

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND
THE AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM**

This Memorandum of Agreement (“MOA”) is made and entered into between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (“USDA”) and the 1994 Land-Grant Institutions, as represented by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (“AIHEC”). For purposes of this MOA, USDA and AIHEC will be collectively referred to as “the Parties.” For purposes of this MOA, AIHEC represents only the Tribal Colleges and Universities (“TCUs”) listed in section 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994, Title V, Part C, Public Law 103-382 (7 U.S.C. 301 note) and described in this document as 1994 Land-Grant Institutions.

ARTICLE I: PURPOSES

1. To promote cooperative efforts in agricultural research, extension, and teaching; and
2. To promote agriculture, indigenous food systems, and agriculture and food related science, research, and internships, fellowships, and careers from a tribal and indigenous perspective at tribally controlled colleges and universities and within American Indian and Alaska Native communities; and
3. To assist in fulfilling the mandate of Executive Order 14049 on the *White House initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Native Americans and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities*, which aims to provide American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students of all ages high quality education and career-building opportunities; and
4. To assist in fulfilling the obligations of the U.S. federal government to federally recognized sovereign Indian Tribes as a result of the federal trust and treaty responsibility.

ARTICLE II: AUTHORITIES

- Section 1409A(e) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. § 3124a(e)).
- Section 533(d) of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994, Title V, Part C, Public Law 103-382 (7 U.S.C. 301 note).
- Executive Order 14049 (White House initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Native Americans and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities) October 11, 2021.

ARTICLE III: USDA AND AIHEC LEADERSHIP GROUP

The Parties will jointly establish a USDA-AIHEC Leadership Group (hereinafter referred to as "Leadership Group") to serve as an advisory body to provide guidance and direction to USDA and the 1994 Program on matters of mutual benefit emanating from USDA-AIHEC partnership initiatives. This group shall consist of an equal number of members from USDA and 1994 Land-grant Institutions for a total of eight members to represent USDA and eight

members to represent AIHEC. Members will serve for a term of two years, but are not term-limited and can be appointed to consecutive terms.

Of the eight USDA members, Secretary of Agriculture shall appoint one as a Co-Chairperson of the USDA-AIHEC Leadership Group and all USDA members. Of the eight 1994 Land-grant members, the Chairman of AIHEC shall appoint on as a Co-Chairperson of the USDA-AIHEC Leadership Group and all AIHEC members for secretarial approval. The USDA-AIHEC Leadership Group will meet on a scheduled basis as determined by the members, but no less than twice a year.

ARTICLE IV: OBJECTIVES

1. Strengthen and sustain 1994 Land-Grant Institutions' capacities by increasing access to USDA programs, boards and committees, services, and resources, and into the nation's Land-Grant system.
2. Address historic inequity faced by 1994 Land-Grant Institutions in USDA funding and program participation.
3. Coordinate Agency activities to increase and enhance employment and educational opportunities for 1994 Land-Grant Institutions' students, faculty, and staff.
4. Support the development of 1994 Land-Grant Institutions' capacities and their consortium to establish and sustain programs and services that support the purposes and objectives of this MOA.

ARTICLE V: RESPONSIBILITIES

A. USDA shall endeavor to:

1. Prioritize Departmental efforts to address historic funding, support, resource development, and program participation inequities faced by 1994 Land-Grant Institutions in the nation's Land-Grant system.
2. Review new employment opportunities and hiring actions internally at USDA for adding expertise in tribal expertise and Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK) and Indian Country science and engineering expertise.
3. Review Departmental programs as well as tailor and coordinate Agency activities and educational opportunities for 1994 Land-Grant Institution students, faculty, and staff.
4. Enhance capacity-building programs, including technical assistance and research programs at 1994 Land-Grant Institutions.
5. Seek opportunities for facilities and laboratory rehabilitation, enhancement, and construction as well as USDA loan program waivers.
6. Broaden outreach and support to the 1994 Land-Grant Institutions to increase their access to and participation in USDA programs and services, including in food sovereignty, food security, nutrition, climate, research, apprenticeship, and infrastructure development programs.
7. Provide AIHEC with information on grant and program opportunities, boards and committees, and resources available within USDA to be distributed to membership.

8. Collaborate with 1994 Land-grant Institutions in the development and implementation of programs to prepare their students for careers that intersect between interests of these schools and USDA through degree programs, cooperative arrangements for student internships, and apprenticeships with USDA agencies
9. Participate in annual conferences sponsored by AIHEC including career fairs, on-campus career orientation, and recruitment activities at 1994 Land-grant institutions.
10. Collaborate in outreach efforts, including providing student career counseling and mentoring.
11. Identify scholarship, internship, fellowship, and cooperative education opportunities at USDA for students, faculty, and staff at 1994 Land-Grant institutions.
12. Explore Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) opportunities for USDA employees to serve at AIHEC's central headquarters and member institutions as executives on loan, technical advisors, and/or faculty.
13. Identify IPA opportunities for faculty members of 1994 Land-Grant Institutions to serve temporary developmental assignments at USDA.
14. Identify opportunities for 1994 Land-Grant Institutions participation in excess property acquisition.
15. Collaborate with AIHEC to develop strategies for improving 1994 Land-Grant Institutions' participation in USDA programs.
16. Collaborate with AIHEC to develop an annual report of 1994 Land-Grant Institutions' participation in USDA programs.
17. Encourage USDA mission areas and agencies to:
 - a. Enter into agreements with 1994 Land-Grant Institutions to promote special initiatives of mutual interest, including, but not limited to, programs to advance extension, research, education, and data collection activities at 1994 Land-Grant Institutions.
 - b. Collaborate with 1994 Land-Grant Institutions, including in delivery of instructional services; development of curricula; technology infrastructure and support; research and facility support; access to Federal resources; educational workshops for instructors; and research and development and technology transfer to these schools.
 - c. Collaborate with 1994 Land-Grant Institutions in furthering the land-grant component of their respective missions.
 - d. Participate in cooperative program activities between 1994 Land-Grant Institutions and other institutions of higher education that have working relationships with USDA.
 - e. Provide opportunities for representation of 1994 Land-Grant Institutions on relevant advisory boards and commissions established by the Secretary of Agriculture, including, but not limited to, the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board.
 - f. Collaborate with other Federal departments to leverage program delivery to TCUs, coordinate application and reporting requirements, and develop common definitions and standards through memorandums of agreement or other means.

B. AIHEC shall endeavor to:

1. Coordinate with USDA in providing support to 1994 Land-Grant Institutions.
2. Help USDA to collaborate with member institutions, including disseminating

information about USDA opportunities, programs, boards and committees, and services that maximize the equitable representation of American Indians/Alaska Natives in USDA-funded programs to 1994 Land-Grant Institutions.

3. Collaborate with USDA 1994 Program to conduct an annual analysis of 1994 Land-Grant Institution participation in USDA programs and develop strategic goals for improving participation through the review.
4. Assist 1994 Land-Grant Institutions in the development and implementation of programs to prepare TCU students for careers that intersect between interests of TCUs and USDA through degree programs at TCUs and through cooperative arrangements with USDA agencies, including field agencies for internship and apprenticeship programs for TCU students.
5. Collaborate with USDA to develop a career pipeline for 1994 Land-Grant Institution students into USDA and in natural resources, food, management, and agriculture fields.
6. Work with USDA to identify opportunities for partnerships within the Land-Grant system that will facilitate opportunities for students to pursue advanced degrees and support the development of such programs at 1994 Land-Grant Institutions, if relevant.
7. Assist 1994 Land-Grant Institutions in establishing partnerships with other Land-Grant Institutions and other institutions of higher education to facilitate transfer of students into baccalaureate and advanced degree programs, if not offered at an AIHEC member institution.
8. Provide facilities, services, and opportunities at regularly scheduled AIHEC events for USDA to provide information, host special educational and training programs to 1994 Land-Grant Institutions' administration, faculty, and students regarding USDA programs, opportunities, resources, etc.
9. Assist in the execution of projects such as forums and workshops directed toward increasing employment and training opportunities within USDA for students, faculty, and staff of 1994 Land-Grant Institutions.
10. Develop IPA opportunities for USDA employees to serve at AIHEC's central headquarters and member institutions as executives on loan, technical advisors, and/or faculty.
11. Identify IPA opportunities for faculty members of 1994 Land-Grant Institutions to serve temporary professional development-related assignments at USDA.
12. Facilitate collaboration with other federal departments to leverage program delivery to 1994 Land-Grant Institutions.

ARTICLE VI: STRATEGIC PLAN

The parties will prepare, maintain, and continually assess a Strategic Plan to develop new initiatives and verify, assess, and sustain existing programs that serve to benefit both AIHEC member 1994 Land-Grant Institutions and USDA.

ARTICLE VII: MOU CONTACTS

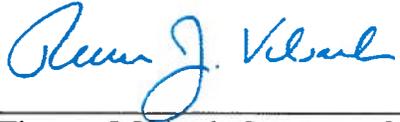
The principal contacts for this MOA are:

- USDA: USDA Tribal Colleges and Universities Program Director, Lawrence Shorty, Lawrence.Shorty@usda.gov
- AIHEC: President and CEO, Carrie Billy, cbilly@aihec.org

ARTICLE VIII: MISCELLANEOUS

- A. USDA and AIHEC and their respective agencies and offices will handle their own activities and utilize their own resources, including the expenditure of their own funds, in pursuing these objectives. Each Party will carry out its separate activities in a coordinated and mutually beneficial manner.
- B. Nothing in this MOA shall obligate either USDA or AIHEC to obligate or transfer any funds. Specific work projects or activities that involve the transfer of funds, services, or property among the various agencies and offices of USDA and AIHEC require execution of separate agreements and be contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds. Such activities must be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority. This MOA does not provide such authority. Negotiation, execution, and administration of each such agreement must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations.
- C. This MOA takes effect upon the signature of USDA and AIHEC and shall remain in effect for five years from the date of execution. This MOA may be extended or amended upon written request of either USDA or AIHEC and the subsequent written concurrence of the other Party. Either USDA or AIHEC may terminate this MOA with a 60-day written notice to the other Party.
- D. This MOA is not intended to, and does not create, any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity, by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture

Date: January 24, 2023

AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM



David Yarlott, Jr., Chairman

Date: 2/7/23