

March 20, 2020

INDIAN COUNTRY PRIORITIES FOR COVID-19 STIMULUS PACKAGE

Economic Development and Employment

- Provide at least \$20 billion allocated for direct federal relief grants to tribal governments and their enterprises.
- Provide at least \$2 billion for a Tribal Forbearance, Loan, & Guarantee Fund allocated for assistance to tribal governments and their enterprises to replace lost revenue.
- Provide not less than \$110 million in additional funding and waive restrictions on Small Business Administration and Treasury programs for Native American Contractors and Native Community Development Financial Institutions to provide for emergency funds and waiver of program restrictions.
- Provide parity to ensure individual and employer emergency assistance is accessible to tribal governments, their enterprises, and employees.

Tribal Governance

- Provide \$950 million for Bureau of Indian Affairs Tribal Priority Allocations funding.
- Provide not less than \$75 million in new funding for BIA's Welfare Assistance Fund (BIA, Operation of Indian Programs, Human Services, Welfare Assistance).
- BIA regulations at 25 CFR Part 20.329 for Emergency Assistance under the Welfare Assistance Program should be updated to include individuals or families who are affected by COVID-19.
- BIA regulations at 25 CFR 20.330 should be temporarily waived to increase individual Emergency Assistance payments from \$1,000 to \$5,000.
- Provide not less than \$20 million in new funding for BIA's Indian Child Welfare Act Fund (BIA, Operation of Human Services Programs, Human Services, Indian Child Welfare Act)
- Provide not less than \$75 million in new funding for BIA Office of Justice Services (OJS) Criminal Investigations and Police Services.
- Provide not less than \$35 million in new funding for BIA OJS Detention/Corrections.
- Provide authority for Inter-Agency Transfers, Withdrawals and Credits to facilitate the prioritized and rapid deployment of coronavirus relief within Indian Country.

Housing and Community Development

- Provide \$600 million in new funding to the Indian Housing Block Grant formula distribution portion, with up to \$150 withheld for the Indian Community Development Block Grants and Imminent Threat projects tribal nations propose as a direct response to COVID-19 issues in their communities.
- Include direct tribal eligibility for any appropriations that are earmarked to other general federal housing programs, and in particular federal homeless assistance programs.

Health

Access to and Increase in Funding and Resources

- Provide \$1.2 billion in funding for IHS Services Account.
- Provide \$200 million in funding for IHS Facilities Account.
- Provide \$1 billion in funding to ensure Tribal communities have immediate access to safe water and sanitation systems.
- Provide \$24 million in funding for Tribal Epidemiology Centers.
- Expand telehealth capacity & access in Indian Country.
- Provide Tribal Nations, Tribal Consortiums administering healthcare programs, and Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) with access to supplies needed to administer COVID-19 tests and lab resources for analyzing the tests.
- Provide an additional \$200 Million for Maintenance and Improvement of Indian Health Service and tribal facilities.

Technical Medicaid/Medicare Fixes

- Authorize Medicaid reimbursements for Qualified Indian Health Provider Services and urban Indian programs.
- Provide reimbursements for services furnished by Indian Health Care Providers outside of an IHS or Tribal Facility.
- Exempt American Indians and Alaska Natives from cost-sharing under Medicare.

Technical Amendments Needed

- Provide Tribal and UIO access to the Strategic National Stockpile.
- Provide Tribal and UIO access to the Public Health Emergency Fund.

Legislative Fixes and Reauthorizations

- Move Contract Support Costs, 105(l) lease expenditures, and Purchased/Referred Care to mandatory appropriations.
- Permanently reauthorize the Special Diabetes Program for Indians with automatic annual adjustments tied to medical inflation, and permit Tribes and Tribal organizations to receive funds through self-determination or self-governance contracts and compacts.
- Ensure continued funding for Community Health Centers.
- Provide mandatory appropriations for Village Built Clinics.

Education

Higher Education

- Provide \$27 million in the Interior-Bureau of Indian Education account to meet the immediate and critical needs of Tribal College and Universities (TCUs).
- Authorize Tribal Colleges and Universities as eligible entities to participate in the E-Rate program.
- Ensure a robust share for Tribal Colleges and Universities, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions (ANNHSIs), Native American Serving nontribal Institutions (NASnTIs) of the requested \$1.5 billion for the Department of Education-Postsecondary Education (Strengthening Institutions) account.
- Provide a TCU-specific set-aside of \$40 million, to be administered by the BIE, if a National Emergency Student Financial Aid Fund is established in the Department of Education account.

K-12 Education

- Authorize Tribally Controlled Grant Schools to Access Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB).
- Ensure that a tribal state of emergency is included in the definition of a qualifying emergency
- Provide \$40 million for the extension of classes for an estimated four weeks at Bureau of Indian Education schools, including institutions of higher education such as Haskell and SIPI.
- Ensure access to healthy meals for all students that are impacted by school closures and have no other means to get these meals.

Nutrition

- Provide an additional \$100 million for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), waive restrictions, and provide certain flexibilities.
- Provide tribes with access to the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP).