



TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION
OFFICE OF THE
CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

EDWARD D. MANUEL
CHAIRMAN

VERLON M. JOSE
VICE CHAIRMAN



December 21, 2015

Re: Tohono O'odham Nation Self-Governance Project and Offer to IHS Employees

Dear IHS Employee or Applicant:

We write to provide information about the Nation's Self-Governance project and we encourage you to continue to serve our tribal members as a key part of our health care system. We want you to know that the health status of our members is of the utmost importance to the Nation, and therefore, the Nation is taking steps to assume operations of the health care programs currently provided by IHS. We hope that by working with our IHS partners, we can improve access to health care, add more flexibility so we can respond to the needs of our people, and ultimately increase the health status and wellbeing of our members.

From the beginning of our planning process, we have recognized the contribution of the IHS employees, and we want you to know that we sincerely value you and appreciate your dedication and service to our members. That is why the Nation placed a high priority on retaining all Federal staff from the outset. In Resolution 15-365 (attached), the Tohono O'odham Nation Legislative Council stated:

"It is the intent of the Legislative Council, to the greatest extent feasible, to maintain stability in staffing of any PSFAs assumed by the Nation by offering the opportunity to continue in federal employment to all current and eligible IHS employees, using Intergovernmental Personnel Agreements, Memoranda of Agreements, or direct hire employment."

We remain committed to working with all eligible IHS employees to maintain their Federal employment status or to transfer to direct hire with the Nation if they desire.

If you are an IHS employee, are considering becoming an IHS employee, or know someone that is considering becoming an IHS employee, you may be wondering if you are eligible to maintain your Federal benefits under an Intergovernmental Personnel Agreement (IPA) or Memoranda of Agreement (MOA). Our understanding is that all IHS employees holding permanent positions that are in good standing will be eligible for some type of arrangement. Contrary to what you may have heard, there are no duration requirements for eligibility, so even if you have held your IHS position for less than one year, you can still be eligible for an IPA or MOA. We encourage you to speak with your IHS Human Resources representatives for more specific information. We will also be holding a series of meetings next Spring to provide more details.

We realize that you may have many questions about this process. We encourage you to visit our self-governance website, available at [Http://self-governance.tonation-nsn.gov](http://self-governance.tonation-nsn.gov), or to contact Richard Ramirez, Governmental Affairs Assistant at Richard.Ramirez@tonation-nsn.gov, for more information. As our process evolves, we will be updating the website and providing you with more information.

We look forward to working more closely with each and every one of you to take this exciting step towards improving health care for our members. We also value your ideas and appreciate that you know best about how to enhance our health care services. We hope that each of you will join us as we work together on this new endeavor.

Sincerely,



Edward D. Manuel
Chairman
Tohono O'odham Nation