



Indian Country Extension Commission

Indian Country Extension Development under the Revised
Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program

Executive Summary



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ICEC Findings and Proposed Solutions

Fundamental Ask:

We are requesting a \$49 million increase in Tribal Extension funding with continuous funding at this level after an initial 4-year program build-up. We request a **\$30 million increase for the FRTEP programs** and a **\$19 million increase for 1994** Extension programs.

Key Solutions:

Eliminate the competitive requirement for FRTEP funding and provide permanent base funding that utilizes a funding formula similar to County Extension programs. Current FRTEP programs need to be grandfathered in and receive increased funding to \$140,000 per year. The new FRTEP positions are to be allocated based on the funding formula described on page 9 of the complete Commission report.

Increase funding for both the FRTEP and 1994 Extension programs to make them equivalent to County Extension programs across the nation. The recommended increase in allocations of \$30 million for FRTEP will bring the base number of agents up to a solid foundation of 125. The recommended \$19 million increase in allocation to the 1994s is needed to enhance their outreach and programming efforts. Both increases need to be incorporated into base funding requests starting in year 5 after the initial 4-year \$49M increased funding is expended. Note that the funding path of each program is separate and should not be seen as a single funding line. Both are critical and need to be supported.

This ask is grounded in the **principal purpose** for Extension – to create economic opportunity and enhance community development through education that helps Tribal community members make healthier lifestyle choices. The result is less dependence on dialysis, food distribution programs and a host of other government-funded benefits. (See Tribal member testimonials at end of document).

Cost savings resulting from this investment will be significant but, most importantly, Tribal Nations will be empowered with a sustainable program that vastly improves the quality of life in their communities.

Modified Smith-Lever Formula specific to Tribal Extension:

A \$30 million increase for the FRTEP program through an initial 4-year investment with continued funding of the existing 35 programs at an increased level of \$140,000. Over this 4-year investment period 90 new agent positions (for a total of the 125) and 27 new specialist positions will be added across Indian Country. Approximately 56% (\$16.9M) will be expended in the first two years with the remaining 44% (\$13.1M) expended in the last two years. All allocations are to be based on the recommended USDA Modified Smith-Lever formula Specific to Tribal Extension:

1. Equity
2. Land Base
3. Tribal Population
4. Per Capita Income
5. Current Indian Country Extension Support

Why this is a Critical Need:

1. FRTEP's inadequate funding has not kept up with inflation. The initial requested funding of \$10 million was to serve 239 Tribes, but in 1991 FRTEP received just \$1 million for 15 positions (see complete Commission report). Thirty years later the program has only increased to \$3M, funding 35 programs serving 32 Tribes. If the original \$10 million had been allocated and increased at the same rate as the \$1 million start-up fund, the program would have had a \$618 million investment instead of the \$72 million over the past 30 years. **This equates to a missed investment of \$546 million** not accounting for inflation.
2. The FRTEP and 1994 programs combined **currently reach less than 10%** of the 574 eligible Federally Recognized Tribes. The need for services from Tribal Nations vastly exceeds the current available and limited resources.
3. FRTEP and 1994 programs, despite their erratic and uncertain year-to-year funding, have performed mightily, **accomplishing significant and measurable results.**

What do Tribal Members say about the impact of FRTEP in their communities?

- "I love all the opportunities it [Extension] provides for children to start learning about accountability, responsibility, about being a good role model and a good productive community member... You really see a difference in our youth."
- "If it wasn't for [the agent] I don't know what my life would be like... [S]he took me everywhere. I'm visiting with elders and stuff, and I love the elders [who] I have learnt from... I'm not going to forget the things they have taught me throughout the years and so that I can pass them on to the next generation."
- "What's been most helpful is that the Extension office here serves as a resource to people of all ages in our community. They provide us with a lot of knowledge. It's very specific to our community, so it fits our needs whether its 4-H, livestock, or agriculture."
- "[Extension is] super consistent, [the agent] would meet with us... gave us a timeline...helped us design and put up a high tunnel, which I built with my students. Without Extension...we wouldn't have the gardening and our kids wouldn't have had these experiences and these memories."
- "It makes a big difference to have a Native person with so much knowledge, passion and mastery of the programs delivered. Because she is a community member, a tribal member, and lives here, she understands."
- "As deadly as that virus was, they [Extension] still provided services, they still provided programming, they still provided opportunities and they never let that get in the way of everyday life because we still have to get through all that... We are really grateful for that."

Imagine the incredible benefits that could have been achieved if the FRTEP program had been **funded as originally intended** and not limited to so few Tribes.

The Commission's request aims to address and – more importantly – **make up for years of lost impact that has resulted from chronic underfunding** while mending and – most importantly – **ending discriminatory practices** through a funding formula that directly **addresses barriers to equity for Tribal Nations.**



“I think that’s really important that the FRTEP program is creating healthy relationships within our families, within our community. There’s a lot of hardships in the community so it’s really nice to have those happy moments to look forward to.”

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