



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health, Education, and Human Services Committee approves first amendment to Child Support Guidelines



Health, Education, and Human Services Committee approved legislation amending the Navajo Nation Child Support Guidelines.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Monday, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee (HEHSC) approved Legislation No. 0195-24, amending the Navajo Nation Child Support Guidelines for the first time since 1996.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Cherilyn Yazzie emphasized that the amendment includes a 20% adjustment to the Navajo Nation Child Support Schedule to better reflect current economic conditions and the rising cost of raising children. The guidelines are based on the Income Shares Model, which is designed to ensure that children receive the same proportion of parental income they would have received if their parents lived together.

“For more than two decades, the child support schedule remained unchanged while the cost of food, housing, utilities, and other basic necessities continued to rise. This amendment modernizes the guidelines and strengthens our shared responsibility to ensure that Navajo children receive consistent and equitable support,” said Delegate Yazzie.

The amendment followed a multi-step review process that included an initial legal sufficiency determination by the Navajo Nation Department of Justice; amendments adopted by the Navajo Nation Law and Order Committee, including expanded definitions of in-kind contributions and the 20% schedule adjustment; and public hearings held across all five Navajo Nation agencies from Oct. 28 through Nov. 1, 2024.

An affordability review was also conducted with assistance from the Navajo Division of Economic Development (DED), who provided a detailed report on child support insights and economic conditions on the Navajo Nation. Updated worksheets and revised schedules reflecting both 10% and 20% adjustment scenarios were submitted for comparison.

The amendment clarifies definitions, details exclusions from gross income, provides guidance on adjustments and family credits, outlines procedures for modification of support orders, and formally recognizes in-kind and non-cash contributions.

Under the comparison presented to the Health, Education and Human Services Committee, a current monthly support amount of \$447 would increase to \$536 under the 20% schedule adjustment, resulting in an approximate \$89 monthly increase. In a 50% allocation example, that equates to a \$44 increase per party.

The Navajo Nation Child Support Act requires periodic review of the guidelines to ensure they remain fair and appropriate. The newly adopted amendment fulfills that responsibility and modernizes the framework for determining child support obligations.

Judy K. Platero, Program Manager for the Department of Child Support Services Administration, expressed appreciation for the Council's action and sponsorship of the measure. She stated that the amendment represents a meaningful step forward for Navajo children and families and reflects the belief that children's needs must be met regardless of the relationship status between parents. Platero also acknowledged the collaborative efforts of the Navajo Nation Council in advancing amendments that prioritize the well-being of children.

Legislation No. 0195-24 was approved by the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee with a vote of three in favor with none opposed. The Committee serves as final authority on the measure.

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