



Empowering Indian Country to Energize Future Generations

Knowledge is power. And in Indian Country, power is the future.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs was established by Congress to provide Tribes, Alaska Natives, and eligible tribal entities with technical and financial assistance to encourage, facilitate, and assist in energy and energy infrastructure development in Indian Country.

In direct response to the requests of Tribes and Alaska Natives, the DOE Office of Indian Energy has designed key programs to provide Indian Country with the knowledge needed to make informed energy decisions—decisions with the power to help stabilize energy costs, enhance energy security, strengthen tribal energy infrastructure, and promote tribal self-determination.

By providing reliable, accurate information and expert technical assistance, the DOE Office of Indian Energy empowers Indian Country to make the wise, well-thought-out, and forward-looking decisions needed to bring about the next generation of energy development in Indian Country.

The office supports those decisions by offering technical support related to technology and project development, financial assistance, and quality real-time training. It works to advance tribal visions for a sustainable energy future by promoting four key goal areas: project development, job creation, grid infrastructure, and energy security.



At the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico, this photovoltaic carport delivers about 23 megawatt-hours of clean electricity annually to the local utility grid. Photo from Sandia National Laboratories, NREL 08978

A Shared Path Toward a Sustainable Energy Future

The DOE Office of Indian Energy’s approach is, first and foremost, a collaborative one. Led by Director Tracey A. LeBeau (Cheyenne River Sioux), the office works with tribal nations, federal agencies, state governments, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to develop the considerable energy resources that exist on Indian lands. To guide the strategic planning and implementation of the department’s tribal energy programs and policies, Secretary Chu established an Indian Country Energy and Infrastructure Working Group (ICEIWG). In addition, the DOE Office of Indian Energy has launched three near-term strategic initiatives to support the tribal energy development and capacity-building priorities established in the Congressional statute defining the DOE Office of Indian Energy’s mission:

- DOE Tribal Energy Education Series
- DOE Tribal Leader and Best Practices Forums
- DOE Strategic Technical Assistance and Response Team (START) Program

As a DOE-led program office, Indian Energy also coordinates and manages the government-to-government and intertribal collaboration involved in carrying out these initiatives and all other DOE tribal energy-related activities and initiatives prescribed through the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

Indian Country Energy and Infrastructure Working Group

To enhance DOE’s understanding of tribal concerns around energy development, the ICEIWG serves as an open forum for communicating tribal viewpoints on real-time obstacles Tribes face in deploying energy technologies, as well as potential solutions. The ICEIWG is comprised solely of tribal leaders and high-level tribal government employees with in-depth knowledge and experience in a strategic energy sector. ICEIWG meetings are held quarterly and are open to all tribal leaders.

“While our work together is far from over, today we can see what change looks like. It’s the Native American-owned small business that’s opening its doors, or a worker helping a school renovate. It’s new roads and houses. It’s wind turbines going up on tribal lands and crime going down in tribal communities. That’s what change looks like.”

—President Barack Obama
White House Tribal Nations Conference,
Dec. 2, 2011



“By leveraging our technical resources and expertise, we will help tribal communities, entrepreneurs, and small businesses create jobs, reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, and build a sustainable energy future. Working together, we can strengthen the energy security and economic competitiveness of tribal homes and businesses.”

*—Energy Secretary Steven Chu
on the START Program, Dec. 2, 2011*



Workers attach the blades of a refurbished wind turbine that powers the KILL radio station at the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.
Photo by Bob Gough, NREL 15954

Tribal Leader Education Series

To enhance tribal leaders’ understanding of energy project development, including DOE’s role, business processes, and project frameworks, the DOE Office of Indian Energy is working with numerous partners to develop education and technical assistance materials that will be available to tribal leaders and staff through regional workshops and online webinars. These partners include other DOE offices, laboratories, and programs, such as the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), Sandia National Laboratories, the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy’s Tribal Energy Program, the Office of Electricity, Western Area Power Administration, and Bonneville Power Administration.

Tribal Leader Forums

To further support smart tribal energy development through collaboration and information sharing, the DOE Office of Indian Energy hosts strategic best practices forums on energy technologies and energy project development and finance. The forums are designed to give tribal leaders an opportunity to receive the latest updates from and interact directly with, Tribes, industry, utilities, DOE, and other federal agencies on tribal energy deployment efforts.

START Program

To better position tribal energy projects for financing and construction, the START program provides federally recognized Native American and Alaska Native governments with in-depth technical assistance. Through START, the DOE Office of Indian Energy and national laboratory experts work directly with community-based project teams to evaluate financial and technical feasibility and provide the early development and technical assistance needed to move clean energy projects forward.

Building on the early-stage energy resource characterization and pre-feasibility investments DOE has made in Indian Country over the years, START supports tribal efforts to achieve steel-in-the-ground energy project deployment on Indian lands.

More Information

For more information on the DOE Office of Indian Energy’s efforts to accelerate next-generation energy development in Indian Country and build a 21st century tribal energy economy, contact us at:

energy.gov/indianenergy
indianenergy@hq.doe.gov

Renewable Energy Potential in Indian Country

Tribal lands comprise 2% of the total land area of the United States, and they hold an estimated 5% of the nation’s renewable energy resources. The DOE Office of Indian Energy works with Tribes to unlock the potential of this vast untapped resource. According to recent studies and analysis conducted by NREL,* Indian lands have significant energy resources available for development, including an estimated:

- 14 billion megawatt-hours (MWh) of utility-scale rural solar resources, or 5.1% of the total U.S. technical potential
- 1,100 million MWh of wind resources, or about 3.4% of the total U.S. technical potential
- 13 million MWh of hydropower resources, or about 5.1% of the total U.S. technical potential

* Technical potential based on assumptions and exclusions outlined in the technical report *Geospatial Analysis of Renewable Energy Technical Potential on Tribal Lands*, <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy13osti/56641.pdf>.



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