



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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10,000 Infrastructure Projects Proposed, \$2.1 Billion in ARPA Funds to be Allocated

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PHOTO: Speaker Seth Damon welcomes the First Lady of the United States, Dr. Jill Biden, to the Navajo Nation.

TWIN ARROWS, Ariz. — On Friday, the 24th Navajo Nation Council met with President Jonathan Nez and Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne to finalize over \$950 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for over 10,000 infrastructure and economic development projects.

In addition, a second allocation for hardship assistance payments is being considered for families during this pandemic. Any future check allocations will follow the process previously approved for the Office of the Controller (OOC).

Earlier this year, the Navajo Nation received approximately \$2.1 billion in ARPA funds from the Biden Administration to respond to the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The Council is working with our Executive Branch divisions and programs to invest over \$1.8 billion in 10,000 projects across the Navajo Nation,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tseyatoh) “We are working together to carefully allocate ARPA money for our small businesses, Chapter projects, the tourism industry, and our infrastructure initiatives. The Navajo people need jobs and immediate assistance. We will get through this pandemic together as one nation.”

In Resolution No. CJY-41-21, the 24th Navajo Nation Council established the Fiscal Recovery Fund (NNFRF) and the Expenditure Authorization Process for ARPA funds, including a procurement process with oversight guidelines. President Jonathan Nez signed the legislation into law in August.

Important topics presented to the Council include the One-Stop-Shop initiative, a \$411 million reimbursement to the Síhasin Fund & Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance (UUFB) project list, and the Defunded CARES project list.

Executive Branch divisions shared the following ARPA funding proposal:

- \$220 for Chapter community projects
- \$220 million for housing and bathroom addition construction
- \$200 million for internet broadband connections
- \$200 million for water lines and wastewater projects
- \$160 million for power line projects
- \$100 million for tribal enterprises
- \$90 million for economic development projects
- \$80 million for educational initiatives for schools, tribal colleges, libraries, and youth programs
- \$80 million for social services
- \$80 million for senior centers, wellness centers, detox centers, and traditional housing
- \$20 million for the tourism industry

“There is a real need during this pandemic to create Navajo jobs that employ our people at each ARPA infrastructure project,” said Delegate Otto Tso (Tónaneesdizí) “We have four years to spend this money, so we have to begin building water lines, constructing homes, and investing over \$100 million into our tribal enterprises hit hardest by COVID-19.”

As part of this larger plan, the Navajo Division of Economic Development (DED) outlined a three-year ARPA spending plan for economic development to assist communities beginning in January 2022. Thirteen proposed projects will receive \$77.6 million for the first ARPA allocation. \$18 million will then be provided to three additional projects in 2023. This brings a total of \$95.6 million invested by 2024 in new economic opportunities for the Navajo people.

“In order to work together, the lines of communication between all branches of the Navajo government have to be open and transparent,” said Delegate Wilson Stewart, Jr. (Fort Defiance, Crystal, Red Lake, Sawmill) “Our people are ready to get to work in their communities. They can design, construct and oversee our ARPA projects. We will get through this pandemic and the ARPA funds are a major investment into the future of the Navajo Nation.”

The Navajo Nation Fiscal Recovery Fund with the Office of the Controller (OOC) created a website to share all ARPA updates and information with the Navajo people. The website can be accessed at www.NavajoNationARPA.org