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Intertribal Agriculture Council Provides Assistance with USDA Discrimination Financial Assistance Program Application Process

Billings, Montana, July 7, 2023—The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the opening of its application process for the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program, which Congress authorized in Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act in August 2022. The program is available to ranchers, farmers, and forest landowners who can demonstrate discrimination by USDA lending programs. With USDA’s historic discriminatory treatment of Tribal producers in mind, the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) is encouraging eligible American Indian and Alaska Natives to apply.

IAC is serving as a cooperator with USDA to ensure that the latest information about the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program reaches Tribal producers and to provide direct assistance to Tribal producers during virtual and in-person events throughout the application period.

“The Discrimination Financial Assistance Program is an acknowledgment that discrimination has been an ongoing challenge at USDA,” said Kari Jo Lawrence, IAC Executive Director. “While this Program is not comprehensive compensation for the discriminatory experiences so many Tribal and other producers have endured in USDA lending programs, it is an opportunity for some level of financial assistance that has not previously been available.”

The program is limited to producers who experienced discrimination before January 1, 2021. Producers have a 4-month window to submit their application for this discrimination program, with submissions due by October 31, 2023. Applications may be submitted digitally, through an online portal, or in hardcopy, either mailed or hand-delivered to regional hubs operated by nongovernmental entities responsible for processing applications via a 4-region framework. Producers are encouraged to complete their applications through the online portal if feasible to ensure complete and error-free submissions.

Producer Considerations

- The USDA has shared that attorney representation is not required to complete the Section 22007 discrimination application program.
- Submitted applications **WILL NOT** be awarded on a first-come-first-serve basis. The application is long and will require time to complete, but within the 4-month window available, take the time to ensure the submission is accurate and comprehensively details your experience. The application period opens July 7 and closes October 31, 2023.
- Reach out to IAC with questions or concerns in navigating the application. You can contact your Technical Assistance Specialist or email ira@indianag.org.

- Participate in outreach events. IAC will be available at a number of events through October 2023 to address questions and concerns in-person or online. Stay tuned for upcoming events where you can receive in-person assistance, or contact IAC at ira@indianag.org.
- IAC will host a live Q&A on the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program on July 13, 2023. Register [here](#).
- This discrimination program is limited to \$2.2 billion. While Congress authorized payments up to \$500,000, it is highly unlikely that payments in the upper range of the scale provided will be awarded.
- If you encounter issues in working with anyone outside of IAC due to your status as a Tribal producer operating on Tribal lands, please reach out to IAC at ira@indianag.org so we might be able to help determine what the misunderstanding is and help navigate around it.
- Applicants are encouraged to use the online application portal to submit their application when feasible. The online portal has mechanisms in place that check for accuracy and completion to ensure submission has all required information. Applications may be submitted in-person or by mail to the regional hub responsible for the region where the Producer's farm or ranch is located.

Resource Information

- USDA's announcement about the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program is available [here](#).
- Online Application Portal: 22007apply.gov
- Hard Copy Application Submissions: Producers interested in submitting a hard-copy application for this discrimination program or have questions about their online application can communicate with their regional hub. Producers can find information about the regional hub that will be processing their application [here](#).
- Third Party Administrator Call Center: 1-800-721-0970 (open from 8 a.m. Eastern to 8 p.m. Pacific, every day except holidays)
- Regional Hubs: Information about your regional hub is available [here](#).

Upcoming Events

- **Thursday, July 13, 2023, 9:00 pm ET:** Join IAC for a live Q&A on USDA's Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP) on July 13. The Q&A will cover the following: the application for the Section 22007 DFAP, deadlines for filing: July 7-October 31, how to prepare for and file a Section 22007 discrimination claim, and questions or concerns about DFAP.

- Zoom Registration [here](#).
- Visit indianag.org for information about future discussions—virtual and in-person.

The Intertribal Agriculture Council is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 1987 to pursue and promote the conservation, development, and use of land-based agricultural resources vital to the economic and social well-being of American Indian/Alaska Native peoples. To learn more about the Intertribal Agriculture Council, visit indianag.org.

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