



## Navajo leaders encourage equitable distribution of CARES Fund chapter distribution supplies

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** January 31, 2021

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo leaders encourage local Navajo Nation chapters to practice an equitable distribution of CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Fund chapter distribution supplies for all Navajo citizens.

The supplies were funded through federal CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Funds distributed to tribal governments through the US Treasury. The Navajo Nation then made portions of those funds available for use by local chapter governments through Resolution No. CS-73-20.

“In the allocation of CARES Funds for chapters to utilize, the Council made funding available through the Navajo Nation’s 50-50 funding formula. That means half of the total allocation for all chapters was split evenly among 110 chapters. The other half was based on population data,” said Speaker Seth Damon.

That action should not be interpreted to mean supplies are only to be distributed to registered voters. No requirement exists in CS-73-20 that supplies only be distributed to registered chapter voters, nor that anyone needs to have voted in the last election to receive supplies from the chapter.

Supplies received through the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development (DCD), which was charged under the Navajo Nation CARES Fund Chapter Distribution Expenditure Plan to administer the program, are intended to be utilized in direct response to the pandemic.

In a memorandum to all 110 chapter (attached) dated Jan 29, the DCD stated: “With the funds, essential items were procured to benefit all members of the Navajo Nation, regardless of Chapter affiliation, membership, or voter registration.”

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# THE NAVAJO NATION

JONATHAN NEZ | PRESIDENT    MYRON LIZER | VICE PRESIDENT



## MEMORANDUM

TO : NAVAJO NATION CHAPTERS

FROM :   
Pearl Yellowman, Executive Director  
Division of Community Development

DATE : January 29, 2021

SUBJECT : DISTRIBUTION OF ESSENTIAL ITEMS PER RESOLUTION CS-73-20

The purpose of this memorandum is clarify the intent of Resolution CS-73-20, Chapter Distribution Funds (CARES Act). With the funds, essential items were procured to benefit all members of the Navajo Nation, regardless of Chapter affiliation, membership, or voter registration.

The Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management, with the concurrence of the Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, declared a Public Health State of Emergency on the Navajo Nation on March 11, 2020 due to COVID-19 (Resolution No. CEM20-03-11). The Navajo Nation Department of Health subsequently issued numerous Public Health Emergency Orders, Public Health Orders 2020-001 through 2020-030. Through the leadership of the 24th Navajo Nation Council and the Office of President and Vice-President, Legislation CS-73-20 allocated funds to purchase emergency food care packages, water, supplemental vitamins, blankets, hygiene products, Clorox bleach, Clorox wipes, diapers, feminine hygiene, toilet tissue, toothpaste, personal protective equipment for elders, anti-bacterial soap, first-aid supplies, gloves, hand sanitizers, masks, and thermometers. The Navajo Nation was able to procure the above-mentioned goods at the valued cost of \$30,000,000, as such, these essential items are provided through U.S. Treasury Funds known as CARES Act for direct relief to all Navajo people.

According to the U.S. Treasury Guidance, the Coronavirus Relief Fund for States, Tribal Governments and Certain Eligible Local Governments were enacted with requirements "that expenditures be incurred due to public health emergency means that expenditures must be used for actions taken to respond to the public health emergency." Furthermore, these expenditures incurred to all the State, territorial, local, or Tribal government to respond directly to the emergency, such as by addressing medical or public health needs."

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Therefore, the Navajo Nation as the prime recipient of the CARES Act funds has the responsibility to ensure these funds are expended in accordance with the U.S. Treasury Guidance to benefit all of the Navajo Nation.

Your understanding and assistance with the distribution accordingly is greatly appreciated.

- c. Paulson Chaco, Chief of Staff, Office of the President and Vice-President  
Pearline Kirk, Controller, Office of the Controller