

**Farm and Food Policy
Diversity Initiative****Farm and Food Policy Diversity Initiative**

c/o Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural

1012 14th Street NW, Suite 1100

Washington, DC 20005

Ph: 202.628.7160 Fax: 202.628.7165

For further information on the Diversity Initiative contact Lorette Picciano at lpicciano@ruralco.org or Savonala Horne at savi@landloss.org.

CREATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVE NUTRITION BY REDUCING INEQUITIES IN INDIAN COUNTRY EXTENSION PROGRAMS

TIMELINE - *Immediate implementation. Add to stimulus package within 60 days.*

PROPOSAL – Expand annual funding for the Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program (FRTEP) from approximately \$3 million discretionary to at least \$20 million annually. The National Congress of American Indians, the Intertribal Agriculture Council, the Southwest Indian Agriculture Association and allies in the Rural Coalition and the Farm and Food Policy Diversity Initiative have for many years requested at least \$10M. The program should be authorized or administratively realigned as a stand-alone extension program within USDA CSREES (NIFA under the new Farm Bill). The long-standing requirement that FRTEP must compete every year for funding should be replaced with a formula stream similar to that enjoyed for over 90 years by universally available county extension programs. The new authority should continue to exempt it from matching requirements (as is done for tribal colleges). Authority should be provided to allow the states to utilize from 5-10% of funds to offset administrative costs.

PROBLEM -American Indians living on reservations do not have an equitable level of access to the 1862 land grant colleges and universities that non-reservation U.S. citizens have. Less than 5% of America's 500 plus tribes have dedicated cooperative extension programs. By comparison, almost 97% of all counties in the U.S. have local, county-based extension offices. The county extension offices are rarely, if at all, ever visible on reservations; politically constrained by their funding protocols and historical relationships with counties and legislatures, rather than with tribes. FRTEP was established under the 1990 Farm Bill and is poised to resolve the inequity issue. Where funded, it delivers to reservation-bound American Indians the same access to research-based land-grant extension educational programs widely available to neighboring county residents. The program was designed to establish offices on nearly 90 reservations across the country. Funds have never been available to serve more than the current number of 27 programs. In order to achieve the intent of congress and to resolve this obvious inequity, the program must be (a) adequately funded and (b) appropriately administered.

OBJECTIVE – Promote agricultural, economic and leadership development and create jobs by providing dedicated extension educational programs for as many tribes as seek them, through the FRTEP mechanism. There is an immediate need for a total of approximately 90 offices, with more than 60 new offices needed.

OUTCOMES – This investment would extend professional, community-driven educational programs backed by research widely to Indian Country. Multiplier effects include:

- Creation of 60+ new professional positions, with 60+ staff jobs on participating reservations. Dramatic increase in Indian understanding of and participation in USDA programs,
- Enables tribes to better utilize new farm bill authorities that supports procurement of “traditional” or locally grown food in the Food Distribution on Indian reservations,
- Establishes and expands 4-H and youth development programs to engage youth in lifelong learning,
- Establishes improved human nutrition, family and consumer education programs,
- Improves capacity to identify, assess and resolve natural resources and environmental issues with university assistance to tribes,
- Establishes community resource, economic and leadership development education programs in Indian Country,
- Improves tribal college participation in 1994 land grant programs and better links them with relevant 1862 land-grant communities.



PROPOSAL SUPPORTED BY: NCAI, IAC, SWIAA, and the Farm and Food Policy Diversity Initiative.

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS: The following are Diversity Initiative members with special expertise on this issue:

Ross Racine, Intertribal Agriculture Council, rracine@indianaglink.com, 406-259-3525 and Joe Hiller, jghiller@ag.arizona.edu, 520-730-5862

The Farm and Food Policy Diversity Initiative (FFPDI) includes diverse partner organizations with deep roots in the civil rights and rural and urban movements to secure land and justice. They work to ensure that organizations serving people of color in the food system have the opportunity to develop and support their own initiatives to improve equity in food and farm policy. They have successfully advocated for policies to increase USDA transparency and accountability, halt land and farm loss by eliminating the factors that cause it, and to increase prosperity in the food system by expanding opportunities and access to agriculture programs for the nation's diverse farmers and farmworkers.

Farm and Food Policy Diversity Initiative Policy Team

- Savi Horne, Land Loss Prevention Project, Policy Team Co-Chair
- Ross Racine, Intertribal Agriculture Council, Policy Team Co-Chair
- Jerry Pennick and John Zippert, Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund
- Chukou Thao, National Hmong American Farmers
- Antonio Gonzalez and Albert Jacquez, William C. Velasquez Institute
- Lloyd Wright, former USDA Director of Civil Rights, Independent Consultant
- Rudy Arredondo, National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association
- Michael Harris, Institute for Community Resource Development
- Tirso Moreno, Farmworker Association of Florida
- Mily Trevino-Saucedo, Organización en California de Liderés Campesinas
- Jose Aguto, National Congress of American Indians
- Edmund Gomez, New Mexico State University
- Brett Malone, ALBA
- Anim Steel, The Food Project
- Quinton Robinson, Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural, Policy Advisor
- Lorette Picciano, Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural, Policy Team Coordinator