



July 11, 2022

Dear Great Plains Area Tribal Leader and Urban Indian Organization Leader:

I am writing to share an important update relating to our work at the Indian Health Service (IHS) to recruit and hire a Great Plains Area Director, including our plans to re-advertise the position.

The IHS values your partnership and input in the Senior Executive Service (SES) recruitment process to backfill our vacant Area Director position. Your participation is essential for identifying candidates who have proven experience leading a complex health care organization and possess the executive core competencies and the technical qualifications needed to be successful.

The United States (U.S.) Office of Personnel Management (OPM) manages the overall Federal executive personnel program, providing the day-to-day oversight and assistance to agencies as they develop, select, and manage their Federal executives. In accordance with Federal law, 5 U.S.C. 3393(a), the IHS must announce SES vacancies intended to be filled by initial career appointment to at least all civil service employees, or to consider a broader, more diverse candidate pool, may expand the area of consideration to include all qualified U.S. citizens subject to Indian Preference. Federal regulations at 5 C.F.R. 317.501(b)(2) require vacancy announcements for career SES appointments be published on the USAJOBS Web site (www.usajobs.gov) for a minimum period of 14 calendar days. Senior Executive Service vacancy announcements must include the Executive Core Qualifications and Mandatory Technical Qualifications that candidates must meet to qualify for the position.

The IHS will continue to work with Tribal Leaders and Urban Indian Organization Leaders in the Great Plains Area to identify qualified applicants for the Area Director position. In addition, the IHS will include Tribal Leaders and Urban Indian Organization Leaders in structured interviews with qualified applicants in making initial recommendations. The following steps in the SES process are inherently Federal functions and will only be carried out by Federal employees. Candidates will be reviewed by the IHS Executive Resources Board, and selectees must be approved by the IHS Acting Director, the Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the OPM's Qualifications Review Board before officially being appointed to the SES position.

The recent SES recruitment process for the Great Plains Area Director resulted in a selection recommendation, which was developed by an interview panel of Federal and Tribal representatives and sent to me for consideration. After thoroughly reviewing the recommendation and conducting a second-level interview with additional IHS senior executives participating, I decided not to select a candidate for the Great Plains Area Director position. This was a challenging decision because establishing a permanent Area

Director is important, but it is equally important to ensure new leadership is well-positioned to help make sustainable improvements to Area-wide health care services and programs.

As a next step, the IHS plans to re-advertise the position on the USAJOBS Web site. We will invite Great Plains Area Tribal Leaders and Urban Indian Organization Leaders to partner with the IHS in identifying the best qualified executive to fill this critical role. RADM Chris Buchanan, Deputy Director for Field Operations, IHS, and Ms. Lisa Gyorda, Director, Office of Human Resources, IHS, will be in contact with you on the timeline to initiate a new SES recruitment for the Great Plains Area Director position.

Thank you for your partnership as we work together fill this vital role in the Great Plains Area.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Fowler -S
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Elizabeth A. Fowler -S
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Elizabeth A. Fowler
Acting Director