

Society of American Indian Government Employees

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT TO FEDERAL AGENCY HEADS and TRAINING DIRECTORS February 11, 2016

Subject: *Regarding the 2016 SAIGE Annual National Training Program and the OPM Memorandum to Chief Human Capital Officers concerning discontinuation of previous practice of recognizing training.*

On May 01, 2015, OPM issued guidance to agencies on Determining if a Conference is a Training Activity.

The Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) hosts an outstanding three day annual National Training Program focused on leadership, professional development centered on OPM's Core Competencies, and the complex relationship known as the Federal Indian Trust Responsibility. Attendees have the opportunity to participate in developmental programs on a variety of topics, while networking with other federal professionals. Additionally, cultural awareness events are presented by local native people and American Indian and Alaska Native professionals. As part of this program, SAIGE offers special training sessions for military veterans and leadership training for college students, as well as a Career Fair with numerous federal agencies represented.

The 13th SAIGE Annual National Training Program, "Serving Our Nations," will be held at the tribally owned Hard Rock Hotel in Catoosa, OK, June 6-9, 2016. For additional information and the draft agenda, visit www.saige.org.

SAIGE is providing the following information to Agency Heads, Training Directors and others to assist them in the training approval process in light of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) discontinuing its practice of issuing memoranda regarding whether conferences qualify as a training activity in accordance with 5 CFR 410.404. See the memorandum at:

<https://www.chcoc.gov/content/opms-discontinuation-issuing-memoranda-regarding-whether-conferences-qualify-training>

SAIGE is pleased to announce that the SAIGE Annual National Training Program, an excellent training source, specifically meets these required criteria.

According to OPM, Agencies may sponsor an employee's attendance at an event as a developmental assignment under section 4110 of title 5, United States Code, when:

- (a) *The announced purpose of the conference is educational or instructional;*
 - **SAIGE meets this criteria –**
 - This event is a National Training Program that provides vital information to the government workforce on issues and topics affecting American Indians and Alaska Natives. It addresses federal recruitment and retention of American Indians and Alaskan Natives (AI/AN). In addition, the Professional Development track offers career advancement training for everyone, taught by instructors from the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity, the Office of Personnel Management and ranking individuals from a number of federal agencies who are experts in their fields.
 - General session speakers provide valuable information on timely topics relevant to attendees

- (b) *More than half of the time is scheduled for a planned, organized exchange of information between presenters and audience which meets the definition of training in section 4101 of title 5, United States Code;*
 - **SAIGE meets this criteria**
 - Sixty percent of the training program includes:

- Interactive workshops that include demonstrations, exercises and question and answer sessions
- Plenary Session Speakers who offer valuable information to attendees on professional and career development, for improved performance of their work responsibilities
- Networking opportunities provide attendees with enhanced interaction with other federal employees, tribal representatives, academics and professionals.

(c) *The content of the conference is germane to improving individual and/or organizational performance;*

○ **SAIGE meets this criteria**

- The SAIGE Training Program provides career and leadership development workshops
- The SAIGE Training offers sessions unique to the implementation of employees' duties regarding the Federal Indian Trust Responsibility and related policies, laws and obligations. All Federal agencies are responsible for upholding this responsibility.
- Plenary session speakers, workshops and networking provide information and tools that focus on improving individual attendees' and/or organizational mission performance.

(d) *Development benefits will be derived through the employee's attendance.*

○ **SAIGE meets this criteria**

- This event is the only national training program that trains individuals on the Federal Trust Responsibility as related to Federal Indian Law, in their roles as stewards of American Indian lands and resources, and in the conduct of their relationships with tribal governments.
- Attendees undergo training that assists them in performance of their duties as Special Emphasis Program Managers, Diversity and Inclusion committee members, and HR or EEO professionals.
- Networking opportunities augment information gained from plenary sessions and workshops, adding important ideas and connections that will enhance their abilities to provide services to AI/AN populations and to tribal governments.

OPM has further stated that when making this determination, agencies should review the event's agenda, session descriptions and additional information, as appropriate. Agencies are encouraged to continue to consider professional training organizations and *affinity groups* as a source of training. SAIGE has been a member of the National Coalition for Equity in Public Service for eleven years. To view the SAIGE National Training Program agenda and the OPM Transmittal letter visit www.saige.org.