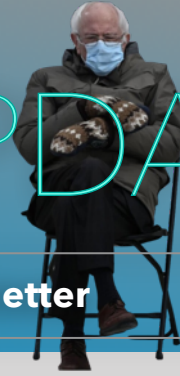


# COMMUNITY UPDATE



Division of Community Development Newsletter

JANUARY 2021

## In this Issue

- **Thank You Essential Workers!**
- **Crownpoint Wellness Center Completed during the Pan**
- **Navajo Nation Begins Mass Vaccinations After Lifting Lockdown Order**
- **Navajo Nation Council approves Covid-19 chapter heavy equipment purchases and funding for emergency water projects**
- **Nation, New Mexico reach multi-million dollar settlements over mine spill**
- **Bulletin Board**
- **Personnel News**
- **Navajo Nation Census Information Center News**
- **Navajo Nation Dikos Ntsaaigii-19 (COVID-19) Stuation Report # 336**
- **Social Distancing is Beautiful**
- **T'ááshoodí Wear a Mask**
- **Avoid Having Visitors at Home to #STOPHESPREAD**
- **COVID-19 Information and Flyers**

## Did You Know..

..there are two basic "snow" terms in Navajo. One refers to snow lying on the ground, and the other refers to falling snow. In Navajo, the "falling snow" term is chíil (usually used in the verb form níchíil "it is snowing" or "the snowstorm has arrived"), and the "snow on ground" term is yas in the western dialect and zas in the eastern.

<https://bit.ly/3rcrXFE>.

## Events:

**February: Atsá biyáázh - "eaglets hatching"**

**February 2: Groundhog Day**

**February 7: Superbowl Sunday**

**February 12: Chinese New Year**

**February 14: Valentine's Day**

**February 15: President's Day (NN Holiday)**

## Thank You Essential Workers!!

The Division of Community Development (DCD) Executive Director, Dr. Pearl Yellowman, and Sonlatsa Jim-Martin, Department Manager II for the Administrative Services Centers (ASC) would like to extend recognition and appreciation to all the Essential Workers who were on duty during 2020 at the ASC Offices and at the 110 Chapters.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



### Crownpoint Wellness Center Completed During Pandemic

The conception of the NN Wellness Center – Crownpoint began in 2004 by the Crownpoint Chapter. The Crownpoint Chapter then began seeking the assistance of Eastern Regional Business Development Office to plan, design and construct the facility.

-- PAGE 4 --



### Navajo Nation Begins Mass Vaccinations After Lifting Lockdown Order

NAVAJO NATION (KRQE) – More homes on the Navajo Nation will now have electricity. Utility Authority crews have been working weeklong shifts through winter conditions to complete an electric line project.

-- PAGE 6 --

# THANK YOU ESSENTIAL WORKERS!



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**DOJ CHAPTER UNIT**

The Navajo Nation Department of Justice (DOJ) Chapter Unit was launched in November 2019. The Chapter Unit provides legal advice to Chapter Officials and the Chapter Administration for all 110 Navajo Nation Chapters. Since the Administrative Service Centers (ASC) within the Division of Community Development provide technical assistance to Chapters, the Chapter Unit also provides legal advice to the ASC Staff. Rodgerick Begay, Assistant Attorney General. DOJ Chapter Unit staff can be emailed at: Rodgerick Begay <[rbegay@nndoj.org](mailto:rbegay@nndoj.org)> and Cynthia Freeman <[cfreeman@nndoj.org](mailto:cfreeman@nndoj.org)>

**Thank you also to all the other essential workers  
within DCD and across the Navajo Nation!**

# Crownpoint Wellness Center Completed During Pandemic

CPMD- Arthur Moore

The conception of the NN Wellness Center – Crownpoint began in 2004 by the Crownpoint Chapter. The Crownpoint Chapter, with the assistance of the Eastern Regional Business Development Office, began to plan, design and construct the facility. The construction documents had been completed by 2012 and the Chapter began seeking funds for the construction phase of the project.

In July 2016, Capital Projects Management Department (CPMD) began its involvement in the construction phase of the project. This included the Crownpoint Chapter, Eastern Regional Business Development Office, and Honorable Council Delegate Jonathan Perry to coordinate and strategize how the needed construction funds would be utilized. The State of New Mexico Tribal Infrastructure Funds appropriated \$2.2 million dollars for construction of the facility. At this point, it was determined that additional funding would be needed to complete the entire construction phase of the project. Although construction documents had been previously prepared, they were deemed insufficient for use in construction and required much updating by the previous Architect who developed those construction documents.

After much review, the Navajo Nation Department of Justice (NNDOJ) strongly advised CPMD to begin this project from scratch with programming, planning, design and construction. CPMD then regrouped with the Crownpoint Chapter to strategize and seek alternatives on how to procure due to the NM Appropriation deadline set on the funding.

The Crownpoint Wellness Project secured additional construction money from the Navajo Nation Capital Outlay Match funding in 2018 in the amount of \$3.5 million dollars.

At this point it was determined the most strategic method of project delivery would be to procure for Design/Build Services that would be architecturally driven. This was presented to Department of Justice for their recommendations on how to approach this.

CPMD procured and entered into a third-party contract for Design/Build Services with LAM Corporation of Gallup, New Mexico. It was at this stage; Architect Loren Miller began the planning and programming stage of the project and provided a schematic floor plan for the project stakeholders to review and approve.

In October 2018, LAM Corporation began work on the site to prepare for the construction phase of the project. This began the construction of the facility; all construction activities went on and all construction services and construction administrative services by LAM Corporation and CPMD continued to completion. Construction was 100% completed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Program moved in and now occupies the facility.



January 2021



Those involved in the development of this project are John Largo, Honorable Jonathan Perry, Honorable Mark Freeland, Rita Capitan, Leonard Perry, Aaron Edsitty, Sylvia Billie, Randall Comb, Edward Preston, Sherilyn Yazzie, James Adakai, Dr. Pearl Yellowman and Arthur Moore.



# Navajo Nation Begins Mass Vaccinations After Lifting Lockdown Order



Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez receives the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in late December at Gallup Indian Medical Center in Gallup, N.M. Noel Lyn Smith/USA Today Network via Reuters

The Navajo Nation has lifted a strict weekend curfew that has been in place for months to expand COVID-19 vaccination efforts. Like much of the country, the Navajo Nation had its worst coronavirus surge at the end of last year. But now, more than 1 in 5 residents have received at least one dose of a vaccine — a much higher level than most states so far.

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez told NPR's All Things Considered that now is not the time to let up on taking individual precautions but that the inoculation campaign is moving swiftly.

"We're going to be focusing on mass vaccinations and these vaccination blitz [events] on Saturday and Sunday," Nez said.

The Navajo Nation has been especially hit hard by the coronavirus. In May, it had the highest per capita infection rate in the United States.

Nez said that so far, one of the main barriers health officials are trying to overcome is vaccine hesitancy, especially among older people. So in an effort to boost confidence in the vaccine, Nez said he rolled up his sleeve and got vaccinated. "We televised it," he said. "I think we brought some of the people who were on the fence to take the vaccine."

## Interview Highlights

What kind of other unique challenges have you faced in getting the vaccine distributed across the reservation?

Here on the Navajo Nation, those challenges are to get the shots into the arms of those that are living in the rural parts of the Navajo Nation that may not have vehicles or choosing to stay there, away from the high-populated areas, so that's been a challenge.

And now with the weather — we got mud and snow, and it's starting to be a challenge to get some of those folks their second dose, because there's a window right, depending on which vaccine you're using. And so we're talking with them and those patients, and we're even trying to encourage them to come to some of these sites to get their second doses as well.

The vaccine will go a long way, but I'm sure your health officials will say it's not the only thing that will resolve the pandemic. What else needs to happen for life to feel normal again on your reservation?

We just need the states around us, the non-Native communities to do the same, take this virus seriously. For example, the state of Arizona — they don't mandate masks; they don't have businesses doing strict protocols. And we're like an island, the Navajo Nation within these three states [Arizona, Utah and New Mexico]. If other areas around us are not taking it seriously, it does impact the Navajo Nation.

I appreciate the state of New Mexico, the governor there. They have a mask mandate; they're doing everything they can, and we're working together on the outreach — getting the information out to our people about COVID, about testing, about vaccinations.

But like I said, our focus here is on the health and well-being of our Navajo people.

Jonaki Mehta and Patrick Jarenwattananon produced and edited the audio story. Farah Eltohamy produced the Web story.

READ MORE AT: <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2021/01/29/962108912/navajo-nation-begins-mass-vaccinations-after-lifting-lockdown-order>

# Navajo Nation Council approves Covid-19 chapter heavy equipment purchases and funding for emergency water projects



WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Addressing immediate heavy equipment needs and emergency water projects funding for Navajo communities, the Navajo Nation Council voted to allocate \$63 million from the Navajo Nation's SÍhásin Fund on Friday, Jan. 15, as part of the ongoing response to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. The purchases are expected to improve local government responses to essential services called-for by the Navajo public.

"This rescue package uses the Navajo Nation's funds to further extend support to critical emergency water projects and local heavy equipment needs," said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaali, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh), sponsor of Resolution No. CJA-01-21 (Legislation No. 0309-20). "Every Navajo community is unique and this funding is intended to build local capacity in responding to this pandemic. This is especially true for our most rural areas that are doing their best to fill in the gaps in direct services that may not be available from Window Rock."

Included in CJA-01-21, additionally cosponsored by Council Delegates Daniel Tso (Littlewater, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake, Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Ojo Encino, Counselor) and Mark Freeland (Becenti, Lake Valley, Náhodishgish, Standing Rock, Whiterock, Huerfano, Nageezi, Crownpoint), are allocations of:

- \$24,058,019.80 for the SÍhásin Fund Chapter Heavy Equipment Expenditure Plan
- \$33,876,114 for the SÍhásin Fund Department of Water Resources Emergency Projects Expenditure Plan
- \$4,974,992 for the SÍhásin Fund Wide Ruins SDS Expenditure Plan
- \$350,000 for the SÍhásin Fund Shiprock Chapter Project Recapture Expenditure Plan
- Total: \$63,259,125.80 (Note: Final amount pending quality control adjustments and certification)

Speaker Damon explained at the Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) on Dec. 15, 2020, that communities face a dire need for backhoes, and the trucks and trailers necessary to haul them, to serve families of those lost to Covid-19 and others experiencing hardship during the pandemic.

"All our relatives who have gone on their journey into the next world, their families are needing assistance with backhoe services. There's not that many out there," said Speaker Damon. "Funds for infrastructure and heavy equipment are needed as quickly as possible. Everywhere, there's a dire need for these services, especially in battling Covid."

President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer indicated to the Council, during its discussion at the Resources and Development Committee (RDC), that heavy equipment and water projects funding should be put off until Congress appropriates more Covid-19 response funding. Their memorandum, dated Dec. 16, 2020, stated, "...we're optimistic that Washington will do the right thing and pass the second round of funding to help with our needs."

Though also optimistic, Council Delegate Thomas Walker, Jr. (Birdsprings, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Coalmine Canyon, Cameron) pointed out the Navajo Nation's experience with the CARES Act, which required heavy federal lobbying and eventually a lawsuit in order for response funding to be released to the Navajo Nation.

"We have no idea what the recovery will be like, what it would entail, how long it's going to take to recover from this terrible, dangerous pandemic," said Walker. "It's not hard to imagine those kinds of complications again. Earlier this year, we had to go into lawsuit to stake that claim."

The RDC also heard from Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain) how Navajo communities have immediate needs addressed by the legislation. "Yesterday, I had to help individuals asking how they could find a backhoe to do a gravesite dig. Chapters are closed and counties can't assist," Begay said. The heavy equipment purchases will help address these community needs.

In September 2020, the Navajo Nation Council voted to approve Resolution No. CS-73-20, which allocated \$90 million of Navajo Nation CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act) Funds for Navajo Nation chapter governments to use in addressing specific community needs. Only \$23 million was able to be used before the remainder was reverted to the CARES Fund.

"When the Council approved sending support to local chapters in the late summer, these heavy equipment needs were a big part of boosting local response efforts with CARES Funds. In the case of Crownpoint, the chapter truly struggled to keep up with moving donation supplies, providing hauling services and being there to serve those who needed a place to lay their loved ones to rest. The opportunity to immediately address the needs of the Navajo People was there with the CARES Fund and it's here with this legislation, and, as Navajo leaders, we must support them in every way we can," said Freeland.

In CJA-01-21, funding was approved for requested water trucks that will help increase the frequency of water deliveries to homesites without requiring community members to make costly trips to community water spouts. Such water hauling services have normally been offered by local chapters.

Other chapters requested refrigerated food-transport trailers, skid-steer loaders and assistive vehicles to deliver food, essential supplies and other shipments that benefit community members.

Funding was also allocated for motor graders to clear roadways in Navajo communities. Dirt roads are found in every community on the Navajo Nation and, while they are essential access routes for emergency vehicles, skilled chapter staff cannot provide maintenance without the necessary heavy equipment.

In collecting and processing chapter requests, Navajo Nation Division of Community Development (DCD) Executive Director Dr. Pearl Yellowman said the DCD established a team to move chapter heavy equipment requests along in the CARES Fund procurement process, led by DCD Project Manager Elmer Johnson.

"We had an infrastructure heavy equipment team, we felt very early on that was a big concern by the chapters," said Yellowman. The DCD reconciled requests for chapter purchases and identified any lacking necessary documentation. "We have been putting together, by every chapter, what was submitted," reported Yellowman.

Those requests were submitted by chapters through an online portal set up by the Office of the Controller. Requests in the portal for heavy equipment, which were denied under the CARES Fund, were then used to create the heavy equipment list in CJA-01-21. With assistance from the Office of the Speaker, chapters were able to complete the process of obtaining quotations and other needed documentation.

DCD will administer the chapter heavy equipment program if it is enacted by President Nez.

The legislation approved Friday also contained critical support for emergency water projects through the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources. CJA-01-21 authorizes projects deemed ineligible for CARES Funding due to time constraints, such as cistern projects requiring design and engineering. The resolution also provides funding for contracted projects for which the Navajo Nation faces possible legal repercussions if no funding is authorized.

"Time ran out for chapters to receive their requested heavy equipment under the CARES Fund and for some water projects to be fully completed. This funding, the SÍhásin Fund, was specifically established to support infrastructure and community development, and now this funding is being used so our community leaders and members are better equipped to deal with immediate life-saving needs," said Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Cove, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Red Valley, Tsé'ahnáoozt'í'í, Sheepsprings, Beclabito, Gad'í'áhl/Tó Ko'í), member of the BFC.

The Council also approved an amendment mandating eligible expenditures be reimbursed to the SÍhásin Fund from any federal funding made available through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or through Congressional appropriations for Covid-19 related relief.

The SÍhásin Fund was established by the Navajo Nation Council through Resolution No. CD-68-14 in December 2014. Expenditures that draw from the SÍhásin Fund are subject to the purposes contained in 12 N.N.C. §2502.

The Office of the Controller reported Friday the current unaudited un-appropriated balance of the SÍhásin Fund is \$426,729,713 as of Nov. 30, 2020. Before Friday, a total of 12 previous resolutions authorized SÍhásin Fund expenditures.

Legislation No. 0309-20 was introduced Dec. 8, 2020, and became eligible for action after the mandatory five-day public comment hold on Dec. 14. BFC considered the measure at its Dec. 15 regular meeting, after which the RDC considered the measure on Dec. 16. The legislation was then forwarded to the Naabik'íyáti' Committee and the full Navajo Nation Council on Dec. 23.

After two amendments were issued by the Council, delegates voted to refer the legislation back to the Naabik'íyáti' Committee for further discussion. The Jan. 7 Naabik'íyáti' Committee meeting resulted in two amendments to the legislation when it was then referred to the Navajo Nation Council and reconsidered on Jan. 15.


CJA-01-20 (Legislation No. 0309-20) was approved by the Navajo Nation Council on Jan. 15 with a vote of 20 in favor and 1 opposed with Speaker Not Voting. President Nez will have 10 days to act on the resolution through regular veto, line item veto or full enactment once the legislation is certified and delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President.

Legislation of the Navajo Nation Council is available for public viewing and comment at the Navajo Nation Council's website ([www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)) and through the Diné Bibeelaz'áanii Binaaltsoos (DiBB) legislative tracking system (<http://dibb.nnols.org/publicreporting.aspx>).

**[Update: President Nez signed the Legislation and DCD has already begun mobilizing to do its part to make these projects a success.]**

READ MORE AT: <https://bit.ly/3tdKXWk>





# Navajo Nation, New Mexico reach multi-million dollar settlements over mine spill

The spill released 3 million gallons of wastewater from the inactive Gold King Mine in southwestern Colorado.

**DAN BENDER OF THE LA PLATA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE TAKES A WATER SAMPLE FROM THE ANIMAS RIVER NEAR DURANGO, COLO., AFTER THE ACCIDENTAL RELEASE OF AN ESTIMATED 3 MILLION GALLONS OF WASTE FROM THE GOLD KING MINE, ON AUG. 6, 2015. | JERRY MCBRIDE / THE DURANGO HERALD VIA AP FILE**

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — The Navajo Nation and the state of New Mexico have reached multimillion-dollar settlements with mining companies to resolve claims stemming from a 2015 spill that resulted in rivers in three Western states being fouled with a bright-yellow plume of arsenic, lead and other heavy metals, officials confirmed Wednesday.

Under the settlement with the Navajo Nation, Sunnyside Gold Corp. — a subsidiary of Canada's Kinross Gold — will pay the tribe \$10 million. New Mexico's agreement includes a \$10 million payment for lost tax revenue and environmental response costs as well as \$1 million for injuries to the state's natural resources.

The spill released 3 million gallons of wastewater from the inactive Gold King Mine in southwestern Colorado. A crew hired by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency triggered the spill while trying to excavate the mine opening in preparation for a possible cleanup.

The wastewater made its way into the Animas River and eventually down to the San Juan River, setting off a major response by government agencies, the tribe and private groups.

Water utilities were forced to shut down intake valves, and farmers stopped drawing from the rivers as the plume moved downstream.

The tribe said the toxic water coursed through 200 miles of river on Navajo lands.

"The Gold King Mine blowout damaged entire communities and ecosystems in the Navajo Nation," Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez said in a statement announcing the settlement. "We pledged to hold those who caused or contributed to the blowout responsible, and this settlement is just the beginning."

The tribe's claims against the EPA and its contractors remain pending. About 300 individual tribal members also have claims pending as part of a separate lawsuit.

Nez added: "It is time that the United States fulfills its promise to the Navajo Nation and provides the relief needed for the suffering it has caused the Navajo Nation and its people."

The EPA under the Obama administration had claimed that water quality quickly returned to pre-spill levels. But New Mexico officials, tribal leaders and others voiced ongoing concerns about heavy metals collecting in the sediment and getting stirred up each time rain or snowmelt results in runoff.

State officials said the Animas Valley is now well within irrigation standards. But farmers continue to see lower sales because of the stigma left behind by the spill.

New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas, who has been shepherding the state's legal claims, said in a statement that he was pleased to settle this part of the case and that it marks a step toward holding polluters accountable.

"It is now the U.S. EPA who must step up and take responsibility," Balderas said. "I will continue to fight to protect our most vulnerable communities and pristine environment, especially from the federal government, which should be held responsible to these communities too."

In August, the U.S. government settled a lawsuit brought by the state of Utah for a fraction of what that state was initially seeking in damages.

In that case, the EPA agreed to fund \$3 million in Utah clean water projects and spend \$220 million of its own money to clean up abandoned mine sites in Colorado and Utah.

After the spill, the EPA designated the Gold King and 47 other mining sites in the area a Superfund cleanup district. The agency is still reviewing options for a broader cleanup.

READ MORE AT: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/navajo-nation-new-mexico-reach-multi-million-dollar-settlements-over-n1254169>

# Bulletin Board

## Seth Damon elected to a second term as Speaker of the 24th Navajo Nation Council

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — In the first business item of the 2021 winter regular session of the Navajo Nation Council, Speaker Seth Damon was elected by Council delegates to the Speakership for a second term on Monday. Legislation No. 0007-21, put forward by Council Delegate Rickie Nez (T'iistsoh Sikaad, Nenahnezad, Upper Fruitland, Tsé Daa K'aan, Newcomb, San Juan), facilitated the nomination and election of the Speaker under Title Two of the Navajo Nation Code.

"The Speaker's Office is here to work for you," said Speaker Damon during a presentation following his nomination by Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton (Shiprock). "Some things we can't change immediately, but what we can change are the options for the next seven generations to have a better hope for the future."

Speaker Damon's platform message to the members of the Council began with an emphasis on stopping the spread of the coronavirus (Covid-19) through advocacy, transparency, funding and working together. Overall, Speaker Damon also drew attention to public safety needs, veterans services, economic development and the need for a responsible roads plan.

"It is my greatest honor to be entrusted with the Speaker's role for the Great Navajo Nation for a second term," said Speaker Damon. "I want to thank Honorable Rickie Nez for sponsoring this legislation and Honorable Eugenia Charles-Newton for providing her nomination and heartfelt words."

The full day one of the 2021 winter regular session can be viewed online at: <https://vimeo.com/503589991>.

The election, including the production and collection of voting ballots, was facilitated by the Navajo Election Administration. Though no other delegate was nominated before the Council voted to close nominations, the election proceeded with one name on the ballot.

The Office of Legislative Services then announced 24 delegates voted, 19 in person and 5 through email. 23 ballots voted for Speaker Damon and one ballot was left blank.

The oath of office for the Speaker of the Navajo Nation was administered immediately following the election. Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne administered the oath for Speaker Damon in front of the Navajo Nation Council Chamber.

Special requirements for coronavirus testing and preventative measures for mitigating the spread of infectious diseases were in place on Monday at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber. For delegates not attending the session in-person, ballots and discussion took place from their respective vehicles or remotely.

The election took place in accordance with Title 2 of the Navajo Nation Code, which requires the election of the Speaker as the first order of business at the winter regular session in every odd-numbered year. The Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council's authority is enumerated in Title 2 of the Navajo Nation Code.

Speaker Damon is Bit'ahnii born for Naaneesht' ézhi Táchii'nii. His maternal grandparents are 'Áshijhí and his paternal grandparents are Tsé Nahabilnii.

READ MORE AT: <https://bit.ly/3ct2DHx>

## Sharon Blatchford Retires After 20 Years with DCD

Sharon Blatchford, longtime DCD Office Assistant, has retired after more than 20 years with the Division. She was a familiar face to many since she used to sit by the front entrance to DCD and was the first person people saw as they came into the DCD offices.

Sharon was always friendly and helpful to everyone who stopped by and was one of the people who kept the Division running behind the scenes.

Good luck in your future endeavors Sharon! You will be missed!



## Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer congratulate U.S. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer congratulate the 46th U.S. President Joe Biden and 49th Vice President Kamala Harris, who were sworn-in at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday, to begin their four-year term in the White House.

"On behalf of the Navajo Nation, I congratulate President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris on this historic and remarkable day. Across this country, it is time to come together in unity, to heal, and to move forward to build a better future for our children and the generations to come. First Lady Phefelia Nez and I have a very good relationship with President Biden and First Lady Dr. Jill Biden. We are very happy for them and their family, as well as Vice President Kamala Harris and Doug Emhoff," said President Nez.

He added, "The Biden-Harris team has laid the foundation to work with tribal nations with the 'Biden-Harris Plan for Tribal Nations' that they presented in October. In the midst of a worldwide pandemic we saw Native Americans, especially young voters, turn out in numbers that we have never seen before. The voting power and influence of Native Americans was a key factor in the outcome of the election. Thanks to the organizing from the grassroots level on up, all tribal nations now have a seat at the table. The Navajo Nation will continue to build a strong partnership with the Biden-Harris Administration to empower our Navajo people and all tribal nations in the years to come."

"We offer our prayers to the Biden-Harris Administration as America continues to move forward. We are confident that God will guide us in these times of change. Over the last few years, I have been honored to have good relations with former President Donald J. Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, and the White House. The Navajo Nation will continue its partnership with our federal partners to enhance the lives and living conditions across the Navajo Nation. Each day, our duty is to place Navajo first. Our message to Wááshindoon centers on our Navajo People. We are indestructible as we have learned in the past, because of our culture and heritage. Resiliency runs deep into our mind, heart, and spirit. The Nez-Lizer Administration has been about 'Working Together' since day one. We look forward to working collaboratively with the federal government and congressional leaders on both aisles in Congress," said Vice President Lizer.

As part of the Inaugural Ceremonies, President Nez and First Lady Phefelia Nez were invited to offer a prayer during the 59th Inaugural National Prayer Service, which will be held on Thursday, Jan. 21, 2021 at 8:00 a.m. MST. President Biden will join the virtual event hosted by the Washington National Cathedral, which will be livestreamed at <https://bideninaugural.org/watch>.

President Nez, First Lady Nez, and Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish also took part in a virtual event to honor and remember the over 400,000 American citizens who have lost their lives to COVID-19 across the country.

In October, President Nez met with President Biden and Vice President Harris and highlighted the need for federal partners to work with the Navajo Nation to move forward with infrastructure development projects to provide clean water, electricity, broadband, and roads for more Navajo people. Among other priorities, he also spoke about the need to improve the health care system for tribes to improve health disparities, supporting economic development, educational priorities, remediating uranium mining sites, water rights settlements, solid waste management, and improving public safety.

The Biden-Harris Plan for Tribal Nations states, "Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are committed to upholding the U.S.'s trust responsibility to tribal nations, strengthening the Nation-to-Nation relationship between the United States and Indian tribes, and working to empower tribal nations to govern their own communities and make their own decisions."

The plan states that the Biden-Harris Administration will reinstate the annual White House Tribal Nations Conference, appoint Native Americans to high-level government positions, appoint judges who understand federal Indian law, ensure fulfillment of federal trust and treaty obligations, promote meaningful tribal consultation, defend the Indian Child Welfare Act, and strengthen self-governance. To view the Biden-Harris Plan for Tribal Nations, please visit: <https://joebiden.com/tribalnations/>.

Read more at: <https://bit.ly/3j4zUKk>

# Bulletin Board



## Council votes to purchase D.C. property

By Arlyssa Becenti | Jan 29, 2021

**WINDOW ROCK** - The Navajo Nation is on its way to being the only tribe to own property on Capitol Hill after the Navajo Nation Council barely agreed to pass legislation to purchase property for the Navajo Nation Washington Office.

The debate among delegates was lengthy, but in the end Council approved the legislation with exactly the 16 votes it needed and 7 opposing. The Navajo Nation will soon be the proud owner of a 3,728-square-foot home, built 161 years ago, located behind the House of Representatives. The cost is \$5.1 million, and these funds will come from the Fund Principal of the Land Acquisition Trust Fund.

The Navajo Nation Land Acquisition Trust Fund is managed by the Navajo Land Department for the purchase of lands for the Navajo Nation in accordance with the Navajo Nation Land Acquisition Act, according to the legislation.

“Over a year ago Navajo Nation Washington Office embarked on this journey to find a home for the Navajo people in Washington D.C.,” said Navajo Nation Washington Office Director Santee Lewis. “When the Navajo Nation Council first created NNWO in 1984, Navajo leaders envisioned someday planting the Navajo flag on Capitol Hill.”

Currently NNWO pays \$25,000 a month in rent, not including utilities, which is over \$300,000 per year that can’t be recouped.

Lewis stated that not only will the house be used for offices, but also offering accommodation to Navajo leadership when they begin travelling to D.C. again. It could also serve as an incubator for Navajo students and teachers undertaking projects in the nation’s capital, and enhance advocacy.

But not all delegates were for this purchase. Council Delegate Charlene Tso said she could see both sides, but ultimately she voted red because the money could be better used elsewhere.

“We as council delegates try to listen to our constituents,” said Tso. “I understand the need and see how this infrastructure is going to pretty much pay for itself in years to come. (But) we don’t know how long this pandemic will last. We will not be considerate of the people’s needs.”

She said the money could be used to provide more infrastructure, roads and other projects. When it comes to meeting with dignitaries, Tso said while she was in D.C. the delegates had to seek them out at their offices; they never came to the Navajo Washington Office.

“I would rather put this money toward people who need electricity at this moment,” said Tso.

Other delegates, however, emphasized the sense of pride and symbolism of a Native American tribe staking its claim in Washington. Delegate Pernell Halona said this purchase symbolizes Navajo “making progress.”

“There is no reason why we should not have property in Washington, D.C.,” said Halona. “This is our land. I see it as all of the United States belong to the American Indian ... the first people that owned this land. This is an investment. It’s true it’s the people’s money, but we are trying to make a strong investment for the people.”

This legislation was heavily supported by President Jonathan Nez, who made mention of it in his State of the Navajo Nation address. He noted that Navajo Nation Washington Office played an instrumental role in getting the Utah Navajo Water Rights Settlement Act passed by Congress and signed into law, as well as securing a three-year extension for the federal Special Diabetes Program for Indians, which provides at least \$150 million annually to help fight diabetes.

“These are the types of initiatives that our Washington Office has helped to advance,” said Nez. “With this initiative, we establish ourselves as the only tribe in the United States to own land and property near the Capitol in Washington D.C. and it will help to advance more issues for the Navajo people including more COVID-19 relief and vaccines.”

“The Navajo Nation has spent so much money for decades renting office space, but we will soon have a long-term investment that will build equity and we will see many returns on the investment in terms of the property and our ability to advocate at the federal level.”

The legislation still has to be approved by Nez.

Read more at: <https://navajotimes.com/reznews/council-votes-to-purchase-d-c-property/>

## Joe Biden Adds Several Native Americans to Administration

BY JENNA KUNZE JANUARY 26, 2021

In his first week in office, President Joe Biden appointed three Indigenous members to his roster, including attorneys Robert Anderson (Boise Forte Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe) and Ann Marie Bledsoe Downes (Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska) to the Interior Department, and Wahleah Johns (Navajo) to head the U.S. Office of Indian Energy Programs and Policy.

The Interior Department, slated to be led by first Native American cabinet member and New Mexico Congressman Deb Haaland, announced the bids on Jan. 20, the day Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris took office.

Anderson will serve as principal deputy solicitor, meaning he will advise the Interior Secretary on legal counsel for cases involving the federal government. The Chippewa Tribal member is a professor at Harvard Law School, where he has worked for over a decade. Prior to that, he taught law at University of Washington School of Law and directed its Native American Law Center. Anderson began his career as a staff attorney for the Native American Rights Fund, and previously served as the Association Solicitor for Indian Affairs and Counselor to the Secretary under Interior Secretary for the Clinton Administration, Bruce Babbitt.

Bledsoe Downes was appointed as Deputy Solicitor for Indian Affairs. She currently serves as the executive vice president of community impact and engagement at Ho-Chunk Inc. Simultaneously, Bledsoe Downes is a professor at the Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law at Arizona State University, where she also serves as Director of the Indian Gaming and Tribal Self-Governance Programs. Prior to that, she served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Economic Development for Indian Affairs at the U.S. Department of the Interior, and as Interim Director of the Bureau of Indian Education.

Neither Anderson nor Bledsoe Downes could be reached for comment before press time.

Biden also tapped Navajo member Wahleah Johns to head the U.S. Office of Indian Energy Programs and Policy. As part of her role, Wahleah will promote Indian tribal energy development and efficiency, reduce Indian tribal energy costs and strengthen Indian tribal energy infrastructure, according to the department’s website.

Wahleah Johns is co-founder and director of Native Renewables, a company that brings solar energies to Native communities.

“I feel honored for my nomination to serve in the Biden-Harris administration as the Director of Indian Energy at DOE,” Johns wrote on Twitter over the weekend. “As the original caretakers of this land, I believe Tribes can lead the way to solving our climate crisis and building a regenerative and clean energy future.”

In another historic pick, Biden assigned Navajo Nation’s Dr. Jill Jim to join the administration’s COVID-19 Advisory Board.

Jim serves as the executive director of the Navajo Department of Health. She holds a doctorate in Public Health, a Master’s degree in Health Care Administration and a second Master’s in Public Health from the University of Utah. Her work has included: consulting for Navajo Area Indian Health Service, and epidemiology for the Utah Department of Health.

Jim was not available for comment before press time.

According to the administration’s press release, more than 80 percent of first day appointees were people of color, adhering to “the Biden-Harris commitment to diversity.”

READ MORE AT: <https://nativenewsonline.net/currents/joe-biden-adds-several-native-americans-to-administration>

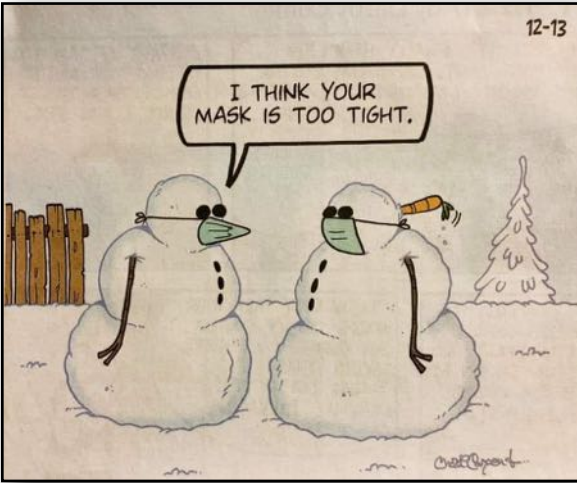
**PERSONNEL NEWS -- DCD OPEN POSITIONS**

<b>POSITION TITLE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>PAY RATE</b>	<b>CLOSING DATE</b>
<b>Administrative Service Centers</b>			
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
Community Services Coordinator (S)	Rock Springs, NM	36,462.40	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Black Mesa, AZ	25,854.40	OUF
Community Services Coordinator (S)	Hardrock, AZ	36,462.40	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)	Becenti, NM	25,854.40	OUF
Community Service Coordinator (S)	Pueblo Pintado, NM	37,7909.28	02/09/2021
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Red Mesa, AZ	25,854.40	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Red Valley, AZ	25,854.40	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Kaibeto, AZ	25,854.40	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Coalmine Canyon, AZ	25,854.40	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Navajo Mountain, AZ	25,854.40	OUF

(OUF) Open Until Filled  
 (S) Sensitive Position (subject to background check)

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**



## Around Half of Unvaccinated Americans Indicate They Will “Definitely” Get COVID-19 Vaccine

### 95% of Those Vaccinated Got or Intend to Get All Required Doses

THOM FILE AND ABINASH MOHANTY | JANUARY 27, 2021

About 8% of American adults reported they had received a COVID-19 vaccination and around half of adults who haven't (51%) indicated they would definitely get a vaccine, while an additional 26% said they probably would, according to U.S. Census Bureau data released today.

The latest revision to Phase 3 of the Household Pulse Survey was implemented on Jan. 6, 2021, and included a new series of questions about COVID-19 vaccinations and attitudes toward the vaccines.

This article is based on analysis of Phase 3 data collected Jan. 6 through Jan. 18, a time period in which the Census Bureau sent invitations to 1,037,972 households and received a total of 68,348 responses.

This content was added in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Based on survey self-reports, these data may differ from other administrative information, particularly those collected during different time periods.

The new vaccination series asks respondents if they had received a COVID-19 vaccination. Those who had are then asked if they plan to receive all required doses.

Adults who have not been vaccinated are asked if they plan to get a vaccine once available. Respondents who express uncertainty are asked the reason(s) for their reluctance.

These data show:

- About 95% of the estimated 19 million who reported receiving a COVID-19 vaccination said they had received or plan to receive all required doses.
- Around half (51%) of the approximately 226 million adults yet to receive a vaccination said they “definitely” plan to receive it when available (Figure 1).
- An additional 26% of adults yet to be vaccinated reported they would “probably” get a vaccine once available, compared to approximately 14% who said they would “probably not,” and 10% who said they would “definitely not” get vaccinated. Overall, these results indicate that around a quarter of all unvaccinated adults will probably not, or will definitely not, receive a COVID-19 vaccine once one is available to them.

### Age Factors

During this initial collection period, the reported likelihood of eventually receiving a COVID-19 vaccination once available varied by age and older adults appear to be more certain they want to get vaccinated.

While about 71% of adults ages 65 and over reported they would “definitely” get a vaccine once available, around half (51%) of those ages 45-64 said the same (Figure 2).

Meanwhile, among those ages 30-44 and 18-29, only 41% indicated they would “definitely” get a vaccine once available (The percentages for these two youngest age groups were not statistically different.)

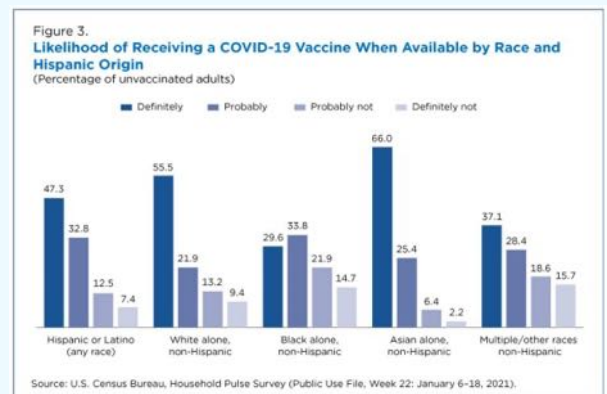
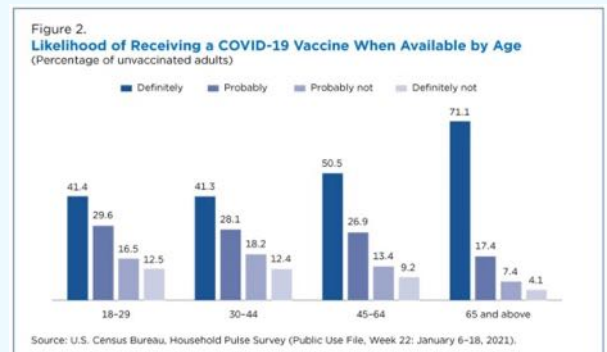
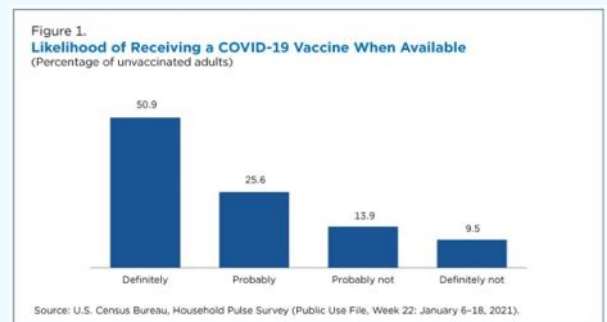
### Racial Differences

The reported likelihood of receiving a COVID-19 vaccination once available also varied by Hispanic origin and race (Figure 3).

About two-thirds of unvaccinated non-Hispanic Asian adults indicated they would “definitely” get a vaccine once available, compared to around 56% of non-Hispanic Whites.

In contrast, only about 47% of Hispanics, 37% of non-Hispanics of other races or two or more races, and 30% of non-Hispanic Blacks said they would “definitely” get a vaccine once available.

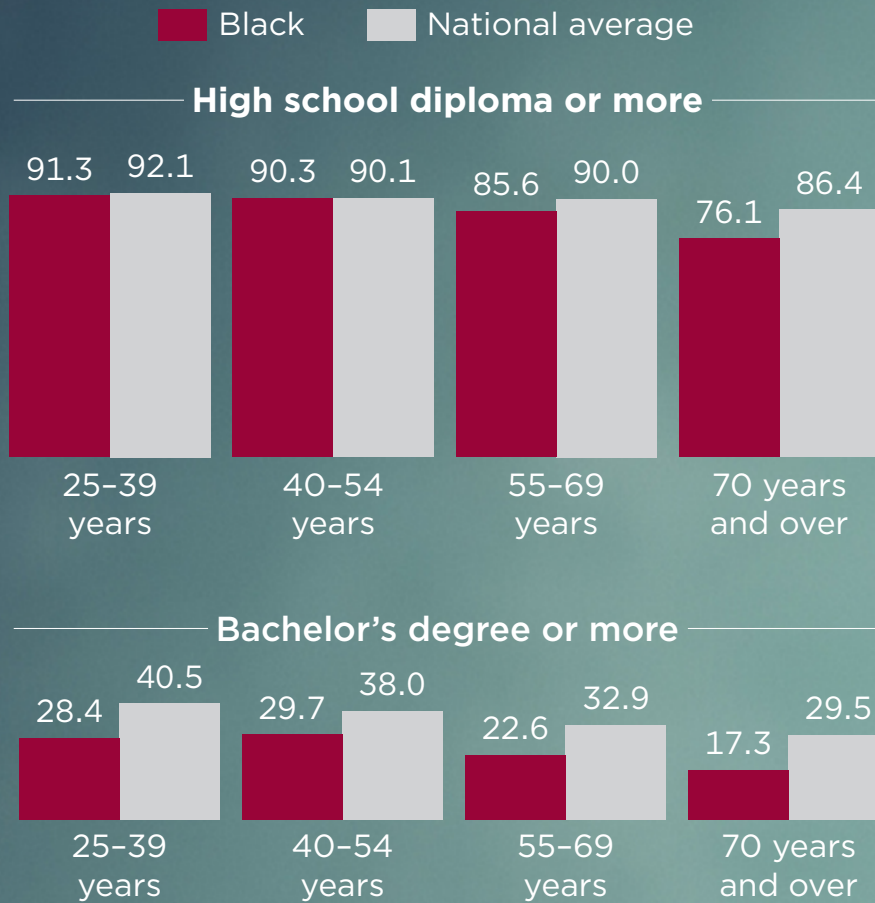
READ MORE AT: <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/01/around-half-of-unvaccinated-americans-indicate-they-will-definitely-get-covid-19-vaccine.html>



HONORING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

# High School Education Gap Narrows Among the Young

Educational Attainment of the Black and Total Populations by Age: 2019  
(In percent)



See full story at <<https://go.usa.gov/xAXjB>>.

Note: For more information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsmar19.pdf>>.

# January 2021

Situation Report #336



## Navajo Nation Dikos Ntsaaígíí-19 (COVID-19)



Last Updated: January 31, 2021

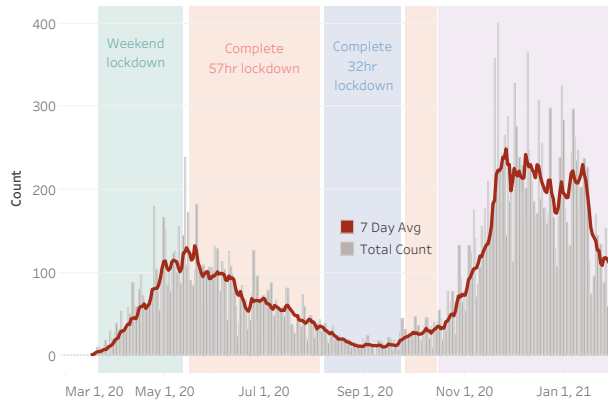
### Navajo Nation Residents

Total Confirmed Cases <sup>1</sup>	Total Recovered	Total Confirmed Deaths
<b>28,325</b>	<b>14,454</b>	<b>1,018</b>
New Cases from Last Update: <b>103</b>		New Death(s) Reported: <b>4</b>
Total Tests Completed <sup>2</sup>	Total Positive Tests <sup>3</sup>	Total Negative Tests
<b>232,173</b>	<b>36,252</b>	<b>185,944</b>

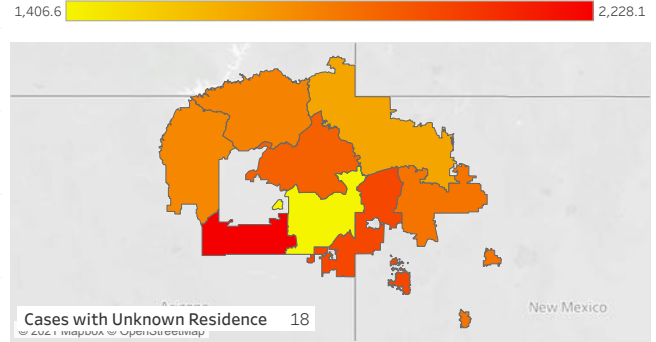
### Service Area Confirmed Cases

Bordertown	Chinle	Crownpoint	Ft. Defiance	Gallup	Kayenta	Shiprock	Tuba City	Winslow
7,916	5,201	2,769	3,280	4,481	2,550	4,866	3,363	1,797

Daily Confirmed Cases on Navajo Nation in All

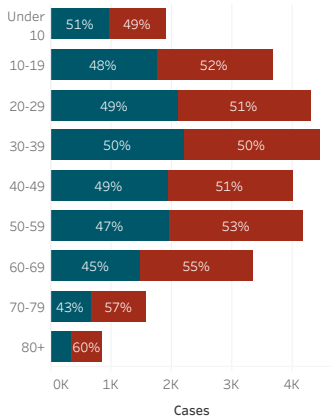


Navajo Nation Service Area Rates per 10,000 population

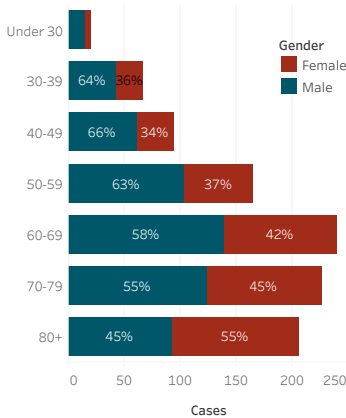


\*Click on service area to display more information. Click outside service area to display Navajo Nation information. Ramah is included with Gallup service area and Alamo, Tohajilee are included with Crownpoint service area.

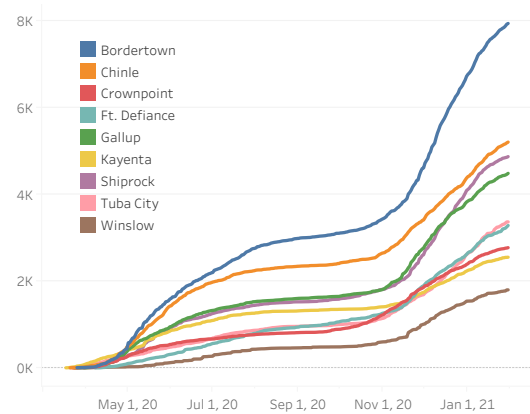
COVID-19 by Age Groups



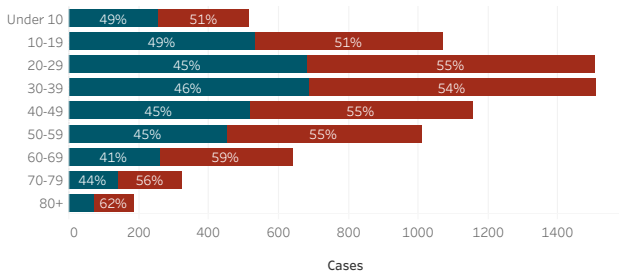
COVID-19 Deaths by Age Groups



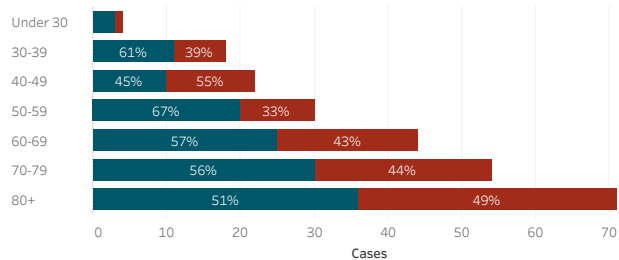
Total Count of Cases since March



Bordertown COVID-19 by Age Groups



Bordertown COVID-19 Deaths by Ages Groups





**Social distancing is beautiful.**

**Get close to what matters, and  
save lives. #DistanceToGetClose**

**#WellnessWarriors**

**#DistanceToGetClose**

**[caih.jhu.edu](http://caih.jhu.edu)**





**T'ááshoodí**  
**Wear a Mask**



**Continue to Wear a Mask before and after your COVID-19 vaccination**

**It is still important to wear a mask, avoid close contact with others, avoid unnecessary travels, and to wash your hands to help prevent the spread of the virus.**

**DIKOS NTSAAÍGÍÍ-19**  
CORONAVIRUS

NAVAJO HEALTH COMMAND OPERATIONS CENTER  
(P) 928.871.7014  
(E) [coronavirus.info@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:coronavirus.info@navajo-nsn.gov)  
[www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19](http://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19)

    
@navajodephealth  
#DineDabizil



# 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



# NAVAJO NATION COVID-19 Vaccine Prioritization: **PHASE 1**

## Phase 1A

Health Care Personnel

Long-Term Care Facilities

## Phase 1B

High Risk Patients

Older Patients: 65+ Years Old

Adults in Congregate Setting

First Responders

Spiritual Leaders  
*Medicine men, Roadmen, Pastors*

Frontline Essential Workers

Essential Infrastructure  
*Public Works, Construction, Water, Gas, Electrical, Roads, Public Transportation, Solid Waste, Telecommunications*

Essential Businesses  
*Healthcare, Government, Schools, Grocery stores, Food banks, Convenience stores, Hardware Stores*

## Phase 1C

Other Essential Workers

Any Remaining Phase 1A or Phase 1B Population



**DIKOS NTSAAÍGÍÍ-19**  
CORONAVIRUS

NAVAJO HEALTH COMMAND OPERATIONS CENTER  
(P) 928.871.7014  
(E) coronavirus.info@navajo-nsn.gov  
www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19



**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



**Talk to your Elders about getting VACCINATED**

Take the time now to talk to your elders about the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The U.S. vaccine safety system makes sure that all vaccines are as safe as possible. After being vaccinated it is important to continue to wear a mask, practice social distancing, wash your hands, avoid visitors and travels, and to clean and disinfect frequently.

**DIKOS NTSAAÍGÍÍ-19**  
CORONAVIRUS

Navajo Health Command Operations Center (928) 871-7014 coronavirus.info@ndoh.org www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19

**DIKOS NTSAAÍGÍÍ-19**  
CORONAVIRUS

NAVAJO HEALTH COMMAND OPERATIONS CENTER (P) 928.871.7014 (E) coronavirus.info@navajo-nsn.gov www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19





# 2021 Goals:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

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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