

Scott Davis, NDIAC Executive Director

RE: Indian Health Service  
Credentialing Process for Dental Assistants/Hygienists

Scott – I apologize for not being able to attend the committee meeting this morning. As a Federal Employee of the Indian Health Service, I am required to receive authorization from the I.H.S. Area/Headquarters to attend/present/answer questions at these types of functions. I emailed my request and didn't receive word back by the end of the day yesterday. This morning they are still asking questions and wanted a formal request from NDIAC. However, I would not be able to make by 10:00 a.m. at this point. I am including in this memo a brief layout of the credentialing process, contracting with a government agency, and applying for a job with Indian Health Service for your presentation. I hope this will be enough. Should anyone have further questions I would be honored to assist. I can be contacted at 701-854-8211 or email [jana.gipp@ihs.gov](mailto:jana.gipp@ihs.gov).

First I would like to say we had 5 Dental Assistant openings at the Standing Rock Service Unit for almost a year. We had 5 Dental Assistants that worked for 30 or more years and retired in the last couple of years. We had filled the positions but have had a turnover in these positions. At our service unit we made the decision to open the pool up so we advertised at a GS-2(High School Diploma with no experience) to a GS-6(Certification with experience and expanded function) with the intention of training on the job if needed.

To look for job openings at Indian Health Service, a potential candidate can go to USAJOBS.gov where you can search for job openings by federal agency. Indian Health Service is under Health and Human Services (HHS). All applicants applying for a job with Indian Health Service must register at USAJOBS.gov, upload or create a resume, and submit all required documents listed on the job announcement by the deadline date. If applicants are missing documents they will not be considered. All applicants must apply electronically. The job announcement will state what qualifications, certifications etc.. required for the job at each grade level on the job announcement.

If a person has qualifications to be a Hygienist, Dental Assistant or in any other Health Field, and are consider being a contractor with a federal agency, they can go to your nearest Small Business Association office (SBA) and request assistance to become a federal contractor. I know of several people that have gone to SBA and received the assistance they needed. The need a DUNS number and need to register along with other requirements that SBA can assist with. Indian Health Service sometimes cannot get qualified applicants so we have to advertise for a contractor or we may need the expertise but not as a full time employee.

At Standing Rock Service Unit we would prefer to have Dental Assistants who have specific training in the field but have limited applicants with experience so we are forced to take entry level applicants and train them ourselves which limits the number of procedures performed per day by the Dentist. This results in less patients seen.

There are challenges with the HR process within Indian Health Service for the Service Units and the applicants. The recruitment and selection process is lengthy and time consuming and selectees in some instances cannot wait it out and take other jobs. I hope this information is helpful.

Jana Gipp