

# Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe, NM

*Strengthening Land-Grant Planning Efforts: To Set the Foundation for a Dynamic Continuing Education Program in Business Development, Entrepreneurship, and Food and Nutrition Education*



The 22 Indian Pueblos and Tribes served by IAIA represent about 10.2% of the state's population of 2,085,287 for 2013 or 212,699. A majority of the tribal members in the region have incomes that result in subsistence living. 31.5% live below the poverty level as compared to the overall USA poverty level percentage of 14.9%. Each of the 19 Pueblo Indian tribes and the 3 Athabascan tribes are feder-

ally-recognized tribes that exercise their respective sovereignty within the context of the federal government's trust responsibility to them.

As a 1994 land-grant institution Institute for American Indian Arts (IAIA) intends to fulfill its mandate through the Center for Lifelong Education's (CLE) continuing education programs in order to perfect the practical skills and knowledge of Native community members to ensure that their learning options continue beyond the conclusion of the community member's elementary and secondary education. Based on anecdotal accounts we anticipate interest in: business development and entrepreneurship; and food and nutrition. The courses offered by the college, particularly the CLE are meant to address the immediate needs of community members by offering courses that meet their needs by supplementing existing skill sets, building new ones, ensuring that community members' job skills evolve to enhance their employability and to increase job security.

Through the development of the Continuing Education program IAIA-CLE will identify and address specific areas of education and training needed to enhance the ability of the Native citizens of this state to address the education and training needs of those who do not pursue postsecondary degrees or who wish to supplement or expand current skills. The TCU/VISTA will be integral to the development of a needs assessment, coordination and administration of the needs assessment across the 22 Indian Pueblos and Tribes served by IAIA, final analysis of the data gathered, and development of new programming. The TCU/VISTA will work with key CLE and IAIA leadership and management, as well as, the 22 pueblos and Tribes IAIA serves to implement this project. Ultimately, this CLE project will identify and offer courses to the wider community to build capacity of the surrounding pueblos and tribes and will offer community members training options and resources that will enable them to be contributing and thriving members of their communities, expanding their employment options, and ensuring their security.





# Lac Courtes Oreilles Ojibwa Community College, Hayward, WI

*Developing a Beginner Producer Program: Hands On Training for Tribal Agricultural Entrepreneurs at the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College Sustainable Agriculture Research Station*



Data from 1999 indicates per capita income for Native American residents on Lac Courtes Oreilles (LCO) was \$9,119, 42.8% of the State at \$21,271. Data from the Lac Courte Oreilles Community Health Center show that diabetes mellitus rates have doubled from the year 2000 to 2005. The total number of cases in 2000 was 194 and in 2005 numbers jumped to 393. According to the LCO Health Center obesity is a major problem facing the youth at LCO. Recent data collected showed 42% of children grades 4-12 are obese and another 19% are overweight. Since being overweight or obese increases risks of developing diabetes, the community is concerned and has been promoting environmental and educational changes to increase physical activity and to decrease obesity rates to lower risk among youth. These issues are paramount in the minds of those wishing to move forward in facilitating growing, harvesting, and preserving healthy, local foods within the community.

The Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College Sustainable Agriculture Research Station (LSARS) is a 220 acre (75 tillable) farm that is critical to agricultural production at LCO. The farm is



leased from the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and operated by the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (LCOOCC). The overall mission of the LSARS is to create opportunities and challenges for students to learn and work with staff, community members and Elders in a sustainable agricultural setting to increase access to healthy, nutritious food; thus improving food security and overall health in a low-socioeconomic tribal community. The TCU/

VISTA will serve as a resource to develop the Beginner Producer Program. The objective of the Beginner Producer Program is to provide education, training, guidance, and resources to community members to develop opportunities in agribusiness. Enrolled applicants in the Beginner Producer Program will have the option to lease a 1-acre plot of land from LCOOCC to implement the knowledge obtained through courses/workshops that will take them through the business and operational aspects of a small farm. Anticipated outcomes include graduating 10 students in the first cycle of the program. Education and research activities in a multigenerational learning environment will encourage community members to take ownership over where their food comes from; community members will have access to land and resources for research, experimentation, and implementation of sustainable agricultural practices and products.



# Leech Lake Tribal College, Cass Lake, MN

## *Implementing a Community Health and Vitality Program: Resource Coordination and Curriculum Development at Leech Lake Tribal College*



The American Community Survey estimates that of all people on the reservation in 2010, one fifth (21.2%) had incomes below the poverty level. Thirty percent (30.2%) of single female householder families had incomes below the poverty level. The percentage increases to alarming rates for those with children under 18 years old (34.5%) and children under five years old (49.0%). Nearly half of the children under five who are living with a single female householder are living below the poverty level.

Diabetes and other food related health issues are significant across the community served by Leech Lake Tribal College. Student and community access to healthy food choices are limited, and awareness and understanding of how nutrition impacts long-term health is low. Gardening is a traditional practice, but younger generations have limited opportunity to learn the skills and gain the knowledge for successful implementation.

The Leech Lake Tribal College Land-Grant Committee is in the process of creating a vision and coordinated plan for the utilization of Land-grant funds towards common goals that will increase the health of the community and provide educational opportunities for student development. While the land-grant committee is still in its infancy, we plan to research and create an organizational structure for securing stakeholder inputs and ultimately hope to develop collaborative projects between the college and the community. Discussion across land-grant offices has spanned a broad spectrum of interests, however, there is a mutual desire to pursue the development of a holistic Community Health and Vitality Program. The TCU/VISTA will be vital to the development of this program and will carry out these three *Community Health and Vitality components of the project*:

- *Community Health and Vitality: Internship/Field-Trip Program*
  - Develop a 'short-term' internship program in health and wellness fields that provide opportunities for students in cities beyond the reservations immediate boundaries.
  - Develop a 'long-term' internship program in health and wellness fields that provide opportunities for students nearer the reservation.
- *Community Health and Vitality: Whole Foods/Native Foods Curriculum Development*
  - Research and develop Curriculum (both for-credit and extension) to be utilized in the *Whole Foods/Native Foods Hands on Learning Program utilizing the LLTC Community Garden, LLTC Community Kitchen, and the Chippewa National Forest CHV component of this project.*
- *Community Health and Vitality: Whole Foods/Native Foods Community Resources Coordination*
  - Coordinate Community Resources to accomplish both the 'Curriculum Development' and support implementation of the new programs.

# Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute, Albuquerque, NM

*Assisting New Mexico Tribes in Agriculture/Land Conservation: to Build Community Knowledge, Skills and Employment Opportunities*



Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) is a National Indian Community College that prepares Native American students to be productive life-long learners, as tribal members, in an ever-changing global environment. As a 1994 land-grant institution, SIPI partners with tribes, employers, and other organizations with a stake in Indian education. An enduring commitment to student success is the hallmark of SIPI's operations. The total work-force within

each of the tribes ranges between 200 and 2,000. Pueblos seem to be below average, ranging from 6% to 33% among the largest groups. The employed and in-poverty rates seem to be average compared to other tribal groups.

The goal of this project is to assist New Mexico tribes in building community knowledge, skills and employment opportunities in agriculture and land conservation. The project will include assessing tribes to support a sustainable future and for the development of a workforce with diverse skills that can fulfill the needs of the community and support economic development and improve access of resources through grant research and writing. In addition, this project will work with state, federal and local agencies to increase partnerships and build networks that will remain in place long after the TCU/VISTA completes the project. The TCU/VISTA will also develop a program to do presentations to high schools about SIPI, green jobs, ecosystems, among other topics related to the project.



# United Tribes Technical College, Bismarck, ND

*Strengthening UTTC Land-grant Program Systems: For Improved Efficiency In Program Delivery*



All reservation bases served by United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) except for one are identified as having very high poverty and unemployment rates – some of the highest in the nation. All children (160) enrolled in the UTTC on campus elementary school qualify for the national school lunch program to receive low-cost or free lunch.

UTTC has considerable experience in providing leadership in legislation, funding, policies, and other national activities affecting Indian country populations, as well as administering projects having local, state, regional, and national impact upon Indian communities. The College has experience in initiating, delivering, and sustaining health, education, and economic programs aimed at supporting the self-sufficiency and self-determination efforts of the Indian communities and Tribes that it serves.

The UTTC Land-Grant (UTTC LG) program will improve the depth and breadth of services significantly with the addition of a TCU/VISTA. The TCU/VISTA will develop internal systems that network our collective programming and educational resources. With our resources better defined and collectively housed, we can more efficiently implement our services to the communities we serve on a community by community based need. By increasing the coordination and efficiency of our internal processes, we can expand our extension programs, educational resources, nutrition and foodservice vocation recruitment, and research capacity over a larger geographical context and serve more tribal members.



*Projects the TCU/VISTA will work on include:*

LG Advisory Council: The LG Advisory Council has not convened for over a year due to a number of members leaving the group. The advisory group is a body that works with the UTTC LG office to identify priority programs and ways to strengthen these programs. TCU/VISTA will work to revive the group and put systems in place to support its continuation.

The UTTC LG System Development: The UTTC LG staff each has their own method for storing information, contacts, etc. While knowledgeable, talented, and hard working in programmatic delivery – staff needs include the development of fundamental systems to consolidate and merge the staffs existing knowledge resources. This will increase the offices efficiency and will redirect more staff time to work on programmatic efforts rather than redundant administrative efforts. Staff does not have the time or technical skills to develop a central resource; therefore, each staff member pursues a different method to accomplish similar tasks – a TCU/VISTA to help establish procedures, centralize records and information, and coordinate these efforts across the staff will be of tremendous value to the staff.

Community Garden Volunteer Capacity: The LG TCU/VISTA will assist in developing seasonal methods for recruiting volunteers to efficiently maintain the gardens.

UTTC Black Hills Learning Center (BHLC): UTTC, Bismarck, ND opened its new BHLC October 2013 in Rapid City, South Dakota. It is the college's first satellite campus. To date the UTTC LG trainings have not been extended to the BHLC. The TCU/VISTA will help establish educational programs to be offered.



# VISTA Living Allowance and Benefits

The Corporation provides a support or living allowance to you to cover the cost of food, housing, and other basic necessities during service. Amounts are low because you are expected to live at approximately the same economic level as the people you are serving. AmeriCorps VISTA sponsoring organizations may not supplement the living allowance members receive from the Corporation unless specifically authorized by the Corporation.

**Living Stipend:** AmeriCorps VISTA members receive a living stipend of no less than \$900 monthly. The living stipend is approximately 110% of the poverty level in the community served.

**End of Service Benefits:** Upon completion of service VISTAs are eligible for a \$5645 Segal Education Award. VISTAs may select a Cash Award of \$1500 in lieu of the Education Award.

**Student Loan Forbearance:** Eligible student loans can be placed on forbearance during service. Interest accrued during forbearance period can be paid in full by Corporation for National Service upon completion of service.

**Settling In Allowance:** Members serving a 12-month term and moving 50 miles or more from their home of record to their project site are eligible to receive a settling-in allowance to cover initial moving expenses. The amount may not exceed \$550.

**Relocation Allowance:** VISTA candidates approved to relocate for service are eligible for a Relocation Travel Allowance. The allowance amount is determined by the mileage between the VISTAs home of record and the service site; not to exceed \$1,000.

**Workers Compensation:** VISTA members are considered employees of the federal government for purposes of coverage under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA). FECA provides compensation for service related illness or injuries.

**Health Benefits:** VISTA members are enrolled in a health benefits package that covers emergency care and some basic preventative healthcare. *This health benefits package does not currently meet the individual mandate requirement of the ACA.*

**Public Benefits:** VISTA members often utilize public benefits like SNAP in order to supplement their living stipend. Public benefits are not a guarantee and it is recommended to establish eligibility for these benefits before starting service.

**Childcare Assistance:** AmeriCorps VISTA offers child care benefits to members who qualify. The maximum amount of child care assistance a member can receive is \$400 per child per month.

**Conditions:** VISTA members may not earn additional income or seek supplementary employment during their service year.



# What is “Land-Grant”?

*(1<sup>st</sup> Edition excerpts)* **A PLANNING GUIDE FOR TRIBAL COLLEGE LAND-GRANT PROGRAMS**  
First Americans Land-Grant Consortium (FALCON)

## What is “land-grant”?

The term “land-grant” defines a set of colleges and universities that Congress has designated as having a formal relationship with the Federal government through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and with a mandate to provide practical education in the agricultural and mechanical arts (and associated disciplines). Congress first bestowed land-grant status to one educational institution per state under the initial land-grant legislation, the First Morrill Act of 1862. Under the terms of that Act, grants of land were given to institutions to fund their operations, so that is where the term “land-grant” originated. Today, there is one university in each state that is authorized under the 1862 Act, and they are collectively known as the “1862 land-grant institutions.”

The ideals of the First Morrill Act and land-grant status were to provide practical education to those who did not otherwise have access to higher education. At that time, higher education was primarily a study of philosophy and the classics for society’s elite class. Hence, the act sought to “promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.” After the Civil War, the Second Morrill Act of 1890 was passed that required land-grant institutions to accept individuals of all races and colors. Because the Southern States at that time were operating under a “separate but equal” racial policy, those states chose to create a second set of land-grant universities that would serve their African-American populations. One of these universities was located in each of the 17 southern states, except Alabama which hosted Tuskegee and Alabama A&M. These universities are known as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and also as the “1890 land-grant institutions.”

In the 1960s through the 80s, another group of higher education institutions from the U.S. territories and the District of Columbia were awarded land-grant status by Congress. These institutions are located in places such as Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, and are collectively referred to as the “1862 Insular land-grant institutions,” but the 1862 is often dropped in favor of simply the “Insular land-grants.”

After much hard work by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) were given Congressional land-grant status under the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994. At the time, the 29 TCUs in existence were covered under the Act. Since then four additional TCUs have received land-grant status, while one has gone out of operation, for a current total in 2007 of 32 land-grant TCUs. These land-grant TCUs are collectively known as the “1994 land-grant institutions,” or “1994 institutions,” or simply, “the 1994s.”



# What is “Tribal” Land-Grant?

## *Continued* What is “Tribal” Land-Grant?

Land-grant status provided the 1994s access to federal funding through USDA in five major program areas:

1. Instead of land-grants, an endowment fund was established in 1996 where the 1994s would receive the interest accrued annually;
2. in 1996, an Equity grant was implemented to support instructional activities at the 1994s;
3. in 1997, an Extension grant was implemented to support community outreach at the 1994s;
4. an Institutional Capacity-building grant was authorized to support facilities construction (but it has never been funded); and
5. in 2000, a Research grant program was implemented to support research projects at the 1994s.

Generally speaking, land-grant programs are categorized into three broad areas of activity: teaching, extension, and research. These categories are partly an artifact of a history of land-grant legislation and funding, where the Hatch Act of 1887 providing research funding and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 provided extension funding. Likewise, most 1994 land-grant programs have evolved into those three functional areas because of how federal funding has become available.

In summary, the land-grant system was created with the goal of providing practical education to all peoples of various races and social classes. It has become a powerful and diverse collection of colleges and universities with a Congressional mandate and a formal relationship with the federal government through USDA. The 1994s are the most recent members of the land-grant system, and their funding provides support for teaching, extension and research activities.

### **What is “tribal” land-grant?**

While there has been much discussion among the 1994s concerning the definition of a tribal version of a land-grant mission, there has been little movement to develop a consensus definition. Perhaps this is because the 1994s, and the tribal nations that they serve, are a heterogeneous group with diverse characteristics and needs. Yet, these discussions have proved fruitful in identifying common goals and needs, which can then be used to promote the growth of land-grant programs at all the 1994s.

An important early discussion on a tribal land-grant definition was a 1996 paper written by Phil Baird, who is now Dean of Academics at United Tribes Technical College. The concept paper, *What is a Tribal Land-grant College?*, highlighted the fundamental characteristics of the 1994s that constitute a uniquely “tribal” land-grant institution. Baird noted that tribes’ sovereignty status and their own land base gave them (and the federal government) a special justification and responsibility to use land-grant status. No other land-grant group was chartered by sovereign nations with their own land base.

As the 1994s began to define their land-grant role, Baird stressed the importance of linking land-grant programming with the TCU’s overall mission,

*The guiding philosophies and purposes of a Tribal college or university are found in its mission statement. As a Tribal land-grant institution, the mission statement will need to be looked at to assess its appropriateness for these [land-grant] roles (p. 7).*



## *Continued* What is “Tribal” Land-Grant?

Baird suggested that land-grant programs could be coordinated by an “institute” within the TCU, which would receive guidance from an “advisory council” comprised of community members, tribal representatives, and other local stakeholders.

Baird identified four major areas that should be considered when assessing the role that land-grant programs should play at a TCU:

1. Research for institutional capacity-building: The 1994s should conduct baseline research on the current state of tribal land and human resources as the centerpiece for program planning and development.
2. Vocational and postsecondary education for developing resident expertise: The 1994s should then seek to build the local expertise that can address the needs identified through research.
3. Outreach/extension and consumer education for strengthening family and community self-sufficiency: The 1994s should use resident expertise to provide community services and community-based education.
4. Indigenous nation-building to sustain tribal sovereignty and self-determination: The 1994s should help build tribal economies, develop leadership, and strengthen policy-making capacities.

A second major discussion regarding a “tribal” land-grant vision took place at the first workshop specifically designed by, and for, the 1994s, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on February 5-7, 2002. David Gipp, President of United Tribes Technical College, acknowledged the diversity of the 1994s when addressing the work that is required to develop any single, comprehensive land-grant plan. During his keynote address, he highlighted an Action Agenda that identified six key challenge areas for the 1994s:

1. Administrative practices: building the institutional capacity of the 1994s to effectively administer land-grant programs;
2. Faculty and curriculum development: developing faculty and staff, and strengthening curriculum and instructional offerings;
3. Student programs: developing and implementing new and innovative programs for 1994 students;
4. Facilities and equipment: securing resources to build facilities, equipment, and technology infrastructures;
5. Community sustainability: providing critical services to 1994 communities;
6. Image enhancement: advocating and raising awareness of the 1994s priorities, needs, and successes.





## *Continued* What is “Tribal” Land-Grant?

The Action Agenda was developed by the USDA/AIHEC Leadership Group, a national advisory body of 1994 presidents and top USDA officials, and it provided a roadmap for the USDA/AIHEC partnership. It was not a strategic plan, but it represented a comprehensive to-do list for the Leadership Group to focus their efforts.

During the roundtable discussion at the workshop, the 1994 participants drafted a “1994 Land-Grant Colleges and Universities (TLGCU) Vision,” which contained four major points:

- As 1994 Land-Grant Institutions in the 21st century, Tribal Colleges and Universities envision the revitalization of Tribal homelands and the self-sufficiency of America’s Indigenous families, communities, and Tribal Nations.
- The 1994 TLGCUs seek equitable opportunities to collaborate with institutions and organizations willing to commit to the needs and aspirations of Tribal People.
- Respecting traditional and new bases of knowledge, the 1994 TLGCUs seek partnership models embracing the uniqueness of TLGCUs and their integrated approaches toward land and human resources development through research, instruction, community outreach, and advocacy.
- The ultimate goal of the 1994 TLGCUs is to ensure the cultural, physical, economic, education, and spiritual well-being of past, present, and future generations of the America’s Indigenous people.

The aforementioned visioning points were further refined into a 1994 Land-grant Vision Statement, which was approved by the AIHEC Board of Directors at their meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on November 1, 2002. The vision statement, as approved, read as follows:

*The 1994 Land-grant Institutions seek to ensure the well-being of America’s indigenous peoples and their tribal nations through discovery, learning and community engagement.*

This statement provided a broad, overarching vision that was consistent with each of the 1994s’ strategic plan. It also allowed for a variety of programs that would benefit the well-being of tribal peoples.

In summary, being a “tribal” land-grant means, above all, using land-grant status to work for the benefit and well-being of tribal peoples and nations. For over a decade, discussions have been taking place on the definition of a common 1994 land-grant vision and mission. A 1994 Land-grant Vision Statement was approved that provided a broad vision for the 1994 land-grant community. A recent common history and a common vision statement provide us a solid foundation for developing our own definitions of what it means to be a “tribal” land-grant institution.



# History

## Tribal Colleges and Universities Land-Grant Development Initiative (TCULGDI)

The Tribal Colleges and Universities Land-Grant Development Initiative (TCULGDI) pilot initiative started as a collaboration between the Department of Interior (DOI) Office of Surface Mining, concerned with environmental reclamation and safety and a proven track record of working successfully with VISTAs; U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) 1994 Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Program, concerned with the development of land-grant Tribal Colleges and Universities and their surrounding communities; AmeriCorps VISTA, concerned with fighting poverty; and the participating TCUs and community improvement groups determined to support the advancement of Tribal economies through the development of post-secondary educational institutional programs, resources, and infrastructure at 1994 Land-Grant Tribal Colleges and Universities.

In 2013 DOI/OSM approached USDA to partner in an “AmeriCorps VISTA Tribal Land-Grant Development Project” as a result of:

- a funding opportunity at DOI to secure VISTAs to work in Indian Country
- a shared interest in capacity building in impoverished communities
- the success of the USDA Land-Grant Development Tribal Fellowship Program which offers training and support to TCU Land-Grant Professionals to support the development of their institutions and that Dr. Allan Comp attended in 2012 and 2013

The Department of the Interior (DOI) through its Office of Surface Mining (OSM) has successfully utilized VISTA volunteers to plan and implement projects in some of Appalachia’s poorest communities. In 2012 the DOI/OSM office and the USDA 1994 Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Program (USDA 1994 TLGCU Program) started exploring the idea of replicating DOI OSM’s success in utilizing VISTA volunteers in Indian Country. In 2013 the USDA hosted its first Land-Grant Development Tribal Fellowship Program which consisted of land-grant department heads of fourteen of the thirty-two 1994 Land-Grant Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). The potential of a USDA and DOI VISTA Tribal Colleges and Universities Land-Grant Development Initiative was extensively discussed at this meeting with Dr. Allan Comp, who heads the OSM/VISTA Teams at DOI/OSM.

In 2014 DOI agreed to fund VISTA Volunteer positions to support work in Indian Country, additionally, funds were secured through USDA to support these positions. Thus the Tribal Colleges and Universities Land-Grant Development Initiative was created to implement the pilot program and fund and provide professional development to participating TCU-VISTAs. The TCU-VISTAs will include a TCU-VISTA Leader that will provide administrative coordination to the TCU-VISTAs working at 1994 Land-Grant Tribal Colleges and Universities across the nation. Schools invited to participate in this initiative participated in the USDA Tribal Fellowship Program or are BIA schools.

Schools that participated in past Tribal Fellowship Programs are ideal candidates for the PILOT Tribal Colleges and Universities Land-Grant Development Initiative as fellows and their institutions demonstrate a commitment to developing their respective land-grant departments - a key component to making the pilot a success. The 2013 USDA Tribal Fellowship Program supported each participating school in the development of a land-grant plan for their department. During the fellowship, fellows participated in land-grant planning workshops and learned about USDA and other Federal programs that could help support their departments, institutions, and Tribal governments, met with key agency staff heading programs relevant to tribal communities and met with Mission Area Under Secretaries to discuss TCU needs and issues.



*The Tribal Colleges and Universities Land-Grant Development Initiative represents a partnership between the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Corporation for National and Community Service, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) to secure college-trained VISTAs to assist in building the capacity of Land-Grant Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) in the areas of Economic Development, Healthy Futures, and Environmental Stewardship. TCULGDI Contributing Partners and their Respective Contributing Bureaus, Mission Areas, Agencies, or Offices, and Non-Profit Partners include: U.S. Department of the Interior: Office of the Secretary, Bureau of Indian Education, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Surface Mining; U.S. Department of Agriculture: 1994 Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Program Office, Rural Development, Office of Advocacy and Outreach, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Research Education and Environment; National Corporation for Community Service, Volunteers in Service to America; & Conservation Legacy which serves as the single non-profit sponsor for the team.*

