



Navajo Controller confirms \$600 million received by Navajo Nation

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The Navajo Nation Office of the Controller notified the Office of the Speaker on Wednesday that the Navajo Nation has received \$600 million in federal CARES Act funding for coronavirus relief efforts.

“With this confirmation, the Navajo Nation Council will now begin accepting public comments and input by Navajo citizens about the specific needs and uses of \$600 million COVID-19 relief funding. We highly encourage the people of the Navajo Nation to submit their written comments through the official public commenting system,” said Speaker Seth Damon.

The \$600 million CARES Act relief funding was approved by Congress and signed into law Mar. 27, 2020. The Act included \$8 billion for all tribal nations through the Coronavirus Relief Fund established by Congress. The Department of the Treasury and the Department of the Interior delayed the distribution of tribal relief funding over questions of the validity of ‘self-certified’ data provided from tribal governments.

On Tuesday, President Trump and the Treasury and Interior Departments announced that tribal relief funding would be distributed starting that day. Speaker Damon also thanked Congressional leaders, President Trump, Treasury Secretary Mnuchin, Interior Secretary Bernhardt and Navajo Nation program partners for their collective effort in getting the relief funding to tribal nations.

“I am looking forward to the aid that has been given to our people,” said Council Delegate Charlaine Tso. “We have been needing relief funding specifically for COVID-19 relief as far back as 2 months ago. Now, resources can be provided to help curve this pandemic. Our health care programs and facilities will now receive a fighting chance and I am thankful for the government-to-government collaboration that helped make this happen.”

Before the April Treasury Department tribal input deadline, the Office of the Speaker offered assistance to the Navajo Nation Washington Office to help Executive Branch staff collect data relating to Navajo chapters, enterprises and health care facilities. The successful collaboration between the Legislative Branch’s existing relationships with all Navajo Nation entities and the Washington Office served as the basis for the Navajo Nation’s response to the Treasury Department’s tribal consultation process.

Now that the federal relief funding has been received by the Nation, the Budget and Finance Committee will consider the initial legislation that outlines how the \$600 million will begin to reach the programs and communities across the Navajo Nation. That legislation, which is still forthcoming, will also be considered by the 24-member Naabik’iyáti’ Committee and then by the Navajo Nation Council.

“Already, the Navajo Nation Council has read many of the comments by the public on social media, in our conversations with local chapter officials and across the many media channels covering the Navajo Nation’s COVID-19 response,” said Speaker Damon. “We need the Navajo People to register those comments with the Office of Legislative Services.”

The Office of the Speaker, in coordination with the Budget and Finance Committee of the 24th Navajo Nation Council, will also publish the dates of virtual public forums held online to collect public input on the forthcoming Navajo Nation coronavirus relief fund management plan and related legislation.

Public comment on topics and legislation under consideration by the Navajo Nation Council may be submitted in written form to:

- Email: comments@navajo-nsn.gov; or
- Regular mail: Executive Director, Office of Legislative Services, P.O. Box 3390, Window Rock, AZ 86515.

Comments may be:

- Chapter resolutions;
- Letters;
- Position papers;
- Written statement in the body of an email.

Comments must include:

1. Your name;
2. Title or position (if commenting as part of an organization or entity);
3. Mailing address (for written comments);
4. Valid email address (for emailed comments).

Anonymous comments will not be included in the legislation packet. Comments on social media posts are not considered as part of the legislative process unless submitted through the above methods.

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