



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Naabik'íyáti' Committee leads Navajo Nation's food access response amid SNAP disruptions

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Friday, Nov. 7, the 25th Navajo Nation Council, through the Naabik'íyáti' Committee, convened a leadership meeting to receive updates from the Chiyáán Access Action Team and provided direction to Navajo Nation departments and programs to address the ongoing impacts of federal and state Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit pauses affecting Navajo families across Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.

"The Naabik'íyáti' Committee convened this meeting to hear directly from our service departments and ensure our government is responding effectively to the food access crisis," said Speaker Crystalyne Curley. "Families, elders and children across the Navajo Nation are being impacted by the ongoing suspension of SNAP benefits, and we must move quickly and collectively to address their needs."

The committee received reports from the Navajo Nation Washington Office, Department of Health (DOH), Department of Emergency Management (DEM), Division of Community Development (DCD), Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Division of Economic Development (DED), and other supporting programs and partners.

The Department of Emergency Management and Department of Health presented updates on the establishment of an Incident Management Team (IMT) and the development of the "Navajo Nation Food Assistance 2025" framework. The plan identifies regional staging areas in Window Rock, Chinle, Kayenta, Tuba City and Red Mesa for food delivery and storage coordination.

While departments continue working to coordinate food distributions and emergency responses, greater alignment is still needed to bring these efforts together under a unified approach. The Naabik'íyáti' Committee emphasized the importance of developing a unified response framework that includes all Navajo Nation programs, local chapters and external partners to ensure equitable support across the Nation.

"This meeting was to ensure that all departments are aligning their efforts and communicating clearly," said Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty. "We need consistent coordination to make sure every community, especially those in remote areas, receives the assistance they need."

Committee members encouraged the Office of the President and Vice President (OPVP) to finalize and execute a Food Access Emergency Plan, activate the Incident Command System (ICS), and include all 110 chapters in emergency food coordination efforts.

The committee also identified potential funding, including COVID-19 Relief Fund allocations, for OMB and DEM to consider in implementing the emergency food response plan.

“The Council’s priority is to ensure our families are not left behind,” Speaker Curley added. “The Naabik’íyáti’ Committee will continue to work closely with the Executive Branch and our local partners to strengthen food access, coordinate resources and ensure timely support for our Navajo people.”

The Naabik’íyáti’ Committee directed departments to continue data collection, coordinate through the Chiyáán Access Action Team and submit a consolidated Incident Action Plan (IAP) within seven days. The IAP will outline resource distribution sites and schedules, available inventory and donations, and communication plans for public information and outreach.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council has launched a public website serving as a hub for food access information. The site includes a directory of food bank and chapter distribution locations, guidance for households transitioning from SNAP benefits to Navajo Nation food assistance programs, and contact details for immediate food support resources.

The website is available at www.navajonationcouncil.org/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap.

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