

NAVAJO CULTURAL SPECIALIST

DEFINITION: Under general supervision, performs work of moderate difficulty in identifying and surveying traditional and sacred sites of the Navajo Nation to ensure mitigating measures and plans for road development, housing constructions are within prescribed federal and tribal laws concerning sacred sites of the Navajo Nation; repatriates sacred items from museums, institutions of higher learning and from various federal and state agencies; performs related work as assigned.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS: This list is ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY and is not a comprehensive listing of all functions and tasks performed by incumbents of this class.

TASKS:

Conducts ethnographic surveys, identifying cultural resources that are significantly sacred and valuable to the Navajo Nation; assesses and recommends eligibility for protection under relevant laws of the federal government; conducts interviews with tribal members to obtain information on traditional cultural sites and burial sites prior to any projected construction activity; consults with federal agencies regarding federal law and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and applicable laws.

Develops public relations programs i.e. brochures, newsletters and public presentations; develops a database that will track and maintain current information as well as site maps of traditional cultural properties; drafts letters of repatriation petitions of sacred items; assists with the return of the items pursuant to rules and regulations; assists and participates in the purification ceremonies of repatriated items.

Consults with traditional leaders on ways to perform repatriation ceremonies while reintroducing and recirculating items into the hands of traditional leaders for use in healing rituals; retrieves sacred items found on the Navajo Nation; acquires sacred items from Navajo families or individuals who can no longer perform the songs, chants and/or prayers which go with the items; interprets Navajo traditions; serves as translator and/or transcriber of the Navajo language to English language or vice versa.

Consults with federal land managing agencies on long term monitoring for traditional cultural properties, historic properties, terrestrial ecosystem activities, aquatic ecosystem activities and intergrad terrestrial ecosystem activities; reviews incoming NAGPRA summaries and determines which items are Navajo and need to be repatriated; may assume delegation of authority in the absence of supervisor.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS:

Knowledge of applicable Navajo Nation, federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, statutes, rules, regulations, policies and procedures.

Knowledge of the historic value to the Navajo people of properties in and around the Navajo Nation.

Knowledge of the principles and practices of archaeological discovery and repatriation.

Knowledge of the social, economic, spiritual and traditional values of archaeological findings in the Navajo tradition.

Knowledge of Navajo traditional ceremonies and rituals.

Skill in interacting with people from various social, economic, ethnic and spiritual backgrounds.

Skill in developing and maintaining effective interpersonal relationships.

Skill in assessing items and determining the value to the Navajo Nation.

Skill in performing traditional Navajo ceremonies and rituals.

Skill in conducting ethnographic interviews to identify sacred places.

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PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS AND WORK ENVIRONMENT: Work involves moderate to heavy lifting and carrying of archaeological findings.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- A high school diploma or GED; and three (3) years traditional training in Navajo cultural ceremonies and rituals as a practicing medicine man; or four (4) years as an understudy.

PREFERRED CLASSIFICATIONS:

- College credits in Anthropology; cultural history or related field.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Possess a valid state driver's license.

Supplemental Requirements:

Incumbent must obtain a Navajo Nation Vehicle Operator's Permit within 90 days of date of hire.

Depending on the needs of the Nation, some incumbents of the class may be required to demonstrate fluency in both the Navajo and English languages as a condition of employment.