

Indian Country Priorities and Opportunities for the 2023 Farm Bill Title VII: Research

Key Points and Recommendations

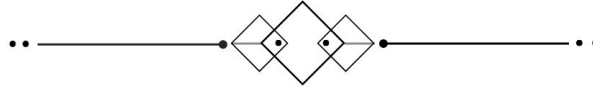
- Research and extension services are vital to improving the resiliency of Tribal food systems. However, agricultural extension resources serving Tribal lands are severely underfunded, and Tribal agricultural research priorities are rarely considered outside of Tribal Colleges and Universities context.
- Indigenous producers who have access to the education and training opportunities that non-Native producers have through the land grant system will build more resilient food systems, improve food security, and expand job opportunities in Tribal communities.

Background Information and Context

The greatest potential for Indian Country in the Research Title lies in opportunities for innovation, research, and educational opportunities that improve efficiency and drive creative solutions to problems in food systems. Consistent support for Tribally led research will spur economic development and entrepreneurship in agriculture across rural America. The ripple effect of consistent investment in research, extension and education will change the shape of our food systems for the better and expanding tribal involvement and representation in research is critical to that change.

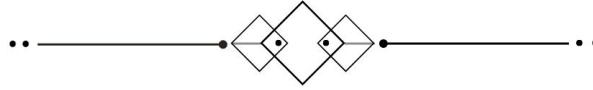
Opportunities for Indian Country in the Research Title

- ***Addressing the Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program's (FRTEP) outdated funding***
 - Fund FRTEP at no less than \$10 million annually to increase the number of FRTEP extension agents and expand Tribal extension to levels comparable to extension services at land grant institutions.
 - Further programmatic improvements include:
 - Allocate federal funding to increase the number of FRTEP extension agents from current number of 30 on Indian reservations to at least 100 over the next four years.
 - Fund FRTEP at \$30 million to account for the additional 1994 land grant institutions that have been eligible to participate since the passage of the 2018 Farm Bill.



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- The Indian Country Extension Commission called for a full, non-competitive funding of FRTEP-eligible sites at \$49 million, with a full list of recommendations as follows:
 - Eliminate the competitive nature of the FRTEP funding and instead use permanent funding similar to County Extension programs.
 - Increase funding for both the FRTEP (\$30 million) and the 1994 Extension programs (\$19 million) to quickly make them equivalent to the non-Tribal Extension programs across the nation.
 - Increase access to additional programs and reduce or remove the matching requirements on all USDA grants for Tribal Extension.
- ***Parity in Funding Opportunities for 1994 Tribal Colleges and Universities***
 - Improve equity by re-examining competitive funding formulas for grants, which are often associated with inequitable funding distribution for Indian Country.
- ***TCU Eligibility for all National Institute of food and Agriculture (NIFA) Funding***
 - Make TCUs eligible for all SDA NIFA funding authorities.
- ***Tribal Set-Aside, Preference and Funding at NIFA***
 - Provide Tribal set-asides and preferences within all non-FRTEP NIFA funding authorities while retaining the competitive nature of the funding, necessary to continue building capacity and strength
 - Amend the agricultural legal funding authority contained in the 2014 Farm Bill to ensure that competition for the funds occurs and funding is set-aside to be provided to organizations and entities that have a proven specialty and primary focus on Indian law issues that intersect with food and agriculture law.
 - Require NIFA funding authorities to focus a portion of their work on building knowledge and capacity in business development unique to Tribal lands and individual Indian owned land.
 - Allow Tribal governments and Tribal organizations full access to all nutrition education programs at NIFA, including SNAP-Ed and all research programs



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related to building knowledge in nutrition, health, obesity, and diabetes prevention.

- Include a set-aside in Small Business Innovation Research projects funded through NIFA for Tribal projects leading for commercialization of food products or food systems innovations.
- Ensure that the federal formula funding authorities that support basic research, education, and extension funding for 1862 institutions is revisited
- ***Agriculture Research Service Projects on Traditional Ecological Knowledge***
 - The Agricultural Research Service must launch and support a considerable number of research projects that focus on the role that traditional knowledge plays in the environmental and natural resource and ecological arenas as well as the food science, nutrition, and health arenas.
- ***Multi-Tribal Funding Research Title Programs***
 - A separate funding authority like the Sun Grant or Sea Grant authorities should be developed that allow multi-Tribal, multi-state, and consortium approaches to meeting the research, education, and extension needs of Indian Country.
- ***Native Youth Grants***
 - Grants for youth organizations must include the provision of grants for youth organizations in Indian Country that focus on developing food and agriculture leadership and scientific knowledge programs.