

May 2020

# COMMUNITY UPDATE

## Division of Community Development Newsletter

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### Did You Know..

Traditional Navajo "War" Names:

Male war names begin with "Hashké (Warrior/Angry)

Female war names end with "Baa' (Raider/Female Warrior)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICJ4YXKMK3s>

### Events

**May: T'aatsoh - Growth of Bigger Leaf Plants**

March 16-June 7: Limited Navajo Nation Services

May 25: Memorial Day

May 29-June 1: 57 hr Navajo Nation Weekend Curfew, beginning on Friday at 8:00 p.m. until Monday at 5:00 a.m.

**June: Ya'iishjaashchilí, which means Planting of Early Crops**

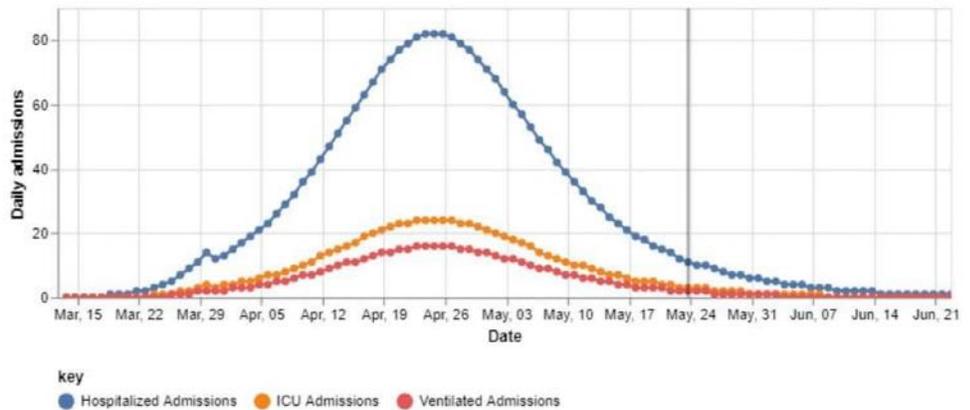
Jun 1: Navajo Nation Memorial Day

Jun 2: Native American Day (AZ)

## New COVID-19 surge projections show the effectiveness of Public Health Emergency Orders and weekend lockdowns

Navajo Area IHS  
Updated Surge Plan as of May 23, 2020

This is an updated review of the predicted surge in NAIHS Federal facilities, including actual inpatient and ICU admissions as well as transfers to tertiary centers.



This projection model shows the daily admissions expected at the NAIHS Federal facilities during the surge time-period. This represents 35% social distancing.

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – During a live online town hall on Tuesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer announced that recent data and new surge projections provided by the Navajo Area Indian Health Service on May 24, indicate that the COVID-19 surge peak for IHS hospitalizations, including ICU admissions and ventilations occurred from April 21 to April 26 – an entire month earlier than initial surge projections on March 27.

Well in advance of the first confirmed case of COVID-19 on the Navajo Nation, the Nez-Lizer Administration took unprecedented proactive measures to prevent and mitigate the spread of the virus by issuing public warnings dating back to January, issuing travel advisories and restrictions for employees and citizens, implementing stay-at-home orders, and daily and weekend curfews. Combined with radio and online town halls, the effort to reduce the impact of COVID-19 is showing early signs of success.

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“Everything that we have implemented has been data-driven and based on the advice and recommendations from health care and medical experts. It’s been effective and it is working to flatten the curve in certain areas and we are working hard to make sure the daily numbers begin to decrease consistently. Nearly two months before the virus reached our Nation, we issued public messages to caution our people and to make them aware. The new projections have very good implications, but now is not the time to let up. We have to continue wearing masks in public, practicing social distancing, and complying with the stay-at-home order and daily curfew.

New data from other states show that relaxing curfews and stay-at-home orders are having serious consequences. In some areas, when states have reopened, their numbers of new cases increased. We must remain diligent and prepared,” said President Nez.

The initial surge projections showed that the Navajo Nation’s COVID-19 surge peak would begin on the week of May 24, with 30-percent effect of practicing social distancing and staying home. The latest surge projection update indicates that the Navajo Nation achieved 35-percent social distancing, and complied at a high rate with curfews and stay-at-home orders. As a result, the Navajo Nation passed the COVID-19 surge peak in late April, much sooner than initially projected.

IHS Director RADM Michael D. Weahkee and Navajo Area IHS Director Roselyn Tso also participated in the town hall to provide updates on Personal Protective Equipment, testing, and other matters. RADM Weahkee also thanked the Navajo people and leaders for everything they have done to help flatten the curve, including implementing public health orders and curfews.

“That’s attributable to all the great actions of you all, the citizens as well as the leadership of the Navajo Nation,” said RADM Weahkee.

“Our administration took decisive actions to ensure the safety of our Navajo people and our communities. We issued travel restrictions, reduced the operation of Navajo governments, closed schools, required masks to be worn, and issued orders to stay home and save lives. These were drastic measures we had to take. The updated surge report shows us that the anticipated numbers of Navajo people needing hospitalization, including intensive care and ventilation, did not materialize according to the first surge report that was generated,” President Nez said.

“I am very pleased to see that the COVID-19 surge peak passed last month. Navajo people have done a tremendous job in answering our call to protect our elders. To stay home, stay safe, and save lives. Social distancing and obeying curfew orders work. The updated surge report shows us that we did a good job. Yes, our numbers are increasing due to increasing testing and improvements in testing result turnaround time. We are seeing that some states are opening up in phases and some places are experiencing spikes with new COVID-19 cases, and we are hearing about potential second and third waves of infection. For Navajo people this tells us that we are not out of the woods yet. We must keep up our fight against COVID-19,” Vice President Lizer said.

The Nez-Lizer Administration thanks the front-line warriors who are helping the Nation to win the fight against COVID-19. The work that contributed to the positive surge projection could not have been achieved without our police officers, emergency personnel, and our Navajo Nation employees who have answered the call to help our Navajo people.

READ MORE AT: <https://www.facebook.com/VicePresidentJonathanNez/posts/2305330483107603>

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## NAVAJO FAMILIES RECEIVE FOOD, WATER, AND SUPPLIES THROUGH OUT THE NAVAJO NATION

The Nez-Lizer team has distributed food, bottled water, and supplies to Navajo families in approximately 72 Navajo chapter communities. All part of the effort to get needed items to elderly and high-risk to keep them home and safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the chapter distributions, there was a Veteran's food distribution event on Veteran's Day at the Navajo Nation Fairgrounds. Two to six chapters are visited during OPVP chapter visits.



Hundreds of vehicles lined up at the various chapters, where Navajo Nation personnel loaded vehicles with hygiene products, diapers, bottled water, and food products such as beans, flour, potatoes and fresh produce. Community Health Representatives also transported and delivered the packaged items to high-risk residents at their homes.



“We know there are a lot of high-risk and elders who need some assistance and we’re doing our best to help them. The Navajo Nation is stepping up to help our own people and we are very grateful for everyone’s generosity and volunteerism. Working together, we are doing great things,” said Vice-President Lizer. (Jeddito Chapter)



A safety meeting is held at the beginning of each event to ensure the safety of the public, staff and the volunteers. All personnel assisting with the food are required to wear protective masks, gloves, gowns, safety vests, and to maintain a safe distance from community members and each other. The personnel's health is monitored during the events.



A prayer for the Navajo Nation's battle against COVID-19 is held at each event.



# May 2020



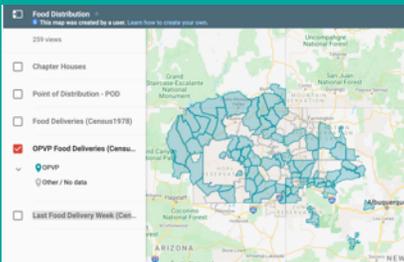
Residents are required to remain in their vehicles with their windows rolled up, while personnel safely placed the food supplies and care packages in the back of vehicles, with no direct contact with anyone.

President Nez has been promoting a healthy diet with fruit and vegetables. Donations of fresh produce have been included in the care packages when available.

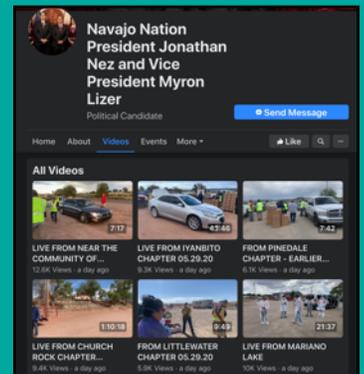


The Division of Community Development wishes to add their thanks to everyone who assists with the distribution including President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, chapter staff and officials, Navajo Nation's CHR Program, Navajo Health Command Operations Center, Navajo Nation Division of Transportation, OPVP staff, Miss Navajo and Division Directors Garret Silversmith of Navajo Division of Transportation, Dr. Rudy R. Shebala of Division of Natural Resources, and Dr. Pearl Yellowman of the Division of Community Development.

OPVP food distributions have been photographed and filmed by Facebook Live or have videos uploaded to Facebook and can be viewed at: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/NezLizer2018>



Food distribution map can be viewed on the DCD COVID-19 Resource webpage: <https://sites.google.com/nndcd.org/covid-19/food-distribution-map?authuser=0>



## 96-year-old Navajo woman becomes an internet hit

*Annette Bilagody had never sold her beadwork online before. With help from her granddaughter, she can barely keep up with demand*

Aliyah Chavez  
Indian Country Today  
May 20, 2020



96-year-old Annette Bilagody, Navajo, is a retired rug weaver and beader. She and her family run a small online business where she sells her jewelry. (Photo courtesy of Lucita Bennett family)

When Annette Bilagody was growing up in the 1930s on the Navajo Nation, her job in her family was to repair broken necklaces. This was her first introduction to beading.

She was born and raised in Preston Mesa, Arizona, near the Colorado border.

In her adult years, Bilagody was a weaver. She would weave rugs with two grey-hills designs, a popular design that uses a central diamond shape. When she completed a rug, she traveled to Gallup, New Mexico, a commerce hub for Navajo art, to sell them at local stores. This is how she made a living for the majority of her life.



A photo of Bilagody weaving her last rug in 2017 before retiring from the craft. (Photo courtesy of Lucita Bennett)

As Bilagody got older, she found that her loom became more difficult to use. So she decided to take up beading again.

When she lost her late husband, Jessie Bilagody, in 2008, she moved to Phoenix with her youngest daughter, Lucita Bennett, and her family.

One necklace here, another there. The 96-year-old Bilagody was working at her own pace when her granddaughter, Attiya Bennett, began to notice.

“Every time I would visit my grandma, I saw she had bundles of necklaces piling up,” Bennett said.

Bennett is a beader too. She posts photos of her beaded earrings, medallions and barrettes on her Instagram account, where she has amassed more than 12,000 followers.

In November, Bennett asked her grandmother if she would take some photos with her necklaces and earrings.

“On Instagram, you have to post a photo once a day to keep up with your followers,” Bennett said. “On that particular day, I didn’t have anything to post. So I thought, ‘Let me post grandma and see if people might be interested in her work.’”

They were.

“She sold out within 30 minutes. There were at least 30 or 40 transactions,” Bennett said. “We created invoices for all of them and then hand-wrote every single address before shipping everything.”

New York, Canada, Florida, South Carolina, Texas. Those were just some of the locations where Bilagody’s jewelry was shipped.

And on her second sale, Bilagody sold out again. This time, she made more than \$1,000. It was the most she had ever made in her life, she says.

Bennett went to the ATM, withdrew the money and recorded Bilagody counting it. She posted the video to her Instagram and TikTok pages, and compliments poured in from around the world.

“Aww I love this. Let me know when she has more earrings,” one user commented.

On the social media app TikTok, Bilagody’s video had more than 25,000 views.

“Usually I get a little bit of money from one sale here and another there,” Bilagody said. “Thank you to whoever bought my jewelry, and may it make them strong.”

Bilagody’s family says the first thing she bought after her sale was a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken.

The rest went to savings.

Years ago, artists made money solely by selling their work at trading posts or flea markets. Now, they’re revolutionizing how to sell their products using the internet and social media.

Online sales have become even more important for crafters amid the coronavirus pandemic.

“E-commerce has definitely created new ways and opportunities for independent artists to showcase, share and sell their work and extend their reach worldwide,” says Amanda Smith, President of the Native American Business Association.

Some ways to market online are by posting in Facebook groups or setting up accounts on platforms like Etsy, eBay or Amazon, Smith says.



“It is great to see how the generations have come together to find a way to bridge the generational gap as well as connect art, history and culture through technology,” Smith said.

As demand increased from social media, Bilagody’s family set up a website for her to continue her sales.

“Grandma Annette loves drawing this little pig, because her late husband taught her how to do it. So she remembers him this way and to keep his memory alive. We love

you Cheii.”

Bennett says the loving nature of grandmothers has helped in marketing products.

“I see many comments on my posts because grandmas are important to all of us,” Bennett said. “People also love that I speak Navajo with my grandma on my videos. She was the one who taught me how to



Annette Bilagody served as the 2014 Miss Navajo Nation Elder. She is pictured here at the Western Navajo fair parade. (Photo courtesy of Lucita Bennett)

# Utah Farm Bureau helps deliver 500 live sheep, 16,000 pounds of lamb to the Navajo Nation

Even as miles-long food bank lines have become emblematic of the coronavirus pandemic, many Utah farmers and ranchers have found themselves with plenty of food but nowhere to sell it.

“Farmers and ranchers have been in just a crazy moment through all of this,” said Ron Gibson, president of the Utah Farm Bureau. “It’s been devastating to some of our industries, and one of the industries that’s been hurt the most is the sheep industry.”

A sheep rancher in Sanpete County recently had a freezer full of meat he couldn’t sell, Gibson said, just as the Navajo Nation, where mutton is a staple for many families, was becoming one of the regions most affected by the coronavirus in Utah.

Looking at the twin problems of food insecurity caused by the economic crises and a drop in market demand for food products, a coalition of groups including the Utah Farm Bureau formed Farmers Feeding Utah, a new effort designed to address both issues at once.

In less than three weeks, the initiative raised enough money, mostly from grassroots donors, to pursue its first project: purchasing 16,000 pounds of lamb and 500 live sheep from Utah ranchers and donating them to families on the Navajo Nation.

“It’s really a Utah program for Utah families,” Gibson said. “The purpose is to help farmers and ranchers in the state ... to buy food from them and give that to people that have food insecurities.”

Rebecca Benally, a member of the Navajo Nation and former San Juan County commissioner, helped facilitate the daunting task of distributing thousands of pounds of frozen lamb and truckloads of sheep to families who live in the remote reaches of the county and where commercial-scale freezer space is in short supply.

San Juan County “is 51 percent Native Americans, and we are told statistically that we are the poorest county in the state,” Benally said at a kick-off event on Friday in Blanding, where lamb and bags of Bluebird flour, another local favorite, were loaded into vehicles at the Blanding Food Bank.

“We’re working 24 hours a day to pull this off, and we will,” Benally added, noting that the live sheep distribution would take place this week and next in communities all across southeast Utah from Aneth to Navajo Mountain.

“When we tell the people they’re getting a live sheep and flour, they’re one step from heaven,” she said. “They’re very appreciative.”

The governor’s office and the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food supported the project, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints covered some shipping and transportation costs. The Farm Bureau paid for administrative costs to allow donations from individuals to go directly to purchasing, processing and distributing food.



(Courtesy of the Utah Farm Bureau) Volunteers help distribute donated sheep in Montezuma Creek on Monday, May 25, 2020, as part of the Farmers Feeding Utah program.

# Utah Farm Bureau - Continued



(Courtesy of the Utah Farm Bureau) Wade Garrett from Utah Farm Bureau helping load the sheep in Montezuma Creek on Monday, May 25, 2020.

The governor's office and the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food supported the project, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints covered some shipping and transportation costs. The Farm Bureau paid for administrative costs to allow donations from individuals to go directly to purchasing, processing and distributing food.

Logan Wilde, commissioner of the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, said the impacts of the pandemic on the food industry have been widespread.

"Across the board, every industry that's in agriculture has been hit," he said. "The price of corn just hasn't come up like it usually does towards spring. There's been a lot of problems."

"We think [the Farmers Feeding Utah program] is a marvelous way for community outreach to happen across the state and across this country," Wilde said.

Cheryl Bowers, director of the Blanding Food Bank, member of the Blanding City Council and county commission candidate, said the impacts of the pandemic were felt almost immediately in southeast Utah. The coronavirus arrived just as tourist-industry workers were ramping up for the busy spring season.

"At the first food bank in April after COVID hit, I had food for 220 families. About 500 families showed up," Bowers said. Volunteers scrambled to increase capacity, but she said she's worried about burnout.

Mutual aid efforts, donation drives and programs like Farmers Feeding Utah have helped local food banks adapt, and local groups have been critical to helping facilitate larger scale food distribution efforts. The lamb meat, for example, was stored in the Blanding Food Bank's facilities.

When you simultaneously support local farmers and enhance existing food drive efforts in the state, you get a "true win-win," said Michael Mower, Utah Gov. Gary Herbert's deputy chief of staff. "Nothing better exemplifies the Utah spirit and the Utah way than this program."

For Farmers Feeding Utah, the San Juan County project is just the beginning. The group is currently fundraising through its website and hopes to replicate the effort by supporting farmers and families in other parts of the state.

READ MORE AT: <https://www.sltrib.com/news/2020/05/26/utah-farm-bureau-helps/>

VIEW NEWS STORY AT: <https://www.fox13now.com/news/local-news/navajo-nation-receives-unique-donation-from-utah-farmers>

# UCSF Sends Second Wave of Health Workers to Navajo Nation

Navajo Nation Now Has the Highest Per-Capita Case Load in the Nation

By Nicholas Weiler



UCSF nurse Nabila Suleiman boards the flight to Flagstaff.

**University of California San Francisco**—As cases of COVID-19 continue to mount in Navajo Nation, UC San Francisco is sending a second team of health care workers – 13 nurses and six physicians – to Arizona to help provide urgently needed support to the largest hospitals serving Navajo patients.

The volunteers, leaving for Navajo Nation today, will join 13 UCSF nurses and three physicians who have been working with local medical workers in Arizona and New Mexico for a month and have requested to extend their service for two to four additional weeks. Five other UCSF volunteers who have been in Navajo Nation since April are returning to San Francisco.

Navajo Nation is the largest U.S. Native American reservation, covering about 27,500 square miles – an area about the size of West Virginia – spanning the borders of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, with a population of about 175,000. Since early March, it has experienced a disproportionate number of COVID-19 cases, stressing its health care system.

Navajo Nation leaders have taken strong action, including regional curfews, support for residents, and the highest per-capita testing rate in the nation, but numbers of cases have continued to climb. With 4,253 positive cases and 146 confirmed deaths reported as of Wednesday, May 20, Navajo Nation now has the highest per-capita case load in the nation, surpassing even New York State. By comparison, San Francisco has seen half as many cases and one-fifth as many deaths in a population five times larger.

In April, responding to a call from Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez for health worker reinforcements, seven physicians and 14 nurses traveled to the Navajo Nation to begin a one-month voluntary assignment alongside Navajo health care workers in Indian Health Service hospitals in Chinle, Arizona, and Gallup and Shiprock, New Mexico. Thirteen of these nurses and three physicians will be staying on for an extended service, while the second wave of 19 UCSF volunteers will be working in two tribally run hospitals in Tuba City and Ft. Defiance, Arizona. Together these five sites represent the largest hospitals serving Navajo patients.

“The medical team from UCSF has been a blessing to the Navajo people,” Nez said. “Their resources, combined with our resources, have certainly saved lives during the time that UCSF has been on the ground here in Navajo Nation. We are truly thankful to their team for the relief and compassionate work they are providing to help fight COVID-19.”

The UCSF health care workers who are volunteering specialize in critical care, intensive care, acute care, hospital medicine and emergency medicine. In addition to providing health care support, UCSF’s volunteers will have the opportunity to learn from their colleagues and gain experience in responding to a sustained surge from a pandemic.

## UCSF - Continued

The UCSF effort is being coordinated through the UCSF Department of Medicine's HEAL (Health, Equity, Action and Leadership) Initiative, a two-year global health fellowship focused on training and transforming health workers working in rural communities around the world. The HEAL Initiative brings together U.S.-trained physicians and health workers of all types from rural communities in the largest global health fellowship in the country. To date, 128 people have completed or are currently participating in the fellowship, which spans 19 sites in nine countries.

The HEAL Initiative has been working in the Navajo Nation since 2015. Fifty-two health care workers in Navajo Nation are current fellows or alumni of the UCSF fellowship, and 25 of them are Native American themselves.

"COVID 19 is tearing across the fault lines of inequity, ravaging communities already hard hit by historic and present day marginalization," said Sriram Shamasunder, MD, associate professor of medicine at UCSF and co-founder of the UCSF HEAL Initiative. "Extensive public health efforts by Navajo Nation leaders have been complicated by a long history of poverty and neglect, including chronic understaffing and underfunding of the Native American health care system. As our teams provide support for the locally led health response during the surge, we must continue to ask why the pandemic is spreading so fast across the Navajo Nation and how these structural injustices can be addressed and repaired in the future."

Read More at: [UCSF News](#)



Congratulations!

2020 Graduates!

# CCC grad strives to bring her research to the Navajo Nation

Twenty-year-old Shawna Greeyes has a resume to envy a researcher twice her age.

In the two years since she graduated from Coconino High School and began attending Coconino Community College, she has conducted research everywhere from the Harvard Forest in Massachusetts to Tucson's Biosphere 2 as well as in local labs at CCC and Northern Arizona University. On separate occasions, she has also traveled all over the country for academic conferences and to share her work.

"I like conducting the research and communicating my science to everybody so they can understand it, to show them how important research is," she said.

Environmental science has been her passion since she completed an internship with the University of Arizona's Native American Science and Engineering program prior to her senior year of high school, Greeyes explained, but as she finishes up her time at CCC and prepares to attend Northern Arizona University in the fall, another area of study will join it: nursing, another longtime interest.

"After having this pandemic strike, I did a reality check," Greeyes said. "If I want to do research I have to sign up for grants and that's not a for-sure thing that I would get. With nursing, that's a job that's always in need, so I won't go out of work."

She plans to first wrap up a degree in biology, then move on to NAU's accelerated nursing program that will help ensure financial stability as she works toward her goal of bringing her environmental science knowledge back to the Navajo Nation.

Though Greeyes grew up in Flagstaff, she is originally from Shonto and still visits often. Her family returns to tend to the crops they plant there, like corn and squash, she explained. Although a few family members briefly attended college, she will be the first to complete her degree, after both her parents and grandparents emphasized the importance of going to school.

Beyond just completing her degree, Greeyes has been a leading member of CCC's chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society and in March, she was one of two CCC students awarded the All-Arizona Academic Team Scholarship, which provides free tuition for 60 credit hours at the recipient's choice of one of the three state universities.

Eventually, Greeyes hopes to create her own research site to help study environmental issues that plague the Navajo Nation, such as water quality and droughts as well as the effects of uranium mining.

The idea was partly inspired by her work in the Harvard Forest, where Greeyes helped give a voice to the Witness Tree, a red oak tree in the forest equipped with sensors to measure its responses to surrounding environmental conditions. Beginning as a summer intern last year, Greeyes helped a team create messages that the tree sends automatically sends out via social media, based on its conditions. The tree has nearly 9,000 Twitter followers.

"For years, so many people have been saying climate change is happening, the trees and all these other species are dying, but if it's coming from those actual species, like a tree, maybe they would understand it more," Greeyes said.

Greeyes has done other work with trees during her time as a research assistant at NAU, where she measures and processes tree cores and other samples for Andrew Richardson's lab, where studies focus on the impacts of global change on land ecosystems.

Like her work in the Harvard Forest, Greeyes' research at CCC had a modern spin, as she and a team of other students studied the effects of 5G cellular networks on the growth of plants. Although the experiment was completed before COVID-19 closures, Greeyes said unfortunately, the team has not been able to analyze its data, which is currently stored at CCC's Lone Tree Campus.

No matter what she is researching or learning from others, Greeyes is always drawn back to the community impact, like the one she hopes to make by bringing both needed research and healthcare — even if it's just a weekend job to support her research — to the Navajo Nation

"I like how you can take science and improve a community, whether that could be the livelihood or the environment itself," she said.

READ MORE AT: [https://azdailysun.com/news/local/ccc-grad-strives-to-bring-her-research-to-the-navajo-nation/article\\_b65f008e-c695-53bd-a6bd-7487dca46e09.html](https://azdailysun.com/news/local/ccc-grad-strives-to-bring-her-research-to-the-navajo-nation/article_b65f008e-c695-53bd-a6bd-7487dca46e09.html)



Shawna Greeyes is graduating from CCC this semester and will attend NAU in the fall to study biology later nursing. She hopes to create her own research site to help study environmental issues that plague Navajo Nation, such as water quality and droughts as well as the effects of uranium mining.  
Coconino Community College, courtesy

# Developer sPower Teams Up With Navajo Power to Replace Coal Plant With Solar

Solar heavyweight sPower and local startup Navajo Power are chasing a 200-megawatt deal with Arizona utility Salt River Project, that's just the beginning.

For decades, the massive coal-fired Navajo Generating Station powered the great cities of the Desert Southwest: Los Angeles, Phoenix, Las Vegas. Yet the Navajo Nation that hosted it contains 75 percent of all the households in the U.S. that lack electricity, according to the American Public Power Association.

The 2,250-megawatt plant shut down in November, leaving job losses and underutilized electrical transmission infrastructure in its wake. Now, startup Navajo Power wants to fill the vacuum with massive solar power plants while channeling the proceeds into electrification and economic development for Navajo communities.

On Wednesday, Navajo Power took a big step toward that ambition by signing a co-development deal with renewables powerhouse sPower, GTM has learned. Navajo Power also announced an initial close of \$4.5 million out of a planned \$10 million seed round of funding.

Arizona utility Salt River Project, which operated and partially owned the coal plant, is seeking bids for 200 megawatts of solar on Navajo land by the end of 2023. Under the sPower deal, it will collaborate with Navajo Power on a project of that size, with a plan to expand up to 750 megawatts. sPower brings access to capital and a track record of developing gigawatts' worth of renewable projects around the country, while Navajo Power specializes in the unique requirements of development in Navajo territory.

Navajo Power CEO Brett Isaac is a Navajo entrepreneur who grew up on the reservation and previously spent years delivering off-grid solar to Navajo households without access to the electric grid. He teamed up with long-time friend Dan Rosen, who co-founded and still serves as chairman of Mosaic, a leading solar loan provider. Rosen met Isaac a decade ago while working on energy and water issues in the region.

The seed funding was led by the Candide Group and joined by Align Impact and the Navajo Nation's Community Development Financial Institution. The investors had to get comfortable with the startup's public benefit commitments, which cap executive compensation relative to the lowest-paid employee, and pledge at least 80 percent of profits to solar projects or community investment.

"We deal with land, we deal with resources, we deal with politics," Isaac said in an interview. "We're building a network of people who understand how to do large projects out on tribal lands."

The nature of the challenge is not technological so much as social: It requires community organizing and business-model innovation.

## Building trust

Standard development practices don't necessarily work with the rules and customs of the reservation, and anyone showing up with promises of big energy projects has to grapple with a complicated history of energy extraction and unevenly distributed rewards.

Reservation land is not bought and sold like land is elsewhere in the U.S.; it's held in trust. Unlocking it for solar development requires support from the local community, known as a chapter, which must approve it via a "chapter resolution" before it goes to the Navajo Nation for approval.

"You really need the community bought-in to make it happen," Rosen said. "That takes a lot of on-the-ground work and figuring out how these projects economically benefit the communities."

The working model for sharing the benefits locally is to generate lease revenue from the solar plant that will feed into a trust for the local community. That can become the vehicle for electrifying homes and investing in public goods such as water and housing.

That's all the more needed in the vicinity of the 200-megawatt development: The federal government banned any development in that section of the western Navajo Nation for decades under a policy known as the Bennett Freeze.

Navajo Power spends considerable time working with communities around its development sites to build consensus for the projects. When asked how they define their values, residents often see the land as a source of survival, rather than a commodity to be measured in dollars per acre.

"What we say is that we're bringing value back to land that has kind of started to degrade because of things like climate change," Isaac said. "It's not exhaustive. We're not going to extract everything and move. We're setting things up with the expectation that these things will catalyze new opportunities."

## Long-duration aspirations

The 200-megawatt project is first on the docket, but Navajo Power has grand ambitions for massive clean energy capacity in the region. Longer-term, the founders want to augment solar production with 5 gigawatts of long-duration storage, which would unlock clean energy on demand, instead of just when the sun is shining.



The Navajo Generating Station shut down last fall, leaving transmission capacity that could ship solar power.

That will require tapping a set of up-and-coming technologies that promise to deliver many more hours of storage duration than the lithium-ion batteries on the market today. Such tools remain niche but have attracted significant investment in the past year as market applications come into view.

"Navajo Generating Station has been the battery of the West," delivering the electricity the region needed to grow, Rosen said. "Let's continue powering the West but figure out how to maximize the economics for communities and for the Nation."

That's something that hasn't always followed from the history of energy development on and around the reservation.

Navajo lands absorbed coal plant pollution as the power it generated supported booming economies in the Sun Belt. The wealth never seemed to trickle down to the Navajo community, even though the Nation's finances became tangled up in the continued operations of the power plant. The Navajo Transitional Energy Co. tried to buy the plant to keep the economic engine running when its owners planned to shut it down, but the deal fell through.



Navajo Power staff meet at a project site in the Painted Desert with community members and leaders, including President of the Navajo Nation Jonathan Nez. (Image credit: Navajo Power)

Navajo Power addresses this history by rooting its operations firmly in the community it aims to serve. Members of the company include Clara Pratte, former chief of staff of the Navajo Nation, and Chris Deschene, who led the tribal program for the Department of Energy under President Barack Obama.

"They're so used to rhetoric and getting pitched on various different things that it's difficult to believe these things could happen to them," Isaac said of the communities he works with. "That's what we're trying to show with these projects."

**READ MORE AT: <https://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/navajo-power-spower-funds-raised-solar>**

# Bulletin Board

## Local woman, who has blindness, makes masks for Navajo Nation

Her uncle and aunt live on the reservation, and are positive for COVID-19



**ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.** – Sacheen Smith was born and raised in Albuquerque.

Growing up, much of her family, including her two grandmothers, lived on the Navajo Nation. Today, her uncle and aunt are still there.

Her uncle was hospitalized with COVID-19 for weeks, and now her aunt is positive too.

"It seems like once it hits a family, it hits everyone in the household," Smith tells KOAT. "It is really devastating."

Smith wanted to help her family on the Navajo Nation, so she started sewing face masks and sending them to her relatives.

Word caught on of her craftsmanship, and now, she's making the masks for rehabilitation centers and children's homes on the reservation.

"This is my tribe," Smith says. "I just want to give back to my community."

What the people wearing her masks don't know: Smith is visually impaired.

She started losing her eyesight 20 years ago and now only has a bit of light perception left. Her mother taught her to sew, and still helps her with the pleats and binding on the masks. "My fingers are basically my eyes," she says.

Smith says she is proud to help her people during this pandemic. "We're a resilient tribe," she says. "We have a history."

If you would like to contact Smith, or help her with her mission, contact her on Facebook.

This is the link to her original post on the KOAT uLocal New Mexico page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/257468451575627/permalink/563892500933219>

## Memorial Day May 25, 2020

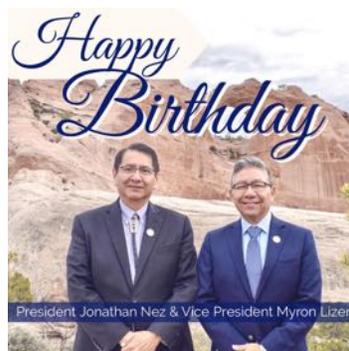
On Monday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, First Lady Phefelia Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, Second Lady Dottie Lizer, and Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish paid tribute to fallen warriors with the laying of a wreath at the memorial wall at Veterans Memorial Park in Window Rock, which lists the names of Navajo men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice serving in the Armed Forces and those who are still missing in action. Flags were lowered to half-staff at Veterans Memorial Park in honor of the many who gave their lives in service to our country.



Following the wreath laying ceremony, President Nez and Vice President Lizer led a food, water, and supply distribution for Navajo veterans. The event was later opened to the general public once all veterans had received the items. Overall, the Nez-Lizer Administration distributed food, bottled water, and other supplies to 586 Navajo families on Monday.

Photos: <https://www.facebook.com/NezLizer2018/posts/2507405359524992>

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO PRESIDENT JONATHAN NEZ & VICE PRESIDENT MYRON LIZER!



WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — **HAPPY BIRTHDAY** to President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer who share May 26th as their birthday!!

# Bulletin Board

## Arizona enacts Native American Day, renames highways

**CHINLE** – It's been a good couple of weeks for Arizona's Native Americans, at least symbolically.

Last Thursday night, Gov. Doug Ducey signed SB 1235 into law establishing June 2 as Native American Day, an official (if unpaid) Arizona holiday.

On March 27, legislation to name three Arizona highways after Native American veterans unanimously passed the senate. Since the actions were in the form of memorials rather than bills, their sponsor, State Sen. Jamescita Peshlakai (D-Dist. 7) can immediately petition the Arizona State Board on Geographic and Historic Names to designate the sections of highway.

Peshlakai was also the chief sponsor of the bill designating Native American Day.

"I learned the governor had signed it last night on his Twitter account," she said in a telephone interview. "I'm so excited!"

In a statement on the Arizona Senate Democrats' website, Peshlakai said, "Our indigenous people have called these lands home for millennia, from the Four Corners to the Colorado delta and everywhere in between. Our ancestors built towering cliff dwellings and the great canals that still irrigate the Valley of the Sun. We have fought overseas for our country and we drive innovation that will lead Arizona forward."

Because the bill will take effect 90 days after the end of the current legislative session, Arizona won't be celebrating Native American Day this year. The first celebration will be in 2019. Peshlakai said she envisions the day as an opportunity for Arizona's 22 indigenous tribes to celebrate their heritage while also discussing issues on the reservations and educating the state's non-Indians both about the tribes' cultural beauty and the obstacles they face.

Ducey tweeted, "Arizona has a rich Native American history and I am proud to sign @jamescita's bill recognizing and celebrating Native American Day on June 2."

Sponsored by Peshlakai and 10 other senators, the three memorials naming the highways passed the senate unanimously.

READ MORE AT: <https://navajotimes.com/reznews/senator-peshlakai-bill-establishing-official-native-american-day-is-signed-into-law/>

## Navajo Food Provided to Those at High Risk

Arthur Bavaro, Community Service Coordinator for the Nenahnezad Chapter has been working with Maxine Tsosie the Nenahnezad Community Health Representative to provide cultural food the the chapter seniors and high-risk community members. The Chapter has been preparing boxes for 97 recurring delivery. Each box is made based on the



community member health needs and then the boxes are delivery to the community members porches by no-contact methods.

The chapter purchases the native food from Valley Trade in Waterflow, New

Mexico. The foods include steamed corn, Dried fruit, chilchin berries, roasted blue corn and gad bit'éézh (juniper ash).

The Chapter also work the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry for flour and pinto beans.



# Bulletin Board

## Navajo Health Command Operation Center implements Unified Command Group to respond to COVID-19 efforts on the Navajo Nation



**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** - This week, the Navajo Nation Health Command Operations Center (HCOC) implemented a Unified Command Group (UCG) to support the incident command system. The UCG provides a unified, coordinated, and interactive approach to the COVID-19 response efforts on the Navajo Nation, and helps to set priorities for the HCOC.

The unified command is a structure that brings together the incident commanders or leaders of the major agencies involved in the incident and provides a critical element in increasing the effectiveness of multi-jurisdictional incidents. As the spread of COVID-19 becomes more complex, the need for a unified command is critical in reducing the spread of COVID-19.

The unified command includes the Navajo Nation Department of Health, Navajo Area Indian Health Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs - Navajo Region, and the Tribal Health Organizations.

The UCG recognizes a set of incident objectives and strategies that all partners can subscribe to, such as the following:

- Support for Navajo health care system by expanding COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, and case management programs
- Develop and implement a non-congregant and congregate sheltering program
- Maintain safety and accountability for tribal, state, and federal workforce
- Recruit staff and maintain continuity of Navajo Nation personnel responding to COVID19
- Prioritize commodity delivery to those testing positive or exposed to COVID-19
- Strengthen health messaging on public health orders and recommendations related to COVID-19 preventative measures.
- Enforce public health orders

The unified command provides a collective approach to develop strategies to achieve incident objectives. All agencies are fully aware of the plans, actions, and constraints of each other, allowing for a streamlined process that reduces duplication of effort allowing Navajo, Federal and State partners to come together and end the spread of COVID-19.

For more general COVID-19 information, helpful prevention tips, and more resources, please visit the Navajo Department of Health's COVID-19 website at <http://www.ndoh.navajonsn.gov/COVID-19>. To contact the primary Navajo Health Command Operations Center, please email <mailto:coronavirus.info@nndoh.org> or call (928) 871-6855.

###

Dr. Jill Jim, Executive Director, Navajo Department of Health

David Nez, Incident Commander, Health Command Operations Center

Read at: <https://bit.ly/2TxZn3c>

**PERSONNEL NEWS**

**DCD OPEN POSITIONS**

<b>POSITION TITLE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>PAY RATE</b>	<b>CLOSING DATE</b>
<b><u>Administrative Service Centers</u></b>			
Community Services Coordinator(S)	Jeddito, AZ	36,462.40	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist(S)	Red Lake, AZ	25,854.40	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist(S)	Klagetoh, AZ	25,854.40	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist(S)	Black Mesa, AZ	25,854.40	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist(S)	Forest Lake, AZ	25,854.40	OUF
Community Services Coordinator(S)	Iyanbito, NM	36,462.40	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist(S)	Alamo, NM	25,854.40	OUF
Community Services Coordinator(S)	Lake Valley, NM	36,462.40	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist(S)	Red Mesa, AZ	25,854.40	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist(S)	Red Valley, AZ	25,854.40	OUF
Community Services Coordinator(S)	Tolani Lake, AZ	36,462.40	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist(S)	Kaibeto, AZ	25,854.40	OUF

(OUF) Open Until Filled

(S) Sensitive Position (subject to background check)

Closing Dates may change due temporary reduction in non-essential Navajo Nation government services

For the most up-to-date personnel info, please visit DPM's website at <http://www.dpm.navajo-nsn.gov/jobs.html>

**Comic of the Month**



**Inspirational Quote of the Month**

**ONCE A WARRIOR**



**ALWAYS A WARRIOR**

**#NAVAJO STRONG**

# Dikos Ntsaaígíí-Náhást'éíts'áadah

## SYMPTOMS OF CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019

Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness.

### Naalnii' bee ééhózinígíí

(Symptoms can include)

\*Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.



### Ts'íísniidóóh

(Fever)

### Dikos

(Cough)



### Ch'ééh jididzih

(Shortness of Breath)

If you have been in close contact with someone with confirmed COVID-19 in the past 2 weeks and develop symptoms, contact your local hospital and/or physician. Call your local hospital before you go to a hospital.

For more information:  
Navajo Department of Health  
(P) 928.871.7014  
(E) [ndoh@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:ndoh@navajo-nsn.gov)

Website:  
<http://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19>



# Dikos Ntsaaígíí-Náhást'éíts'áadah

## STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE RESPIRATORY DISEASES LIKE COVID-19.

**Bitah dahoneezgai'lgíí  
bits'aa nanínáh**

Avoid close contact  
with people who are  
sick.



**Áadóó nináá' níchííh  
dóó nizéé' t'áádoó  
bídílníhí**

Avoid touching your  
eyes, nose, and  
mouth.



**Dílkosgo dóó  
Háts'íyaa dinígo  
Chíjbee Yit'oodí  
chiiníí' dóó Ts'ilzééh  
biíh hi'níí' biyí'jil'  
kódííííí**

Cover your cough or  
sneeze with a tissue,  
then throw the tissue  
in the trash.



Avoid touching your  
eyes, nose, and  
mouth.

**T'áadoole'í áláhji'  
chiiníí'ngíí' bíná'íjot**

Clean and disinfect  
frequently touched  
objects and surfaces.



**Nitah honeezgalgo  
t'áá hooghandi  
sínídá t'áá hazhó'ó  
azee' naah ádoolníí'  
binliyé'go t'éiyá**

Stay home when you  
are sick, except to  
get medical care.



**T'áá nihíla'  
t'ánínádaahgis txíjigo  
yíkósigíí naadiindah  
alzhiinji' bíighahji'**

Wash your hands  
often with soap and  
water for at least 20  
seconds.



For more information:  
Navajo Department of Health  
(P) 928.871.7014  
(E) [ndoh@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:ndoh@navajo-nsn.gov)

Website:  
<http://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19>



## Census Bureau Statement on 2020 Operations on Tribal Lands and Reservations

MAY 15, 2020

RELEASE NUMBER CB20-RTQ.18

MAY 15, 2020 – The U.S Census Bureau is committed to a complete and accurate count of American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) population, wherever they live. The AIAN population is diverse and geographically dispersed across the country. While most do not live on designated tribal lands or reservations, those who do are among groups historically undercounted in the census. For years, the Census Bureau has been working closely with tribal governments to change this - and make sure everyone counts in the 2020 Census.

As part of this effort, census takers are set to go household to household and drop off census materials at front doors in tribal communities. This operation, dubbed Update Leave, promises to up the count by allowing us to confirm each household's physical location and provide a special Census ID number in materials tied to that location.

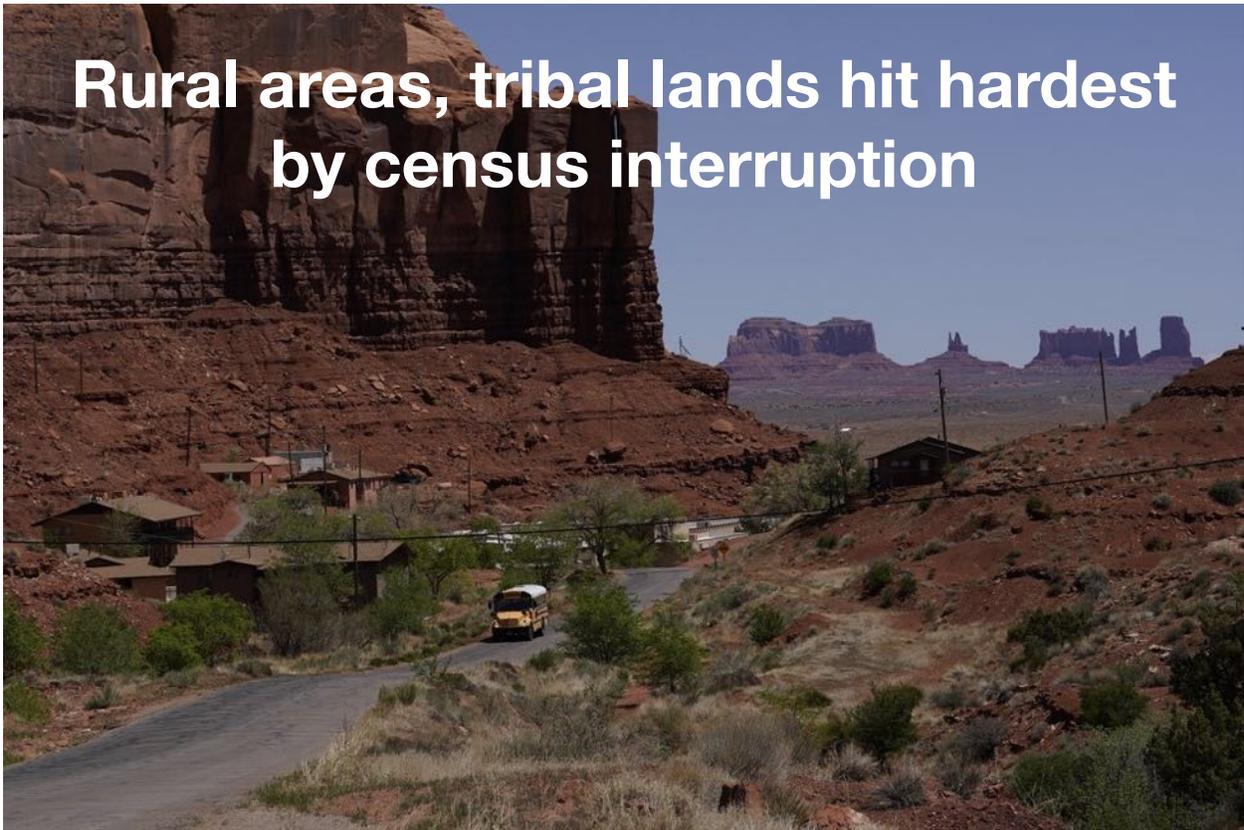
Due to COVID-19, we delayed Update Leave to protect the health and safety of our staff and tribal communities. We made the move knowing we could still achieve a complete and accurate count - and are working closely with tribal leaders to determine the right time to resume this important operation. Currently, we are doing a phased re-opening in areas where it is safe to do so.

We understand there are many questions about how to participate in the 2020 Census. The Update Leave operation generally affects rural households that use post office boxes to receive regular mail or lack traditional mailing addresses. Most urban households use physical street addresses for mail delivery, so we mailed invitations and reminders with instructions on how to respond to the census. As a result, many AIAN people who live outside designated tribal lands have already received census invitations with a Census ID linked to their specific address. Using a Census ID when completing the census helps us get an accurate count and avoids the need for follow-up by a census worker to confirm household information.

We continue to encourage any household with a Census ID to respond online at [2020census.gov](https://www.census.gov), by phone or by mail and look forward to being back in tribal communities when it is safe to do so. We are committed to working together to shape our future.

**READ MORE AT: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2020/operations-aian.html>**

# Rural areas, tribal lands hit hardest by census interruption



IN THIS APRIL 27, 2020, PHOTO, A SCHOOL BUS IS DRIVEN THROUGH OLJATO-MONUMENT VALLEY, UTAH, ON THE NAVAJO RESERVATION. EVEN BEFORE THE PANDEMIC, PEOPLE LIVING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES AND ON RESERVATIONS WERE AMONG THE TOUGHEST GROUPS TO COUNT IN THE 2020 CENSUS. (AP PHOTO/CAROLYN KASTER)

By MIKE SCHNEIDER

May 23, 2020

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Even though they're neighbors, two New Mexico counties couldn't be further apart in the rate of people answering the 2020 census.

Los Alamos County, where the atomic bomb was born and many people are highly educated, has one of the nation's highest response rates at 79%. Rio Arriba County, where a language other than English is spoken in over half of homes, is at the bottom at 9%.

The reason for the difference? Households in Rio Arriba and other rural counties across the U.S. rely on census workers to drop off their questionnaires, which was on hold for a month and a half because of the coronavirus pandemic.

While the U.S. Census Bureau is restarting that work, leaders in rural America worry it will be difficult to catch up in communities that are already among the toughest to count. Ultimately, it could cost them congressional seats and federal funding for highways, schools and health care that the once-a-decade count divvies up.

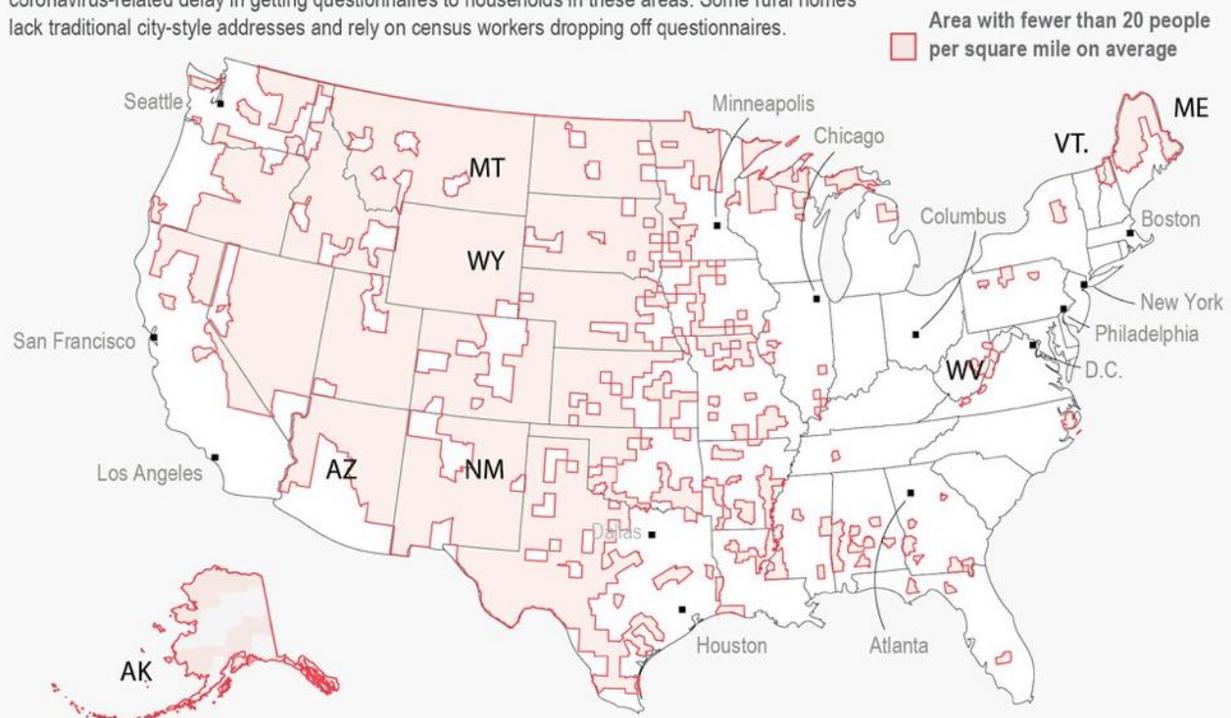
"We have historically been underrepresented in the past, and there's an unfortunate precedent to show we will be underrepresented again. This pandemic makes it all the more challenging," said Javier Sanchez, mayor of Espanola, a city of 10,000 in Rio Arriba County. "I think we are struggling like every other rural community and doing the best we can amid these problems when so much is at stake in the next 10 years."

May 2020

A rolling census count shows that states with large rural populations are lagging behind the rest of the nation in answering the 2020 questionnaire. They have the largest concentration of households dependent on receiving forms from census workers in the spring.

## A greater challenge for the census in rural America

Advocates for rural America worry about residents being undercounted in the census because of a coronavirus-related delay in getting questionnaires to households in these areas. Some rural homes lack traditional city-style addresses and rely on census workers dropping off questionnaires.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Some data unavailable for parts of Alaska.

AP

Around 5% of U.S. households fall into that category, but it accounts for anywhere from about 17% to almost 30% of homes in Alaska, West Virginia, New Mexico, Wyoming, Maine, Vermont and Montana.

These are places where homes are spread apart and often hidden from main roads. Internet access is poor, and this is the first census that most people are encouraged to respond online.

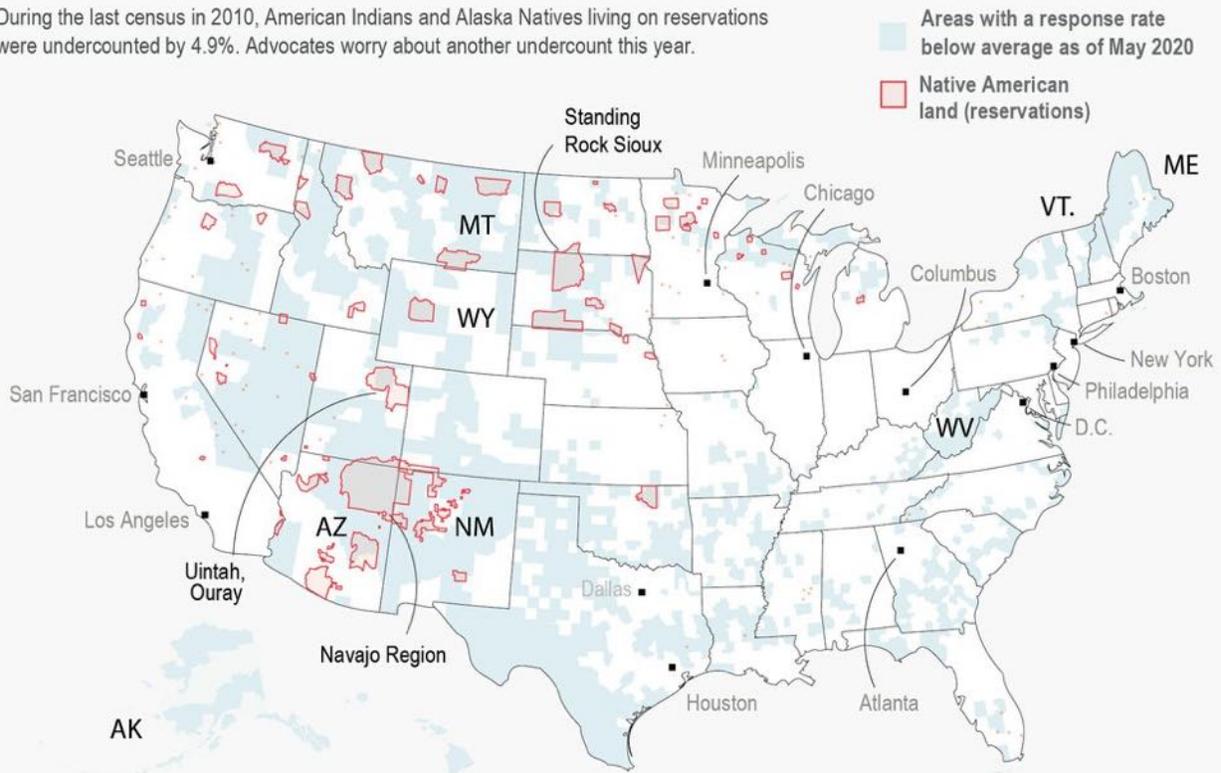
Many people lack traditional city-style addresses, get their mail by P.O. box or live in areas with high concentrations of vacant, seasonal housing. While they wait for hard copies from census workers, the rest of the U.S. mostly is contacted by mail — either with invitations to respond online or with a paper form.

Two months after most U.S. residents could start answering the 2020 census, response rates in states that have many households without city-style addresses ranged from 40% to 50%. The national rate is 59% as of mid-May.

During the last census in 2010, American Indians and Alaska Natives living on reservations were undercounted by 4.9%, according to the Census Bureau, by far the highest undercount of any group.

## Response rates for the census are below 10% in some tribal areas

During the last census in 2010, American Indians and Alaska Natives living on reservations were undercounted by 4.9%. Advocates worry about another undercount this year.



Source: U.S. Census There are over 300 Indian reservations. Most are too small to show here. Some data unavailable for parts of Alaska

AP

Olson acknowledged that some tribal lands have closed themselves off to stop the spread of the virus, and census workers won't be able to drop off questionnaires until they reopen.

"There may be some pockets that are further delayed," he said.

The pandemic has forced the Census Bureau to push back its deadline for finishing the count from the end of July to the end of October.

The agency says it's restarting operations this week in Puerto Rico, where census forms are required to be dropped off at homes because of the devastation from Hurricane Maria in 2017. The island has a very low response rate as of mid-May — over 8%.

In West Virginia, almost 30% of households don't have traditional addresses, and the state's response rate is 47%.

While the state is getting back to pushing rural residents to fill out the census, halting work on the ground in March was like playing a ballgame "with three players off the field," said Andy Malinoski, a spokesman for the West Virginia Department of Commerce.

READ MORE AT: <https://apnews.com/8d67a26ce771a8d2f464557dad699277>

## COVID-19 SIMPLIFIED FACT SHEET

- SOCIAL DISTANCING:** means not shaking hands, avoiding crowds, standing several feet away from other people, and staying home if you feel sick.  
**Why is this necessary?** The ultimate goal is to break the chain of transmission. You want to decrease the risk of infecting a lot of people at the same time. As an individual, you have a very real & important role in breaking this transmission because, for every individual who gets infected, two to three others will be affected.
- SELF-MONITORING:** might include regularly checking your temperature & watching for signs of a respiratory illness (fever, cough, shortness of breath).  
**Why is this necessary?** Say you attended a party/conference, and you found out later that someone there tested positive for the virus:
  - If you weren't near them = **SELF-MONITOR** since you're not at risk
  - If you had a long conversation with them/ that person was coughing & sneezing near you = **SELF-ISOLATE** chance you have the virus & can spread to others
- SELF-ISOLATION:** when you're sick/show symptoms of the virus (high temperature, new continuous cough).
  - if you have symptoms, stay at home for **7 days**
  - if you live with other people, they should stay at home for **14 days** from the day the first person got symptoms**Why is this necessary?** An individual who is sick can pass the virus on (to family, neighbours, or people on the bus). Some of these newly infected people may end up in hospital since they're a lot weaker, and they'll fill up a LOT of beds needed by other people (cancer patients, new-borns, car accident victims, etc).
  - Yes, you *might* have to **SELF-ISOLATE** more than once to break the chain/transmission, for example:
    - o you go into 2 weeks of self-isolation because you *thought* you had the virus
    - o Afterwards, you go out & *actually* get the virus– you **need** to self-isolate **again** to break this chain, so it's not passed on.

Source(s):

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://choice.npr.org/index.html?origin=https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/03/16/816490025/quarantine-self-isolation-social-distancing-what-they-mean-and-when-to-do-them>

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/mar/16/how-to-social-distance-convince-friends-family>

May 2020



The DCD Newsletter, "Community Info", is produced monthly by the Division of Community Development and is a resource for division staff and chapters.

**NEWSLETTER TEAM:**

Norbert Nez, Editor

Denise Copeland, Assistant Editor

Sylvia Jordan, Contributing Writer

