

BPA tribal student summer internships

BPA, in partnership with American Science and Engineering Society and Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho, offers tribal students summer internships in Environment, Fish and Wildlife. These are focused on tribal, fish, wildlife and natural resource management areas. Similar internships in Transmission and Power Services focus on engineering and technical areas. These internships expose Native American college students to challenging professional experiences and serve as an effective way to identify top candidates for employment. Applications are usually due in early spring and are accessible on the Tribal Affairs Web site.

Utility formation

The Energy Policy Act of 1992 paved the way for competition in the electric power industry. Tribes across the country now have an opportunity to redefine their traditional roles in receiving electric service. Many are considering forming utilities in response to wholesale deregulation of the electric industry. Despite the challenges, tribes who form utilities can reap significant benefits. These benefits include providing and encouraging tribal employment,

supporting conservation and resource development, and improving utility infrastructure and service.

Owning and operating utilities allows tribes to work in the best interest of their tribal members. A tribal utility can work for the sustainable development of the tribe through policies set and accepted by tribal members. In most cases, access to cost-based power from federal power marketing administrations will lower tribal members' utility bills. BPA requires that six Standards for Service be met before an entity can become a utility customer. The purchaser must:

- Be legally formed in accordance with local, state, federal or tribal laws;
- Own a distribution system and be ready, willing and able to take power from BPA within a reasonable period of time;
- Have a general utility responsibility within the service area;
- Have the financial ability to pay BPA for the federal power it purchases;
- Have adequate utility operations and structure; and
- Be able to purchase power in wholesale amounts.

Tribal Affairs

If you would like more information about Tribal Affairs services or programs, please contact us.

Web address:

www.bpa.gov/corporate/About_BPA/tribes/

E-mail address:

tribalaffairs@bpa.gov

Mailing address:

Bonneville Power Administration
Tribal Affairs Office (DKT-7)
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, OR 97208-3621

Street address:

905 NE 11th Ave.
Portland, OR 97232

Phone and fax numbers:

(503) 230-7685, phone
(503) 230-5884, fax

Tribal Affairs



The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) takes its responsibility to work with Pacific Northwest tribes very seriously. BPA's Tribal Policy was written with extensive involvement from the 13 Columbia River Basin tribes and signed in 1996. The policy is the foundation of BPA's trust responsibility as a federal agency and provides a framework for a government-to-government relationship with the federally recognized Columbia Basin tribes.

American Indian tribes maintain their inherent right to be recognized and act as sovereign nations. The United States has acknowledged this status through treaties, executive orders, Supreme Court decisions, laws and everyday transactions. As a federal trustee, BPA has a responsibility to understand and support the tribes' cultural values and their statutory, regulatory and treaty rights.

To ensure this support, BPA maintains a skilled Tribal Affairs staff. Tribal Affairs has developed the following mission statement:

To ensure Bonneville Power Administration's understanding of and respect for tribal values and resources; Tribal Affairs will fulfill BPA's tribal trust responsibility and Tribal Policy commitments by initiating and supporting effective, two-way communication with tribal governments.

Services

Through its Tribal Affairs staff and business units, BPA is dedicated to providing the following services to the region's tribes.

- Develop and maintain strong government-to-government relationships and provide consultation and technical assistance to tribes.
- Proactively anticipate the tribes' need for information and be responsive to tribal requests for information on BPA initiatives, such as power products and services, utility formation, wholesale power rates, renewable resource development, transmission facility development, energy efficiency programs and right-of-way policies.
- Provide information to tribes to help them understand BPA perspectives on power, transmission and environment and fish and wildlife issues being discussed in the region.
- Fully consider the interest of tribes when establishing BPA policies that impact them such as river operations, transmission system maintenance and development, environment, and fish and wildlife programs. Engage the affected tribes in two-way dialogue about potential policy and program changes.

Programs

Cultural resources

BPA's management of cultural resources takes place against the backdrop of BPA's relationships with the 52 sovereign tribal governments in the region.

Protection of cultural resources such as burial sites, religious sites, and usual and accustomed gathering areas are of vital interest and importance to the tribes.

One challenge for the agency is that most of the transmission system was built prior to passage of many federal cultural resource mandates. BPA's transmission system encompasses a five-state service territory and includes over 15,000 miles of high-voltage transmission lines. BPA transmission line infrastructure improvement or maintenance projects can span many miles and pass through diverse terrain, sometimes including Native American cultural sites and historic areas. Annual river operations of the Federal Columbia River Power System at the 14-mainstem federal dams also impact federally protected historic properties and traditional cultural values on mainstem reservoirs located throughout the Columbia River Basin. BPA's Tribal Policy commits the agency to consulting with potentially affected tribes prior to taking actions that could have an adverse impact on them.

Low-income weatherization

BPA has a long-standing commitment to provide funding for weatherization services to low-income households. In 1999, BPA specifically set aside funding to be targeted for Native American homes

to improve the installation of weatherization measures in both Indian Country and throughout the service territory of BPA's public utility customers.

Since 1999, BPA has met with several tribes who were interested in participating in the Tribal Set-Aside Low-Income Weatherization Program. As a result of these meetings, several improvements to the program were identified to ensure its success. BPA continues to work closely with tribal governments, local community action agencies, states and sometimes the servicing utility to eliminate any obstacles to the equal access to federal programs by the region's Native American population. Activities include:

- Direct involvement with tribal governments to implement outreach and coordinate with tribal members.
- Potential funding for installation of measures if the tribe has a qualified program that can implement auditing, installation and inspection services.
- Funding grants that are simple and developed to meet the specific needs of the tribe.
- Funded tribal training sessions for certification as weatherization auditors and inspectors.
- Training for certified auditors and inspectors.