

COMMUNITY UPDATE

Division of Community Development Newsletter

In this Issue

- Dr. Fauci praises Navajo Nation for handling of COVID-19
- 17 Organizations Providing Emergency Food Relief to Native Communities During COVID-19
- The Navajo Water Project bridging the water gap for some residents
- ASC Essential Workers
- The Navajo Water Project bridging the water gap for some residents
- 'We get scared when we're out of water': Team delivers water, tanks across Navajo Nation
- For the Navajo Nation, a Fight for Better Food Gains New Urgency
- Bulletin Board
- Personnel News
- Navajo Nation Census Information Center News
- The 2020 Census: 4 Ways to Respond
- Avoid Large Gatherings
- Avoid Having Vistors At Home to #Stop the Spread
- Help with Dealing with Stress or Emotional Effects of COVID-19

Did You Know..

Black-tailed prairie dogs, the best known of the five prairie dog species, live in larger communities called towns, which may contain many hundreds of animals.

Typically they cover less than half a square mile, but some have been enormous. The largest recorded prairie dog town covered some 25,000 square miles.



<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/group/prairie-dogs/>

Events:

October: Ghaaji', which means Separation of Seasons

October 1: Navajo New Year's Day

October 12: Arizona Indigenous People's Day

October 31: Halloween

Dr. Fauci praises Navajo Nation for handling of COVID-19

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — One of the country's top doctors, Dr. Anthony Fauci, praised the Navajo Nation for its handling of COVID-19 during a town hall with tribal leaders Monday.

The Navajo Nation was previously an epicenter for COVID-19, but strict mask mandates, curfews and lockdowns have helped flatten the curve.

"My Navajo people, I commend each and every one of you for the hard work that you have done," said Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, echoed President Nez's statement during a virtual town hall.

Dr. Fauci praises Navajo Nation for handling of COVID-19

"The reason you should be proud of what you've accomplished is that you have proven that when you do these public health measures, you can turn around a serious surge of infection," he said.

"When I go out and try and plead with the rest of the nation, I will actually bring up the example of the success of what the Navajo Nation has been able to do," the doctor added.

The Navajo Nation announced last week that it will participate in the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial. Dr. Laura Hammitt with Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health is leading the initiative.

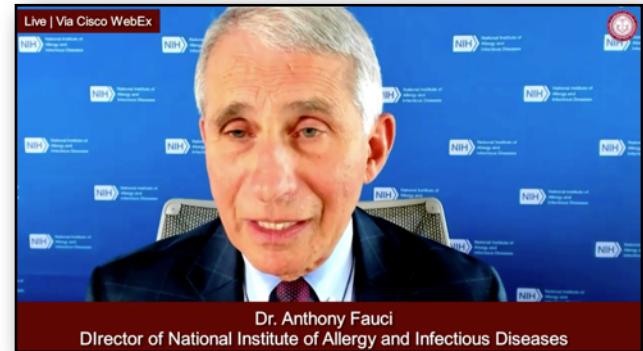
"Native Americans have effectively been denied the opportunity to participate in these clinical trials because almost all of the city's sites are in large urban areas that have not done effective outreach," Dr. Hammitt said.

The Pfizer COVID-19 clinical trial is one of many underway across the country. Dr. Fauci insists there are safeguards in place to ensure the vaccine that's eventually distributed to the public is safe.

"We don't know when they will be shown to be safe and effective. My projection had been likely by November and December, but it is conceivable that they might be available towards the end of October," he said.

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Read More at the Navajo Times (<https://bit.ly/2G45rgr>)



17 Organizations Providing Emergency Food Relief to Native Communities During COVID-19

Contributing Author: Elena Seeley

Editor's note: This article will be continually updated throughout the COVID-19 outbreak and will remain in alphabetical order. Please email elena@foodtank.com if you would like to add an organization to our running list.

As COVID-19 continues to spread, Native communities across the country have been particularly hard hit by the virus.

In New Mexico, half of those who died from COVID-19 in a single day were American Indian/Alaska Native. And in Arkansas, the Pacific Islander community represents 1.2 percent of all COVID-19 cases in the state, despite making up only 0.3 percent of the population.



Health disparities and limited access to healthcare have contributed significantly to these trends. Diet-related illnesses, including diabetes, that disproportionately impact Native communities have made them more susceptible to severe symptoms of the virus.

In tribal nations, where COVID-19 is spreading rapidly, communities also face a unique set of challenges. Between 35-40 percent of homes lack running water. And limiting the spread of the virus is difficult when 16 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native households are classified as overcrowded.

The pandemic has also exacerbated food insecurity in Native communities, which typically already face high rates of poverty and hunger in urban and rural areas. As COVID-19 disrupts food supply chains, communities face more severe water and food shortages.

Although the federal government distributed aid for tribes, communities say it is not enough. In response, Native-led organizations have established funds and mobilized volunteers to keep the most vulnerable fed and safe. Food Tank is highlighting these incredible efforts that you can support to ensure that Native communities receive the food and supplies they need.

1. All Pueblo Council of Governors (APCG) and Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (IPCC)

The All Pueblo Council of Governors (APCG) and the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (IPCC) created the Pueblo Relief Fund to support the needs of 20 Pueblo Nations during the pandemic. Funds will be used to provide cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment (PPE), and food. Through this collaboration, APCG and IPCC hope that they will meet the needs of all New Mexico Pueblos.

2. Decolonizing Wealth, National Urban Indian Family Coalition, and Native Americans in Philanthropy

These three organizations launched the Native American Community Response Fund to support Native-led organizations serving people impacted by COVID-19. Funding initially focused on the 78 percent of Native Americans who live off-reservations, but as the pandemic spread, the Fund expanded its efforts to include tribal communities. This financial support ensures that Native peoples can access reliable shelter and food. Native Americans in Philanthropy also compiled a comprehensive list of resources to help Native communities access additional aid.

3. Emergency Mobile Pantry in Zuni, New Mexico

The volunteer-run mobile pantry in Zuni, New Mexico delivers food baskets and non-perishable goods to homebound elders in the Zuni community. The pantry is actively seeking donations of food and cleaning materials. Financial donations are also accepted to help them purchase additional supplies from local businesses.

4. First Nations Development Institute

In response to COVID-19, the First Nations Development Institute created the COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund to meet the needs of American Indian/Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities. The Fund offers direct financial support to Native nonprofit organizations and tribal programs that need it most. The Institute also coordinated the donation of over 21,000 gallons of water and over 12,000 pounds of meat.

5. The Hopi Foundation

Surrounded by the Navajo Nation, which reports one of the highest per-capita rates of positive COVID-19 cases, the Hopi community is at great risk during the pandemic. In response, the Hopi Foundation is directing funds from their Emergency Assistance Fund to local villages, organizations, and individuals to help distribute emergency relief. Donations primarily support low-income families, elders, single-parents, and disabled individuals in need.

6. Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health

The Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health's COVID-19 Response mobilized over 200 people to support families in tribal communities. The Center repurposed its mobile food truck to deliver food, water, and other supplies. They have also hired a team of community members to make face masks for healthcare workers at their field sites in Whiteriver, Arizona and the Navajo Nation.

7. Kansas City Indian Center

Since 1971, the Kansas City Indian Center has provided health, welfare, and cultural services to Native peoples in the Kansas City area. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, the Center has remained committed to serving the community. Although the Center is currently closed to the public, clients can make an appointment to access services such as food pantry items, face masks, and hygiene supplies.

8. Kinłani/Flagstaff Mutual Aid

Kinłani/Flagstaff Mutual Aid in Arizona is a volunteer-run response to COVID-19. Community members can offer skills, resources, space, and time to support the most vulnerable. A central hub was established to accept material donations, while financial donations support the purchase of additional goods. Their website also provides resources to help volunteers build new neighborhood pods to create a support network across Kinłani/Flagstaff.

9. McKinley Mutual Aid

Serving the Navajo and Zuni peoples in Northwest New Mexico, McKinley Mutual Aid is a network of organizers and advocates. By partnering with Strengthening Nations and the United Methodist Church of Gallup, they have been able to utilize a community church as a distribution and storage center. Since they launched their COVID-19 response, they have distributed food, PPE, firewood, and baby supplies to almost 500 families.

10. Navajo & Hopi Families COVID-19 Relief Fund

Navajo and Hopi tribal members started The Navajo & Hopi Families COVID-19 Relief Fund to support the elderly, families with children, and immunocompromised and mobility impaired individuals. Funds raised go toward the purchase of groceries, water, health supplies, and other necessities. Since the campaign was launched on March 15th, it has raised over US\$3 million, and organizers are forming a nonprofit to manage its funds and distribution efforts.

11. NDN Collective

An Indigenous-led organization, the NDN Collective works to build Indigenous power through organizing, activism, philanthropy, narrative change, and capacity-building. As part of Phase I of their COVID-19 Response Project, the Collective secured over US\$2.3 million to support programs and projects that provide immediate relief to tribal communities. Currently, they are distributing funds to support Indigenous artists and Indigenous-led small businesses, but they intend to offer additional service grants in future phases of the Project.

12. Notah Begay III (NB3) Foundation

The Notah Begay III (NB3) Foundation is a Native-led nonprofit that works to improve the health of Native youth. In response to COVID-19, the Foundation launched the NB3 Foundation COVID-19 Response Fund to support families and children in Navajo Nation, New Mexico and tribes in South Dakota. Funds will support access to food and clean water as well as educational resources for students.

13. Northern Diné COVID-19 Relief Effort (NDCVRE)

The Northern Diné COVID-19 Relief Effort (NDCVRE) is a community coalition that offers relief to the Shiprock Chapter area and neighboring communities in the northern Navajo region. The coalition's volunteers deliver care packages that include food, infant formula, and PPE to a list of homebound families in need. NDCVRE also provides assistance to local farmers and ranchers.

14. Partnership with Native Americans (PWNA)

For nearly 30 years, Partnership with Native Americans (PWNA) has provided immediate relief, educational support, and more to 60 Northern Plains and Southwest reservations. As a first responder in its nine priority states, PWNA quickly acted to provide relief to tribal communities impacted by COVID-19. PWNA is delivering food, water, toilet paper, and other essentials to families and elders that face stay at home orders.

15. Seeding Sovereignty

When Seeding Sovereignty noticed that critical financial support was not reaching Indigenous communities in New Mexico, they created the Indigenous Impact Rapid Response Initiative. Through the Initiative, they are able to provide mental health support, supply healthy meal kits to students and elders, and distribute stipends to those who require financial support as a result of COVID-19. Seeding Sovereignty is also providing PPE to frontline medical workers from reservation clinics. They are accepting financial donations and essential supplies to support their efforts.

16. Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples, Inc.

Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples, Inc started the Flicker Fund to provide resources to Indigenous communities around the world who are impacted by COVID-19. Working with trusted Native community partners, Seventh Generation Fund focuses its efforts on elders, multi-generational households, and families with young children. As part of the recent Apsaalooke project, funds were used to deliver food staples, hot lunches, and cleaning products to those on the Crow and Cheyenne Reservations.

17. Torreon Community Alliance

Established over ten years ago, the Torreon Community Alliance is a community development nonprofit. Because Far Eastern Navajo communities are removed from large medical facilities, governmental centers, and food markets, the Alliance hopes to shorten chains of support with the Far East Navajo COVID-19 Response Fund. The Alliance releases funds monthly to purchase food and sanitation supplies for community members in need.

ASC Essential Workers



The Division of Community Development wishes to extend its appreciation to the essential employees with the Administrative Services Center (ASC) who have been on duty since the beginning of the Navajo Nation government closure and COVID19 Emergency for the last six months.

On March 13th, the Navajo Nation announced a temporary reduction of the number of on-duty Executive Branch employees to be more proactive to prevent the potential spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus on the Navajo Nation. ASC Department Manager, Sonlatsa Jim-Martin, and ASC service area managers remained on duty under the leadership of Dr. Pearl Yellowman, Division Director.

The Public Health State of Emergency for the Navajo Nation was issued in response to the growing spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, known as "Dikos Ntsaaígíí-Náhást'éíts'áadah." The national and worldwide concerns regarding the novel coronavirus disease outbreak activated the Incident Command System (ICS) of emergency response on the Navajo Nation and the ASC management team were on standby and ready to assist the Health Command Operations Center.

On March 17th the first confirmed case involving a member of the Navajo Nation tested positive for the COVID-19 coronavirus. The Arizona Department of Health confirmed the positive test result from an individual from the community of Chilchinbeto, AZ which was first reported to the Kayenta Health Center in Kayenta, AZ. The Kayenta ASC staff were responsive to the situation with the leadership of Calvin Tsosie, SPPS.

On March 18th the Division of Community Development programs closed administrative offices and the ASC management team and a couple of ASC staff began implementing remote work plans to respond to the immediate emergency needs of the Chapter communities experiencing the first COVID-19 outbreaks.

On March 19th the Navajo Nation was informed by the Navajo Department of Health and Navajo Area IHS that the total number of positive cases of the COVID-19 coronavirus for members of the Navajo Nation had reached 14. The majority of the 14 cases involve individuals who initially reported their symptoms to the Kayenta IHS Service Unit. Health and emergency officials were taking every precaution to screen and isolate family members and others in the local Chapter communities.

By March 21st the number of positive tests for COVID-19 had reached a total of 26 for residents of the Navajo Nation overall which included 18 cases from the Kayenta Service Unit, 4 from the Chinle Service Unit, 3 from the Tuba City Service Unit, and 1 from the Crownpoint Service Unit. There were no confirmed deaths related to COVID-19 for residents of the Navajo Nation at that time.

During this time, the ASC management team and a couple of ASC staff maintain communication and coordination with Chapter Branch which was established within the Health Command Operations Center. Several Chapters agreed to operate as Staging Posts or distribution centers with the SPPS serving in the capacity and role of Liaison with Chapter leaders and Strike Teams.

By May 3rd, the coronavirus was ravaging the Navajo Nation with over 2,000 members infected and with 70 deaths related to COVID-19. On April 23rd, one of the ASC staff members who worked at the Kayenta ASC service area died. The ASC family was deeply affected by the loss and continue to honor the memory of their coworker during these last six months. We dedicate this story to the ASC essential employees who have been on duty from the beginning of the COVID-19 emergency on the Navajo Nation. Your dedication and commitment to your Chapter communities is greatly appreciated during these difficult times and we recognize you. On August 17th, all the ASC employees returned to the workplace with safety measures in place and can be contacted at the following email addresses:

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Ms. Deidra Dale, Administrative Assistant

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ASC SERVICE AREAS:

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Sharon Loley, Office Specialist

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The Navajo Water Project bridging the water gap for some residents

By MARK DUGGAN • SEP 3, 2020

Most of us take hot and cold running water and a flush toilet for granted. But for some residents of the Navajo Nation, it's a luxury they don't get to enjoy at home. Some studies show up to a third of Navajo households lack indoor plumbing. But several projects now underway are trying to bridge what's known as the "water gap."

Emma Robbins oversees one of them. The Navajo Water Project is part of Dig Deep, a Los Angeles-based non-profit that works to bring reliable water to underserved communities. For Robbins, bringing fresh water to Native American families is personal. A member of the Navajo Nation, she grew up in Tuba City, Arizona, and had grandparents and other family members that didn't have running water.

"I've always grown up with this idea that not having running water is 'normal' on the rez," she explained in an interview with KSUT. "It wasn't until I moved off the reservation as an adult that I saw that's not something that is 'normal' and it shouldn't be normalized."

A 2019 study commissioned by Dig Deep and the U.S. Water Alliance, whose members include public water utilities, showed that more than 2.2 million Americans don't have running water. And Native American households are 19 times more likely to lack indoor plumbing.

To help close the water gap on the reservation, groups like the Navajo Water Project install self-contained water systems at households as an alternative to public utility water.

Since 2015, the organization has placed nearly 300 systems, which consist of a 1,200-gallon underground cistern; pump, heater, filter, and related plumbing works; a sink with hot and cold faucets; and a greywater drain field. The cistern is replenished by a water truck.

"We have a system for families who do have grid electricity. And we have a system for families who need solar panels.

It's not just a copy-and-paste solution," she continued. "The way that these projects and solutions are going to work is when we tailor them for each home."

The Navajo Water Project follows Dig Deep's method of partnering with local governments, often Navajo chapters, to identify eligible households. Another consideration is sustainability; since the cisterns have to be refilled, there must be a nearby source to fill delivery trucks.



A woman tries out a newly-installed faucet in her home on the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Water Project installs self-contained water systems that include a sink, a cistern, pump, heater, and plumbing.

CREDIT DIG DEEP

"In my mind, I would love to go out and install these systems for everybody," Robbins said. "But if we can't consistently fill them up with safe water from a water delivery truck, then that's not going to be a good fit."



Dig Deep/Navajo Water Project crews fill a 1,200-gallon cistern at a home on the Navajo Nation. It's part of a self-contained system that brings potable water to families that lack indoor plumbing.

CREDIT DIG DEEP

COVID has complicated the organization's work. They've stopped installing their usual systems until the pandemic lifts. Now they're focusing on putting in above-ground storage tanks as an emergency response to the virus.

Robbins pointed out that during the coronavirus, they've been unable to enter people's homes. The lack of human interaction disturbs her. She misses seeing a grandmother's delight at turning on a faucet in her home for the first time. Or seeing a child's joy as they fill a cup with cool, clean water.

"Everybody needs to have water," she added. "It's not just about having drinking water, it's not just about being able to clean yourself. It's about having that mental stress lifted from you. When you don't have to worry about paying for water, when you don't have to worry about spending gas money to haul water. It's something that is giving back to you your time. You're able to be with your family and you know that your water is coming from a safe source."

READ MORE AT: <https://bit.ly/2G8UGJr>

'We get scared when we're out of water': Team delivers water, tanks across Navajo Nation

Shondiin Silversmith
Arizona Republic



FROM LEFT: JEREMY BEGAY, ERIC TELLER, AND DEBORAH TSO FILL UP A TANK WITH WATER BEFORE DELIVERING WATER TO FAMILIES IN THE NAVAJO NATION ON SEPT. 1, 2020, AT THE GANADO FIRE DISTRICT STATION IN GANADO, ARIZ. WATER WARRIORS UNITED DELIVERS WATER TO FAMILIES IN NEED ALL ACROSS THE NAVAJO NATION.

SEAN LOGAN/THE REPUBLIC

STEAMBOAT — Gathered by the front door of their home, Bertha Lookingback and her sisters, Ruth and Loretta Keyaanie, watched as several of their empty water barrels were filled with fresh water.

"We get scared when we're out of water," Loretta Keyaanie, 55, said. Their family has to haul water for drinking, cooking, washing and their livestock.

"It is scary," Lookingback, 72, added. When they do run out, they start to panic.

The water jugs varied in size from two gallons to 55, together enough to last a little over a week.

None of their homes on family land in Steamboat has running water, so when their barrels go dry, they have to haul water.

They travel to the chapter house in Steamboat or Cornfields for water. Chapter houses are local community governments on the Navajo Nation.

If the chapter house is closed, they'll visit the windmills near their home, which draw water from wells, but lately, those haven't been producing enough water to fill their jugs.

"All the windmills are out. There's no water," Loretta Keyaanie said.

During their last visit to the windmill, Lookingback said it only pumped about two inches of water into a jug.

So when Zoel Zohnnie and his team, known as the Water Warriors United, drove up the dirt road in a white truck hauling a 500-gallon water tank and offering fresh water, the sisters were extremely thankful.

"Thank you so much with all our hearts. We appreciate it," Lookingback said, and her sisters echoed her sentiment. "We needed help. We were out."

"When we're out of water, we don't feel right," Loretta Keyaanie added. Thanks to the Water Warriors United team, their family doesn't have to worry about hauling water right now.

Water Warriors campaign

Zohnnie is the co-founder of Collective Medicine, a Native American network that gathers resources that benefit and comfort fellow Natives, the website states.

Water Warriors United is a COVID-19 relief campaign established by Collective Medicine that delivers fresh drinking water and donates 55-gallon water barrels to families in need across the Navajo Nation.

Zohnnie was laid off in March, and quarantining at home throughout April. He was restless and noticed that, as organizations worked to provide food boxes and essential items for families across the Navajo Nation, one thing seemed to be missing.

"Nobody was hauling water to families that didn't have running water or people who were living in remote areas," he said. As the owner of a new truck, he wanted to put it to use.

He started a fund-raising campaign and took donations via PayPal, then coordinated with a few locals in Shiprock, New Mexico, and made his first water deliveries to people on the Navajo Nation.

"It was the right thing to do," Zohnnie said. "It kind of took off from there."

Now the Water Warriors United team has delivered water to 54 communities across the Navajo Nation, donated 693 barrels and provided over 150,000 gallons of fresh water, according to Pam Arthur, co-founder of Collective Medicine.

September 2020

The campaign runs off donations, and all donations are now processed through the Collective Medicine website.



VOLUNTEERS WITH WATER WARRIORS UNITED DRIVE TO DELIVER WATER TO FAMILIES ON SEPT. 1, 2020, IN STEAMBOAT, ARIZ. THE GROUP DELIVERS WATER TO FAMILIES IN NEED ALL ACROSS THE NAVAJO NATION.
SEAN LOGAN/THE REPUBLIC

Zohnnie said in the beginning they would get a lot of requests through social media, but that turned out to be too hard to manage. They tried to coordinate his efforts with the local chapter houses, but that also got too complicated.

"Local governments need to do a lot more on a local level to get people to help out here. This should be a tribal program," Zohnnie said.

One day, a community health representative from the Shiprock area reached out to him on social media and told him about elders in the community that needed water. The team was able to get water to them by the next day.

Zohnnie said the health rep already had a list of names and it made maneuvering in the community smoother. They weren't getting lost or losing track of people and were able to get more done. Now he works with local community contacts or community health representatives because they're the ones who know what residents need help.

"There's plenty of community involvement to work around the chapter, which is sad when the chapter should be the main source of all these services," Zohnnie said.

Arthur coordinates the team's schedule, Zohnnie said. She'll inform them what community they're going to and they'll drive out to make the deliveries. Eight volunteers work with Collective Medicine and four of them are drivers making deliveries five times a week.

'Nobody else is doing that'

On a recent morning, Zohnnie and his team drove two trucks for nearly three hours from Farmington, New Mexico, to the Ganado Fire Station in Ganado to fill two 500-gallon water tanks for the day.

One truck had a 500-gallon water tank strapped to the truck bed, while it pulled another 500-gallon tank on a flatbed with a bunch of empty blue 55-gallon water barrels tied beside it.

Zohnnie's truck pulled a 500-gallon water tank on a flatbed, while a few empty water barrels were tied into his truck bed next to his toolbox.

The team worked with a local guide, Steamboat resident Glenda Wheeler, who met up with them at the fire station holding a clipboard with a list of residents from Steamboat chapter house. This is who they'd be visiting in the area.

Wheeler said she heard of the Water Warriors on social media, and with a lot of locals without running water, she knew they would help. She reached out to Arthur and worked out a time to have Zohnnie and his team visit.



FROM LEFT: BERTHA LOOKINGBACK, 72, LORETTA KEYAANIE, 55, AND RUTH KEYAANIE, 78, WATCH AS VOLUNTEERS WITH WATER WARRIOR UNITED FILL THEIR WATER JUGS ON SEPT. 1, 2020, IN STEAMBOAT, ARIZ. THE GROUP DELIVERS WATER TO FAMILIES IN NEED ALL ACROSS THE NAVAJO NATION.

SEAN LOGAN/THE REPUBLIC

September 2020

The trip was the Water Warriors' second to the area. The trucks were led on dirt roads through the Steamboat area by Wheeler. Zohnnie and his team, Eric Teller and Deborah Tso, visited over 10 locations in about six hours. Each location housed a family of at least three to five people, all without running water.

They went through three 500-gallon water tanks and Zohnnie had to break off from the group about two hours into the trip to refill the tank at the fire station.

Most of the residents mentioned that the Water Warriors have been either the only group or the second to bring water to their homes since the pandemic started. Many have had bottle watered delivered and food boxes, but not general purpose water.



JESSE SLIVERS, 61, WATCHES AS ZOEL ZOHNNIE FILLS HIS WATER TANK ON SEPT. 1, 2020, IN STEAMBOAT, ARIZ. WATER WARRIOR UNITED DELIVERS WATER TO FAMILIES IN NEED ALL ACROSS THE NAVAJO NATION. SEAN LOGAN/THE REPUBLIC

The team pulls up to the houses, asking if the family needs water. If they do, they are guided to empty containers. Team members wear masks and maintain social distancing practices while on site. They never go into the house and they request the family remove the lids from their water containers before the containers are filled.

A power-operated pump allows the team to fill whatever water container the family provides, and if the family doesn't have a water barrel, Zohnnie will donate one.

At the last house, the team found Jesse Slivers, 61, from Bear Springs. He lives on his ranch with his wife, daughter and grandson. They haul water for themselves, and for their livestock.

Slivers said they've lived in the area for over 40 years, and still have no access to running water. This is why he's thankful for what Zohnnie and his team are doing.

"It's a relief," he added. "When you live out here you have to adapt and improvise."

Slivers had two 55-gallon water barrels for the water they use in the home. Zohnnie donated another barrel, giving the family access to 165 gallons of water.

Slivers said they often try to haul water once a week, but "it all depends on how much water we use. For the livestock, it's every other day."

They rely on the chapter house for their water. If it's closed, they have to scrounge around for water.

"We wouldn't mind having running water out here," Slivers said. "Unfortunately, we don't. It's good when other people are willing to help out."

They also don't want their water to sit too long inside the barrels because "it goes bad" from being in the heat. They try to keep the barrels in the shade. He has two barrels under a tree near the house and another beside the house door.

After the Water Warriors filled Slivers' drinking water barrels, they offered to empty the few remaining gallons of their tank into his livestock barrels. Slivers accepted and pointed toward the water bins near his sheep corral.

Zohnnie backed his truck up to the corral and unloaded the last of the water they had in the 500-gallon tank.

Zohnnie said Collective Medicine is still new and he hopes it becomes a non-profit that can help Native people by providing them resources that will make them more comfortable, stable and safe.

None of their efforts would be possible without his team, he said, and all the people who got involved to help build their network.

"We've been able to grow the way we have and become what we have because everybody involved has their heart in it," he added.

More information about Collective Medicine and their Water Warriors United Campaign can be found on their website at www.collectivemedicine.net. They have donation pages set up for the water campaign.

Zohnnie and Arthur can be reached via email at ZoelZohnnie@collectivemedicine.net and PamArthur@collectivemedicine.net.

Reporter Shondiin Silversmith covers Indigenous people and communities in Arizona. Reach her at ssilversmi@arizonarepublic.com and follow her Twitter @DiinSilversmith.

READ MORE AT: <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona/2020/09/11/water-warriors-united-team-delivers-water-throughout-navajo-nation/5646206002/>



For the Navajo Nation, a Fight for Better Food Gains New Urgency

As the pandemic has brought home the importance of the global movement for food sovereignty, members are planting and sharing.

Artie Yazzie grows produce for his community in the Arizona section of the Navajo Nation. The determination of growers and gardeners like him keeps the food sovereignty movement alive. Credit...John Burcham for The New York Times

By Amelia Nierenberg

Aug. 3, 2020

THE NAVAJO NATION — When Summer Brown lived in Phoenix, she had no problem finding fresh produce. If the Sprouts supermarket near her home didn't have what she was looking for, she would just drive somewhere else.

This winter, Ms. Brown, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation, moved back to her childhood home in Cornfields, Ariz., to start a small business as a leatherworker. Now, healthy food is harder to find for her two children, Paisley, 6, and Landon, 7. The entire Nation, which stretches 27,000 square miles across Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, has fewer than 15 grocery stores.

"The pickings are kind of slim here," said Ms. Brown, 31. "It's a lot of processed foods, and I try not to feed my family that."

Even before the coronavirus pandemic dealt an exceptionally brutal blow to the Navajo — who call themselves the Diné, which means "the People" — Ms. Brown wanted to grow her own food. She spent last winter collecting seeds from Indigenous seed banks and researching Indigenous methods. Her small garden is already feeding her family, and she is looking forward to the fall harvest.

Her backyard garden isn't meant just to replace a trip to the grocery store. Ms. Brown is part of a movement for food sovereignty, a global effort to give people control of their food supply and nutrition. It is a public health endeavor, an economic reclamation, an environmental protest and for many, a spiritual quest. Gardeners aim to grow healthy foods that are connected to their traditions, and to revive old methods of cultivation.



Summer Brown moved back to the Navajo Nation to reconnect with the land and expose her two children to Diné culture.Credit...John Burcham for The New York Times

September 2020

"I want to show the whole Navajo Nation, and even off the reservation, that you can live with the earth and you don't have to rely so much on the outside to feed yourself," Ms. Brown said. "We have all this land. We should be able to just go outside and get our food."

The small gardens and cornfields rising across the Nation (which the Diné call the Dinétah) are attempts to correct legacies of historical wrongs. Once, the Diné were prosperous gardeners, hunters and stewards of the land. Then the United States government colonized the land and displaced the Diné in the mid-1800s, during what is now known as the Long Walk, to an internment camp at Fort Sumner, N.M. Livestock were killed off. Fields were trampled. And some orchards were lost forever.

Those and other attempts to divorce the Diné from their land and ancestral foodways have also left them vulnerable to the pandemic. Across the United States, Indigenous nations have suffered outbreaks that often appear to be more devastating than those in surrounding cities. But data gaps, population fluidity and under-testing make the scope of infections hard to quantify.

The Diné have weathered curfews and high rates of infection. The Nation is one of the hardest hit areas in the United States: 9,019 people have tested positive and 454 have died of Covid-19, as of July 30, according to the Navajo Department of Health.

Many households do not have running water, at a time when hand washing is critical. Many multigenerational families live together in compounds, which makes social distancing impossible. And for the Diné and many other Indigenous nations, the public health crises caused by food inequality are generations old.



Nate Etsitty teaches young gardeners, and cultivates Indigenous seeds using traditional methods.
Credit...John Burcham for The New York Times

After seeing food shortages during the pandemic, many Diné have started gardens. Normally, they would work communally, but social distancing has required some innovations. This year, Mx. Etsitty (who uses gender-neutral pronouns and titles) has been helping first-time gardeners through the complex processes from afar. Other experienced gardeners, inundated with requests for help, are recording videos.

Felix Earle, 43, one of Mx. Etsitty's closest friends, has been advising gardeners growing Indigenous seeds. In 2015, he found a handful of white corn kernels in a jar, 35 years after his grandmother hid them for safekeeping. He named the strain "Grandma Helen's Corn." Its kernels look like little white teeth, perfect and round.

This year, Mr. Earle, a fashion designer, planted his biggest crop ever. Across his property, stalks of corn are rising, almost 1,000 in all. He turned his discovery into a business, Red Earth Gardens, and gives kernels to interested members of the Nation. This year, for the first time, he ran out.

"It took a deadly virus to make people realize just how important this is, how important it is to grow your own food," he said.

A global Indigenous food sovereignty movement began well before the pandemic. Some point to 2002 as a transitional moment, when representatives from Indigenous nations in 28 countries gathered at Lake Atitlán, in Panajachel, Guatemala, to write a declaration of the right to food.



Felix Earle helped grow a cornfield on land his maternal and paternal grandparents once walked in Ganado, Ariz. He and Mx. Etsitty worked to rehabilitate the land, Red Point Farms, with the assistance of the nonprofit Black Mesa Water Coalition and his father's clan, Waters Edge.
Credit...John Burcham for The New York Times

"We know that food is medicine, but it can also make us more sick," said Denisa Livingston, a leading Diné community health advocate and the Slow Food International Indigenous Councilor of the Global North. "It can contaminate our health and well-being."

With limited sources of income to pay for the gasoline for long trips to faraway stores, families buy cheap bulk foods with a long shelf life, instead of fresh produce. Today, the Diné have high rates of diabetes, heart disease and obesity, conditions that pose a higher risk of complications or death from Covid-19.

"This virus has really shown how fragile and even unreliable the system really is, and how quickly everything can collapse," said Nate Etsitty, 40, a food sovereignty advocate who has been helping Ms. Brown with her garden. "That's what is driving more people to be partially more self-sustained."

September 2020

Many Diné also receive federal food benefits. "You've got to stretch those funds, and the cheapest out there is junk food," said Artie Yazzie, a community gardener, who grows produce for his neighbors.



"People come in here and pick whatever they want," Mr. Yazzie said. "I just leave a sign." Credit...John Burcham for The New York Times

"We have these big old thirst-busters that cost 60 cents, and three people can share it," he added, using a popular term for soda. "So we're going to go ahead and buy that instead of the \$3 water or milk."

Some programs are working to get fresh produce to Diné children. The Community Outreach and Patient Empowerment program, a nonprofit health partnership, provides vouchers for families with young children that are good for buying only fruits, vegetables and traditional foods. The amount, depending on family size, can go up to \$35 a week.



A watermelon plant in the Teesto Community Garden. Credit...John Burcham for The New York Times

But when children turn 5, they are usually no longer eligible for vouchers. Dr. Lydia Kim, a pediatrician with the Indian Health Services, sees the damage that unreliable access to food and water can wreak on her patients. Some who struggle with obesity drink five or six sodas a day.

With help from community partners, Dr. Kim started the Shiprock Area Food Access Coalition in 2018 to increase access to healthy food and water. She asked managers of a local grocery to move produce to the front of the store, so more shoppers might see and buy them. The managers told her their hands were tied, she said, because soft-drink companies owned the displays near the entrance. (The store manager did not respond to multiple texts seeking comment.)

Dr. Kim said she has seen many more sugary-drink displays in grocery stores in Shiprock, N.M., than in those outside the reservation. "There's predatory targeting and a complete lack of choice."

Ms. Livingston and members of the Diné Community Advocacy Alliance lobbied the Navajo Nation government to pass the Healthy Diné Nation Act of 2014. It lead to an elimination of a tax on healthy foods, while imposing a 2 percent tax on unhealthy foods, like soda.



Some gardens at schools and senior centers have been closed since March. The Teesto Community Garden, which Mr. Yazzie tends, has remained opened through the pandemic. Credit...John Burcham for The New York Times

The tax revenues help fund community wellness and food sovereignty projects like the Teesto Community Garden, in the Arizona section of the Nation. Last year, Mr. Yazzie, 39, the community gardener who oversaw the garden as a seasonal employee, would borrow the municipal pickup truck to fill an 1,800-gallon tank with water and irrigate the garden. In the summer, he goes through about 3,000 gallons each week.

For much of this year's planting season, the truck was tied up delivering emergency provisions to families in need. But for Mr. Yazzie, planting was still a priority.

At first, he recruited his cousin to help fill a 300-gallon barrel each week. They contributed part of their federal stimulus checks to repair a 600-gallon water tank and trailer, burning through expensive gas as they drove back and forth.

READ MORE AT: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/03/dining/navajo-nation-food-coronavirus.html>

Census Workers On The Navajo Nation Race To Catch Up With Less Than A Month To Finish Count



Hatchita is a census-designated place on the Navajo Nation in San Juan County, Utah. The nation has some of the lowest census response rates in the country, and some are worried there won't be enough time to get an accurate count. The population in Hatchita was 266 according to the 2010 census. Kate Groetzinger/KUER

By Kate Groetzinger

Published September 2, 2020 at 7:33 PM MDT

The Navajo Nation's census self-response rate is lagging far behind the rest of Utah. Only around 18% of households on the Nation have filled out the census so far, compared to nearly 70% statewide.

Part of the reason that number is so low is that most Navajo residents weren't able to respond to the questionnaire until mid-June because they don't have standard street addresses. Workers began delivering packets to homes with a special code identifying their location on June 11. The Nation's response rate at that time was just 0.8%.

But the Tribe's 2020 census director, Arbin Mitchell, said that even after receiving the packets, not everyone knew what to do with them.

"For the previous census, you knock on the door, somebody answers, you tell them 'Here's the packet,'" Mitchell said. "But because of COVID we just hung it on the door handle, so a lot of our elders probably wondered 'What is this?'"

The self-response rate on the Navajo Nation was up to 15% at the beginning of August, when census workers started conducting in-person questionnaires for the Bureau's non-response follow up operation. So far, workers have visited about a third of households on the reservation, according to numbers released by the Bureau this week, bringing the total response rate for the Nation up to 52.8% as of Sept. 1.

While that's a big improvement, it still lags behind the state's current rate of 87%.

Earlier this spring, the U.S. Census Bureau announced the non-response follow up operation would be extended through Oct. 31 to make up for COVID-19 related delays. But the Bureau decided to move the deadline up to the end of this month to accommodate the White House's request that they deliver population numbers for redistricting before President Trump leaves office.

That cuts the non-response follow-up period to 57 days – about half of what it was during the last census – and could mean a huge undercount on the Navajo Nation, according to the tribe's Census Liaison, Norbert Nez.

"The time is very short," Nez said. "We have to hope for a miracle to get everything completed."

The Navajo Nation joined a federal lawsuit this week to restore the Oct. 31 deadline, according to James Tucker, vice chair of the Census National Advisory Committee. Tucker also serves as a pro-bono attorney for the Native American Rights Fund, and said shortening the non-response follow up period could lead to an undercount in many tribal areas.

"Literally tens of millions of dollars will be lost, especially for larger reservations like the Navajo Nation," Tucker said. "It really matters."

Navajo people could also lose political representation through federal, state, and local redistricting processes, he added.

READ MORE AT: <https://www.kuer.org/news/2020-09-02/census-workers-on-the-navajo-nation-race-to-catch-up-with-less-than-a-month-to-finish-count>

Bulletin Board

NTUA connects 223 families to electric grid and continues to make progress with water and wifi access projects with CARES Act funds

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer received an update report from Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, indicating that NTUA has connected 223 homes to the electric grid, upgraded 30 water wells, continues to install up to 150 water cistern systems, and continues to make progress using CARES Act funds.

NTUA utility crews continue to work 10-hour days, weekends, and holidays to complete projects.

NTUA is planning to extend electricity to 510 families, which includes over 350 families that were identified during the 2020 LIGHT UP NAVAJO II application process. In addition, NTUA continues to accept applications from residents for its residential solar program, which was allocated \$35.1 million in CARES Act funds. For more information about eligibility for the solar program, please visit www.ntua.com under CARES Act-NTUA Projects.

"NTUA is doing a great job in partnering with the Navajo Nation to expedite the right-of-way processes and other requirements to connect many homes to the electric grid. We are very grateful to all of the NTUA crews and management for moving quickly to move forward with projects that will provide more electrical power, water resources, and internet access for our communities. We are hopeful that our people will have access to electricity and water to help minimize the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are optimistic that NTUA will be able to connect electricity for well over 500 families by the end of the year," said President Nez.

NTUA was approved to receive \$13.8 million for power line projects, \$24.7 million to increase overall electric grid capacity, \$20.9 million for cistern systems, \$18.6 million for wastewater systems, and \$32.8 million for wireless and broadband expansion from the CARES Act funds.

"I commend NTUA for putting together a plan that leverages all of the available resources and CARES Act dollars for the benefit of the Navajo people. Their utility crews are spending many hours away from their families to help other families – that's what we need more of, people helping other people during this pandemic to help us overcome the challenges. We look forward to seeing more progress in the weeks and months ahead," stated Vice President Lizer.

Among numerous water projects, NTUA utility crews are in the process of replacing motors and pumps for up to 45 targeted water wells, and working with Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority to install 150 water cistern systems where there is no water available for household drinking water, and bathroom and kitchen usage. Other projects include renovations and upgrades of regional water stations, construction of several new watering points, converting off-line-wells to watering loading stations for livestock, water well renovations, replacement of exposed water lines, and more.

NTUA has also established 32 free wifi hotspots in various communities across the Navajo Nation to help students, parents, and teachers with online learning. NTUA and NTUA Choice Wireless are assessing the possibility of installing additional wifi hotspots due to increased demand and usage. NTUA is also awaiting the arrival of new materials and equipment to construct new towers in several communities.

Read more at: [https://www.navajo-nsn.gov/News%20Releases/OPVP/2020/Sep/FOR%20IMMEDIATE%20RELEASE%20-%20-%20NTUA%20connects%20223%20families%20to%20electric%20grid%20and%20continues%20to%20make%20progress%20with%20water%20and%20wifi%20access%20projects%20](https://www.navajo-nsn.gov/News%20Releases/OPVP/2020/Sep/FOR%20IMMEDIATE%20RELEASE%20-%20NTUA%20connects%20223%20families%20to%20electric%20grid%20and%20continues%20to%20make%20progress%20with%20water%20and%20wifi%20access%20projects%20)

Federal Government Awards \$45 Million To Navajo Nation Drinking Water Project

By KNAU STAFF • SEP 2, 2020

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has awarded more than \$45 million to a Phoenix-based contractor to construct water-pumping plants on the Navajo Nation.

Water from the San Juan River will be pumped via a new system to 43 Navajo chapters and the City of Gallup, N.M.

They'll be located near the communities of Sheep Springs, Twin Lakes and Coyote Canyon in New Mexico. Officials say the goal is provide clean, reliable water sources to residents on the Navajo Nation.

The project will pump water from the San Juan River to 43 tribal chapters and the City of Gallup, serving an area roughly the size of New Jersey. It will include 300 miles of pipeline, water storage tanks and treatment and pumping facilities. Construction is expected to take up to three years.

READ MORE AT:

<https://www.knau.org/post/federal-government-awards-45-million-navajo-nation-drinking-water-project>

2 universities team up to provide water to Navajo Nation

Posted: Sep 22, 2020 / Updated: Sep 23, 2020

NAVAJO NATION (KRQE) – Two New Mexico universities are teaming up to help the Navajo Nation. New Mexico Tech and Navajo Technical University signed an agreement Tuesday starting a project to improve the availability of clean water on the Navajo Nation. They'll figure out which wells would benefit most from filtration technology and provide new water sources to areas in need. The agreement is set for two years.

Read at: <https://bit.ly/3i8hOVD>

Bulletin Board

Gov. Ducey signs proclamation to declare Oct. 12 Indigenous People's Day



Arizona state Sen. Jamescita Peshlakai. (Facebook Photo/ Jamescita Peshlakai)

initiative to change Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day recognize the history of the "First Americans."

"I'm grateful to our governor for signing this proclamation," Peshlakai said in a press release.

Arizona state senator launches effort for statewide Indigenous People's Day

"This has been an effort close to the hearts of many Indigenous people. It is time that we move beyond Columbus Day and onto a day that celebrates Indigenous people."

Campaigns to change the name have said the federal holiday honoring Columbus overlooks a painful history of colonialism, enslavement, discrimination and land grabs that followed the Italian explorer's 1492 arrival in the Americas.

To celebrate the proclamation, Peshlakai, Indigenous Peoples' Initiative President Dylan Baca and community members will hold an event at the Heard Museum on Sept. 29 at 9:30 am

Read at: <https://ktar.com/story/3579601/gov-ducey-signs-proclamation-to-declare-oct-12-indigenous-peoples-day/>

PHOENIX – Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey signed a proclamation Tuesday to declare Oct. 12 Indigenous People's Day in the state.

The proclamation, which was proposed by Arizona state Sen. Jamescita Peshlakai, says Arizona recognizes "indigenous people were the first inhabitants of the America" and acknowledges the historic injustices they suffered.

Peshlakai, who is also a member of the Navajo Nation, launched an

Day to Indigenous People's

Day

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September 2020

PERSONNEL NEWS

DCD OPEN POSITIONS

POSITION TITLE	LOCATION	PAY RATE	CLOSING DATE
Administrative Service Centers			
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)	Crystal, NM	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
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Alamo, NM	25,854.40	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
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Coalmine Canyon, AZ	25,854.40	OUF

(OUF) Open Until Filled

(S) Sensitive Position (subject to background check)

Closing Dates may change due to 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



A person who
never made a
Mistake
never tried anything new.

-Albert Einstein

Navajo Nation Census Information Center News

National Hunting and Fishing Day: September 26, 2020

SEPTEMBER 26, 2020

RELEASE NUMBER CB20-SFS.121

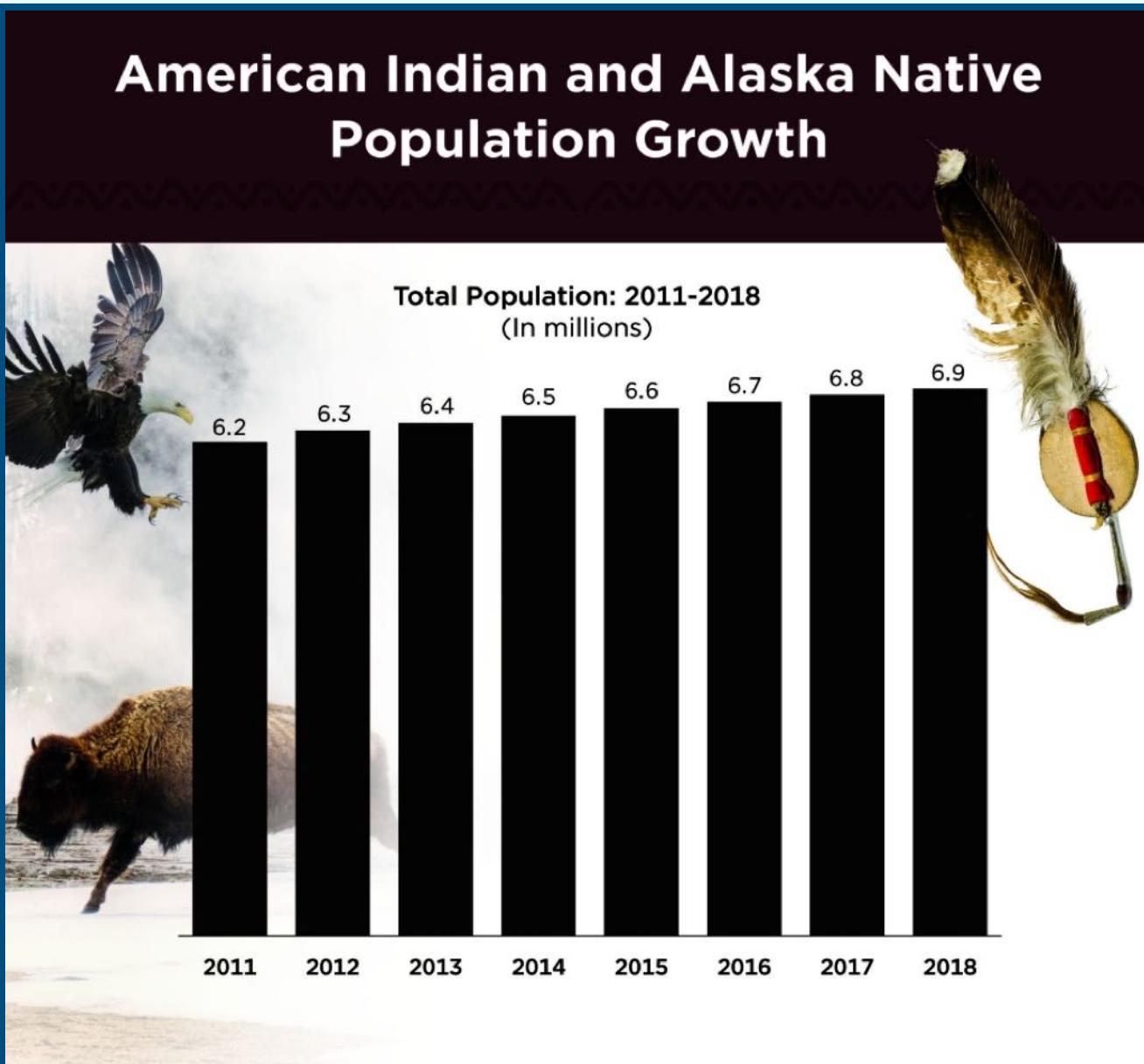
From uscode.house.gov, Joint Resolution, Public Law 92-285:

In 1972, Congress resolved, "That the President of the United States declare the fourth Saturday of September 1972 as 'National Hunting and Fishing Day' to provide that deserved national recognition, to recognize the esthetic, health and recreational virtues of hunting and fishing, to dramatize the continued need for gun and boat safety and to rededicate ourselves to the conservation and respectful use of our wildlife and natural resources."

From The American Presidency Project, Proclamation 9935—National Hunting and Fishing Day, 2019:

"Since our Nation's earliest days, hunting and fishing have remained enduring pastimes that are inextricably linked to the American experience. For the first American settlers and Native Americans, hunting and fishing were a means of survival. Today, hunters and anglers of all ages carry on these traditions in the spirit of rugged individualism to provide for their families and to show the next generation of Americans the splendor of the great outdoors. On National Hunting and Fishing Day, we celebrate their stewardship of the natural world, their contributions to our thriving economy, and America's abundant natural resources and beauty."

READ MORE AT: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/stories/hunting-fishing-day.html>



The 2020 Census

4 Ways to Respond



1. Secure Internet

New and Quick, Respond Online. It's safe, secure and confidential. Your information and privacy are protected. It's economical both for you and for the taxpayers. It's greener saving trees and it's user friendly—offering you help screens and the ability to review your answers.



2. Respond by Phone

Our enumerators are ready to take your information question by question from the convenience of your phone.



3. Respond by Mail

Wait until you receive your paper form through the mail or dropped at your residence. It can be filled out at home and dropped into your mailbox or post office.



4. In-person Interview

Our enumerators will visit and quickly interview residences that choose not to self respond.

Respond today at **2020census.gov**
or call **844-330-2020**

Each completed survey
is a building block to
a better America.

Shape
our future
START HERE >



Avoid Large GATHERINGS



The more people you interact with at a large gathering (flea markets, ceremonies, family celebrations, in-person church services, and others), and the longer the interaction lasts, the higher risk of becoming infected and spreading COVID-19.



HERE'S HOW YOU CAN STAY SAFE:

- Avoid large gatherings
- Protect our elders and people with underlying health conditions by wearing a mask and staying at least six feet apart
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Frequently clean and disinfect high-touched surfaces and objects
- Discourage handshaking and hugs
- Avoid food sharing with people you do not live with
- Celebrate with a phone or video call

AVOID HAVING VISITORS AT HOME TO #STOPTHESPREAD

Visitors are strongly discouraged from visiting individuals who are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Help protect adults 65 and older and individuals with severe chronic medical conditions, such as heart or lung disease, and diabetes. If you have to visit someone, make sure it's an emergency and visit outside within 6 feet distance apart.



Here are some tips to avoid having visitors at home:

- Make and post a sign on your door or at the entrance of your homestead that you are not allowing visitors
- Let visitors know you prefer a phone call instead
- Notify visitors that they can leave mail or supplies, such as care packages, outside by the door
- Let visitors know they should wear a mask at all times when delivering items



Family members or others should not visit anyone when:



- They are showing symptoms of COVID-19
- They have traveled in hot-spot areas
- They have had close contact with a positive COVID-19 person



IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW NEEDS HELP DEALING WITH STRESS OR THE EMOTIONAL EFFECTS OF COVID-19 HERE ARE SOME RESOURCES:

Navajo residents can also call
Navajo Regional Behavioral Health Center at
(505) 368-1438 or
(505) 368-1467, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.,
Monday-Friday (MDT)

After 5 p.m., Monday - Friday (MDT)

Chinle Region:

(928) 551-0713

Dilkon and Tuba City Region:

(928) 551-0624

Farmington, Kirtland, and Shiprock Region:

(928) 551-0508

Shiprock and Red Mesa Region:

(928) 551-0394

September 2020



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

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