

COMMUNITY UPDATE

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

October 2024

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Did You Know...

You've Been Tying Your Shoes Wrong Your Whole Life. This is why they keep coming undone. ... The method a lot of us use, once you've progressed from bunny ears, is the system of creating a loop with one lace, then looping the other lace around before pulling it through and creating a second loop. ... "If we start over and simply go the other direction around the bow, we get this, the strong form of the knot. And if you pull the cords under the knot, you will see that the bow orients itself along the transverse axis of the shoe," he continued. "This is a stronger knot. It will come untied less often. It will let you down less, and not only that, it looks better." Now stop tying your shoes wrong.

Read more at: <https://bit.ly/4hqq6lv>

Events:

October: Ghąąjį' - End of Growing Season

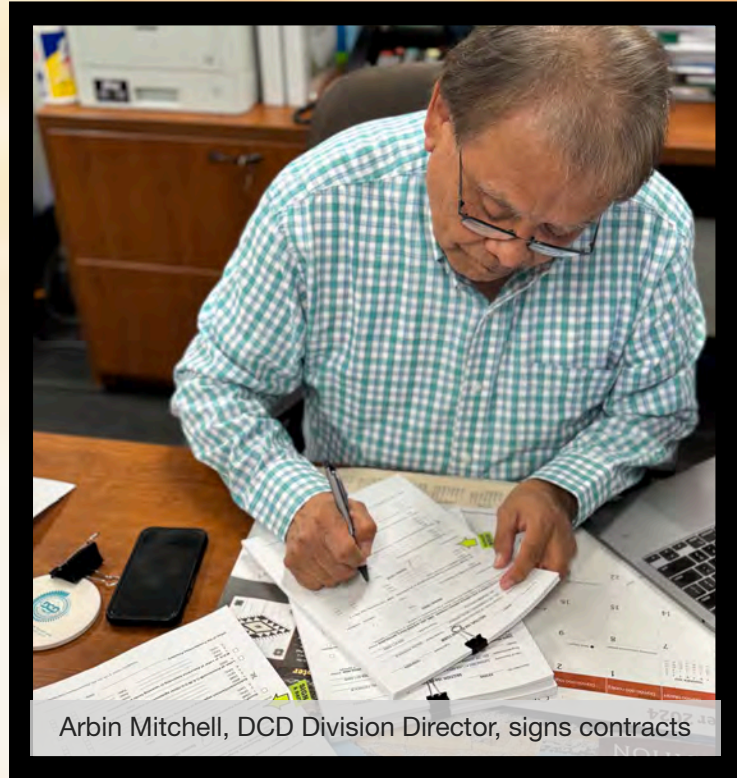
October 1: Happy New Year shik'éeí, shidine'éeí

October 14: Indigenous Peoples' Day

October 31: Halloween

November: Níłch'its'ósf - Small Winds

November 3: Denise's Birthday



Arbin Mitchell, DCD Division Director, signs contracts

CHID Secures \$100 Million in ARPA Funds to Build New Homes for Navajo Nation Families

In a significant stride toward addressing housing needs across the Navajo Nation, the Community Housing & Infrastructure Department (CHID) has secured an additional \$50 million in funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), as authorized by CMY-28-24. This funding increase, formalized through contract modifications signed on October 30, 2024, by Mr. Arbin Mitchell, brings the total ARPA housing allocation to a remarkable \$100 million. The funds will be instrumental in constructing and acquiring new homes for eligible Navajo applicants, providing critical support for community members in need of stable, safe housing.

A Commitment to Affordable Housing for Navajo Families

The \$100 million ARPA housing fund represents one of the most substantial investments in housing for the Navajo Nation to date. With the added funds, CHID aims to construct or purchase hundreds of homes for Navajo families, prioritizing accessibility and affordability. This effort addresses a long-standing housing shortage in the Navajo Nation, where community members often face challenges related to overcrowding,

substandard housing, and limited access to necessary utilities. CHID's mission is to ensure that these funds support sustainable housing solutions that meet the community's diverse needs, bringing hope and stability to families for generations to come.

Partnerships with Seven Contractors

To execute this ambitious project, CHID has enlisted seven contractors with the expertise and resources needed to bring these housing projects to life. These contractors will work collaboratively with CHID and the Navajo Nation government to develop high-quality homes, incorporating modern building standards and energy-efficient practices tailored to the unique environment and geography of the Navajo Nation. By leveraging the skills and experience of multiple contractors, CHID is committed to maximizing the impact of each dollar invested and ensuring that the projects are completed efficiently and to the highest standard.

Building Sustainable, Community-Centered Housing

The construction and purchase of new homes will reflect a thoughtful approach that prioritizes not only the immediate housing needs of Navajo families but also the long-term sustainability of these communities. This project underscores CHID's dedication to creating homes that are environmentally conscious, culturally responsive, and built to endure. The new homes will be designed to support various family structures, address accessibility needs, and provide comfort and security in alignment with Navajo Nation traditions and values.

Expanding Opportunity Through Housing Investment

The additional ARPA funds will not only help increase the housing stock but also support economic growth within the Navajo Nation. By contracting local construction companies, the project will create employment opportunities, stimulate the local economy, and empower Navajo businesses. This initiative aligns with the Navajo Nation's commitment to fostering a self-sustaining economy and reducing reliance on external resources.

A Vision for the Future

The \$100 million housing fund is a transformative step toward resolving housing shortages and improving the quality of life for Navajo Nation citizens. By investing in long-term housing solutions, the CHID is working to build a stronger, healthier future for the Navajo Nation, where families can thrive in communities that are resilient, self-sustained, and supportive. This unprecedented investment is a testament to the commitment of CHID, Mr. Arbin Mitchell, and the Navajo Nation government to create lasting, positive change.

As the project progresses, CHID will continue to provide updates and ensure transparency in how these funds are utilized. For more information about eligibility, project developments, and updates on the housing initiative, community members are encouraged to visit the CHID website or contact their local chapter. Together, we are building more than homes – we are building a legacy of resilience, opportunity, and hope for the Navajo Nation.



DCD Booth at the Shiprock Navajo Fair: Elderfest & Kids Day



The Division of Community Development (DCD) staff made a strong showing at this year's Shiprock and Western Navajo Fairs, connecting with community members from across the Navajo Nation. Representatives from Administration, ASC, CPMD, and CHID departments were on hand to answer questions, offer program updates, and gather valuable input. Visitors to the DCD booths expressed keen interest in ongoing and future initiatives, particularly in ARPA-funded projects that are set to bring improvements and resources to chapters across the region.

Throughout both fairs, the DCD staff engaged in dynamic conversations about community needs, including infrastructure developments, community health initiatives, and support for local governance. Many fairgoers were eager to learn about specific projects underway in their chapters and how these would impact local resources and facilities. Chapter members, local officials, and families all took time to discuss potential new projects and to share ideas for enhancing chapter programs and services.

For DCD, the fairs were a valuable opportunity to strengthen ties with the Navajo communities and address their questions and feedback directly. By the close of each event, the DCD team was thrilled to have connected with so many dedicated community members and leaders, reinforcing their shared commitment to the Navajo Nation's growth and progress. DCD is looking forward to further outreach events and continuing to inform, engage, and support the community in meaningful ways.

WESTERN NAVAJO
Fair



CPMD Project Updates

October 2024
by Dwayne Waseta



Construction Progress Report:

Gadii Ahí Chapter Housing & Senior Center:

The new Gadii Ahí Chapter Administrative and senior center projects are nearing completion, with Arviso Construction reporting the buildings are almost 100% finished. As of October, the off-site waterline connections are being finalized to meet the anticipated project completion date in December 2024. In November, crews will begin improvements to the common grounds, including the parking lot, access roads, and landscaping, preparing the facilities for public use.

St. Michaels Chapter Renovation & Expansion:



The St. Michaels Chapter is seeing progress on its chapter house renovation and expansion project, currently 15% complete. Following the installation of the floor system, wall construction is moving forward as planned. Renovations to the original building include modifications to bring the structure up to International Building Code standards, ensuring both safety and functionality for the community.



Oak Springs Chapter Renovation & New Construction:



Despite delays caused by rain in September and early October, the Oak Springs Chapter project is back on track. The contractor has increased the workforce to compensate for weather-related setbacks, with the project now approximately 55% complete. The additional manpower has helped to maintain momentum as the team works towards timely completion.

Tuba City Chapter Senior Center:



Construction of the Tuba City Chapter Senior Center is progressing smoothly. Interior work is advancing with drywall installation underway for ceilings and walls, while preparations are being made for final interior finishes in November. Outside, parking lot and driveway construction are in full swing, with curbs already completed. These updates bring the senior center one step closer to completion, providing an essential space for community members.

Planning Initiatives:

Warehouse Design Standardization: The CPMD is working with an on-call IDIQ firm to develop four standardized warehouse designs, aimed at streamlining future warehouse projects across chapters. However, funding challenges persist, as some chapters are currently unable to fully finance the planned warehouse construction. CPMD is exploring additional funding strategies to ensure these vital storage facilities can be built as envisioned.

Stay tuned for next month's updates as CPMD continues to advance these key projects for the chapters!

Exciting News: Project Management Course Empowers Division of Community Development Staff!

October 31, 2024
by Maukenzi Moore

We're excited to share that staff from key departments—including the Capital Projects Management Department (CPMD), Administrative Services Centers (ASC), and the Community Housing & Infrastructure Department (CHID)—are now enrolled in a comprehensive 10-week Project Management Course. This program, delivered through a partnership between the University of Arizona and Ziplines Education, is strategically crafted to bolster our team's capacity in leading impactful projects that drive sustainable community development.



About the Course and What It Offers: Throughout this transformative training, our team will dive deeply into core project management areas that are critical for effective, adaptive project execution. Some of the key topics covered include:

- **Leadership and Team Dynamics:** Building cohesive teams and fostering productive collaboration.
- **Conflict Resolution and Stakeholder Management:** Developing strategies to navigate and resolve challenges with stakeholders, a vital skill for projects involving multiple interests and objectives.
- **Budgeting, Cost, and Resource Planning:** Equipping staff with the skills to make data-driven decisions around budgeting, resource allocation, and financial tracking.
- **Agile Project Management:** A modern approach that promotes flexibility and responsiveness, essential for meeting evolving community needs.

To further enhance their technical skill set, participants will gain hands-on experience with leading project tracking tools, focusing on Jira Software Essentials. This practical experience will culminate in the opportunity to earn the Jira Software Essentials Associate Certification, a credential that will bolster their project management toolkit.

Empowering Our Team for Greater Impact: This training is a major step toward building a project management foundation that promotes efficiency, cross-functional collaboration, and outcome-driven execution. By mastering these competencies, our team is better equipped to manage complex projects, bringing enhanced efficiency and a structured approach to our initiatives. Moreover, the collaborative spirit fostered through this course will contribute to an integrated, high-performing department capable of delivering impactful results for the communities we support.

We are confident that these skills will empower our staff to drive continuous improvements and innovative solutions across our projects. Here's to a brighter, more efficient future for our teams and the communities we serve!

Housing Improvement Program Update

Housing Improvement Program

Rita M. Begay
Program Manager I
P.O. Box 527
Fort Defiance, AZ

FORT DEFIANCE AGENCY
Housing Improvement Program
Bldg# 8229 Field House Road
Google maps location
PWPJ+2P
Fort Defiance, Arizona 86504
Phone No.# (928) 729-4017
Fax No.# (928) 729-4277

CHINLE AGENCY
Bldg #2492 SW of Chapter House
Google maps location
5C3Q+8W
Chinle, Arizona 86503
Phone No.# (928) 674-2260
Fax No.# (928) 674-2266

EASTERN AGENCY

Google maps location
MVM2+83
Crownpoint, New Mexico



Message from Rita Begay, Program Manager I

On September 27, HIP held a special retirement dinner at Anthony's to honor Joe Descheenie, who dedicated over twenty years to the program. As a skilled carpenter, he assisted numerous families in building their homes. His reliability and commitment to his work made him invaluable, and he is deeply missed, even though it has only been a month since his departure. We take comfort in knowing he is now enjoying quality time with his family and the well-deserved free time he earned. Thank you for your service, Mr. Descheenie.

DCD ARPA Updates

DCD ARPA Office

October, has been a busy month for DCD ARPA we have been progressing with both purchasing and project discussions. Advertising and closing two IFBs, resulting in over \$160,000 in purchase orders, with the help of Mr. Jaron Charley and the NNOOC Purchasing Department.

The ARPA team participated in the Budget and Finance Committee Meetings on October 1, 2024 and the Naabik'iyati Committee Work Session 10/08/24-10/09/24 and 10/15/24. October 23, 2024 Navajo Nation Council Fall Session. Along with attending the council committee and worksession meetings. The team has met with 55 chapters discussing Section 11: Bathroom addition updates and ARPA/RRR updates.

Lastly in efforts to stay up to date with Navajo Nation Procurement procedures Ryan Begay and Dawnell Begay, Planner/Estimators attended a procurement training hosted by Valerie Bitsilly with NNOOC.

If your chapter is interested in DCD ARPA/FRF updates please feel free to reach out to Dawnell Begay, Planner/Estimator; dbegay@nndcd.org or Ryan Begay, Planner/Estimator; rbegay@nndcd.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 29, 2024

25th Navajo Nation Council approves amendment to expand Fiscal Recovery Fund usage for bathroom renovations/upgrades WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The 25th Navajo Nation Council has unanimously passed Legislation 0014-24, amending Resolution CJN-29-22 to expand the eligible uses of Fiscal Recovery Funds (FRF) to include bathroom renovations, in addition to the previously authorized new bathroom additions. This move aims to enhance infrastructure in Navajo communities by making bathrooms safer, more sanitary, and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The amendment permits the reallocation of FRF funds under Section 11 to support bathroom renovation projects that may include repairs or improvements to existing bathrooms, addressing critical improvement repairs such as ADA accessibility upgrades, replacements of water heater(s), wall heater, toilet, bathroom sink, utility sink, and replacement of fixtures as necessary to make the renovation of the existing bathroom compliant with industry standards.

It also includes provisions for broader home infrastructure improvements, such as dry wall finishing work for water line connections, septic systems, and electrical system installation. The decision responds to remaining unspent FRF balances limiting the FRF dollars to “new bathroom additions,” however with community demand for renovations over new construction, this amendment maximized the impact of federal relief funds.

Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) Chair Shaandiin Parrish, who sponsored the legislation, emphasized the need to effectively utilize remaining FRF dollars to meet the needs of residents across the Navajo Nation. According to Parrish, “By expanding the scope of these funds to include renovations, we can ensure that all dollars are used to provide essential upgrades for Navajo households, preventing any unused funds from being returned.”

The legislation provides an equal distribution increase to the Delegate Regional Plans in the amount of \$4.1 million per delegate region by reallocating unused funds not being spent by departments to an identified need.

Health, Education, and Human Services Committee (HEHSC) Chair Vince James expressed concerns about addressing unserved areas lacking running water. In response, the legislation includes provisions to direct funds toward broader infrastructure needs, including water and septic system connections.

Law and Order Committee (LOC) Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton and other delegates highlighted the importance of ADA compliance, particularly for elderly residents and those with disabilities, advocating for renovations that include critical safety upgrades like walk-in showers and higher toilet seats.

Ryan Begay, Planner/Estimator for Division of Community Development (DCD) noted that the legislation will enable case-by-case assessments to identify homes needing renovations, including upgrades like walk-in showers, widened doorways, and ADA compliance measures. The initiative aims to allocate the remaining funds before the December 31, 2024, U.S. Treasury federal deadline, with approximately \$50 million designated for bathroom-related projects, of which \$28.5 million has already been obligated.

The DCD will work with 110 local chapters to assess, prioritize, and implement bathroom renovation projects. The Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority (NECA), as the main contractor for DCD, will collaborate with subcontractors to manage project execution. The legislation sets a deadline of November 1, 2024, for modifying existing contracts to accommodate these expanded uses.

The FRF funds reallocated from the CJN-29-22; Section 7 Wastewater and Section 9 Electric Connections to homes; in total approximately \$98 million dollars was reallocated to bathroom renovations, repairs, and improvements of existing facilities.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council voted 21 in favor with none opposed, approving Legislation 0014-24. Once the resolution is certified and delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren will have up to ten calendar days to consider it.

NNFRFO ARPA Update Meeting for AZ ChaptersLocation: NDOT – Tse Bonito, NM

Date: Wednesday, October 16, 2024

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

The Navajo Nation Fiscal Recovery Fund Office (NNFRFO) held an informative meeting to update Arizona chapters on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding progress and to provide insights into chapter projects and fiscal procedures. The event began with introductions, followed by a series of updates on current chapter projects. Attendees also discussed CMY-28-24 updates, covering ARPA/FRF and RRR/GF funds, and explored procurement processes for upcoming initiatives.

Further agenda highlights included an overview of project amendments, an open forum for chapter questions and recommendations, and closing remarks. The NNFRFO plans to hold a follow-up meeting for New Mexico chapters on November 4, 2024, and is also available for one-on-one sessions with individual chapters.

This meeting provided chapters with essential guidance for optimizing ARPA funding and fostering collaboration across the Navajo Nation.



TECH TIPS: ESSENTIALS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW

Leverage Technology to Improve Your Content and Captivate Your Audience



UTILIZING CLOUD STORAGE

Cloud storage services like Google Drive, Dropbox, and iCloud offer free, accessible backups to keep your data safe across devices, even if your primary device is lost or damaged.



BASIC TROUBLESHOOTING ISSUES

Before contacting tech support, try basic troubleshooting like restarting your device to resolve issues or checking cables for external device problems.



USING SHORTCUTS AND AUTOMATION TO SAVE TIME

Technology should simplify life, and automation tools like IFTTT or Zapier can streamline routine tasks, such as turning on lights when you arrive home or starting the coffee maker with a voice command.



UNDERSTANDING BASIC CYBERSECURITY MEASURES

Basic cybersecurity knowledge is key to staying safe online—be cautious of phishing attempts, use reputable antivirus software, and remember that proactive measures are your best defense.



EMBRACING MOBILE PAYMENT SYSTEMS

Mobile payment systems like Apple Pay, Google Wallet, and Samsung Pay provide a secure, convenient way to shop without cash, using encryption to protect transactions and simplifying checkout.



Community Land Use Planning Updates

Community land-use planning involves organizing and managing how land in a community is developed and preserved. It includes creating a plan that considers housing, commercial spaces, public infrastructure, and green areas while balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability and social needs. Key steps include assessing the community's current needs,

engaging residents in setting goals, defining land uses (such as residential, commercial, and industrial zones), and developing guidelines for future growth. The ultimate goal of community land-use planning is to create functional, sustainable, and attractive spaces that support the well-being of both current and future residents.



DCD's Senior Planner, LaTasha, is working with the Navajo chapters to update the community land-use plan. An updated plan provides several key benefits:

- **Balanced Development:** Guides growth in a way that effectively integrates residential, commercial, and recreational spaces.
- **Sustainability:** Promotes environmentally responsible development, preserving green spaces and protecting natural resources.
- **Enhanced Quality of Life:** Creates safer, more accessible, and attractive



neighborhoods

with amenities that improve residents' lives.

- **Economic Growth:** Supports business development and job creation through well-organized zoning and infrastructure.
- **Community Involvement:** Engages residents in planning, fostering transparency and community trust.

Administrative Services Centers October Highlights

In October, the Administrative Services Centers (ASC) team advanced its ongoing support for the Navajo Nation's 110 chapters. While gearing up for Fiscal Year 2025, our team has also been committed to helping chapters finalize their FY2025 Annual Allocation Budgets and their FY24 into FY25 Carryover Budgets.

Our eight local ASC offices collaborated with various division programs and Navajo Nation offices to conduct a wide array of training sessions and meetings. This month's events featured new employee orientations, project management workshops, and training on best fiscal practices—essential components for fostering growth and sustainability across the Nation.

Additionally, the ASC department organized budget work sessions to guide chapters through their FY2025 Annual Allocations. These sessions included detailed reviews of the Navajo Nation Office of the Controller's FY2025 Budget Instructions Manual and reinforced key chapter budgeting procedures.



**FT. DEFIANCE ASC STAFF MEETING
OCTOBER 16, 2024 GALLUP CHILDREN'S LIBRARY**



**FT. DEFIANCE ASC STAFF MEETING
OCTOBER 24, 2024 NDOT - TSE BONITO, NM**

Fort Defiance ASC

Patricia Begay, Senior Programs & Projects Specialist

Derek Echohawk, Administrative Services Officer

Laci Begay, Office Specialist

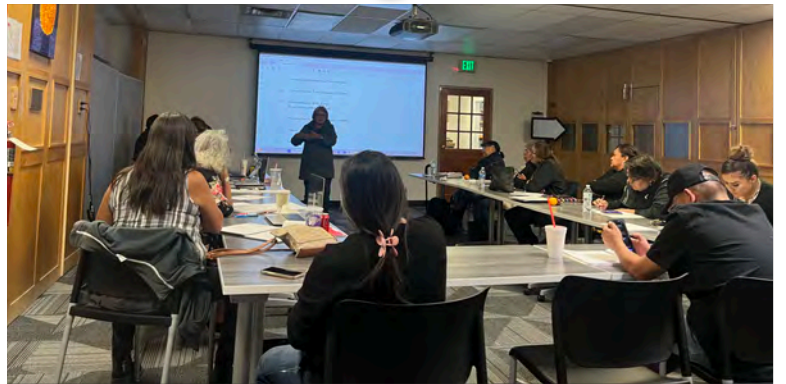
On Thursday, October 24, 2024, the Fort Defiance ASC team gathered for a productive staff meeting led by facilitator Patricia D. Begay. Kicking off with a warm welcome and an invocation, the team introduced Shante Dale, the new Administrative Management Specialist for Wide Ruins.

The agenda featured insightful presentations, starting with Cheryl Bia from the Tax Commission, who discussed important updates relevant to the team, and Wells Fargo's virtual session on Fraud Management, equipping staff with key tools to protect department resources. Dewayne Waseta provided valuable CPMD updates, offering clarity on current initiatives and future projects.

The meeting concluded with additional departmental updates, bringing the team up to speed on ongoing activities.

On October 7, 2024, the Fort Defiance ASC facilitated a focused budget work session at the Navajo Department of Transportation building in Tse Bonito, NM. Led by Derek Echohawk, the session provided essential guidance to chapters served by the Fort Defiance ASC Office.

Mr. Echohawk emphasized effective fiscal management and strategies for navigating FY25 budget allocations under the Navajo Nation's continuing resolution, CS-39-24. Participants engaged in practical discussions and gained valuable insights to optimize the allocation and management of their funds, ensuring compliance and efficiency for the upcoming fiscal year.



Dilkon ASC

Eunice Begay, Senior Programs & Projects Specialist

Toni Mina, Administrative Services Officer

Jennifer Ruskin, Office Specialist

On October 29, 2024, Dilkon Chapter hosted a powerful Breast Cancer Awareness Health Fair from 1 to 5 PM DST, drawing the community together in support of breast cancer education and health resources. The event featured informational booths, health screenings, and resources aimed at promoting breast cancer awareness and prevention. Attendees enjoyed the opportunity to connect with health professionals, learn about preventive care, and access educational materials.

A highlight of the afternoon was the 4 PM Walk/Run, which brought participants of all ages together in a symbolic show of solidarity for those affected by breast cancer. The fair fostered a sense of unity, resilience, and empowerment, emphasizing the importance of regular screenings and a healthy lifestyle in the fight against breast cancer.



Rio West Mall Job Fair

Wednesday, October 16, 2024 (Gallup, NM)

On October 16, 2024, our team proudly participated in a job fair at the Rio West Mall in Gallup, NM, to connect with potential applicants. Representing our department, Office Specialists Laci Begay and Adrianna Carviso hosted an informational booth, where they engaged visitors by sharing details about our current vacancies and offering guidance on the application process with the Department of Personnel Management. Their outreach aimed to attract qualified candidates and broaden awareness of career opportunities within our department.



Staff Updates

Welcome new staff!

Jerald Bidtah
Community Services Coordinator
Teecnospos Chapter

Your background (previous roles or experience)

My name is Jerald Bidtah. I am Dine (Navajo) originally from Shiprock, New Mexico. My clans are Ta'chii'nii (Red Running Into the Water Clan), born for Bit'ah'nii (Within His Cover Clan).

I do possess my PreK/K-12 Principal Certification. This also includes a K-8 Teaching certificate as well as a 9-12 Teaching certificate in mathematics. I am retired from the educational field after 25 years of teaching Elementary Education/Middle School Math/High School Administration as an principal, teacher and administrator. I also served in the United States Marine Corps from 1986-1990 as a High Frequency Communications Center Operator/Field Radio Operator. I possess a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership and Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from New Mexico State University.

My varied experience includes teaching mathematics at the middle school, high school and elementary grades 3-5. I also served as a principal at Navajo Elementary School in Navajo, New Mexico as well as the GEAR UP Coordinator for Central Consolidated Schools in Shiprock, NM.

What excites you most about joining DCD

I feel very fortunate and blessed to have been chosen to be a part of the Teec Nos Pos Chapter as the Community Services Coordinator. I am an advocate for programs that will benefit the community of Teec Nos Pos. I look forward to this new experience and am so excited to be here at Teec Nos Pos Chapter! Ahe'hee'

Any fun facts or hobbies you'd like to share

I have been married for 14 years and have a daughter and son. As a hobby, I enjoy spending time with family, exercising and officiating basketball games and wrestling matches

Staff Updates

Welcome new staff!

Chris P. Benally
Community Services Coordinator
Coppermine Chapter

Your background (previous roles or experience)

Was once a custodian and a laborer, and eventually graduated to a high pressure tube welder. Still play that role at home at times.

Served a short stint as a NN prosecutor. Worked with Chinle District Court for two years as an advocate. Worked with Navajo Hopi Legal Services, as an advocate in child support cases and a legal interpreter. Served in the chapter unit under the NNDOJ for four months.

What excites you most about joining DCD

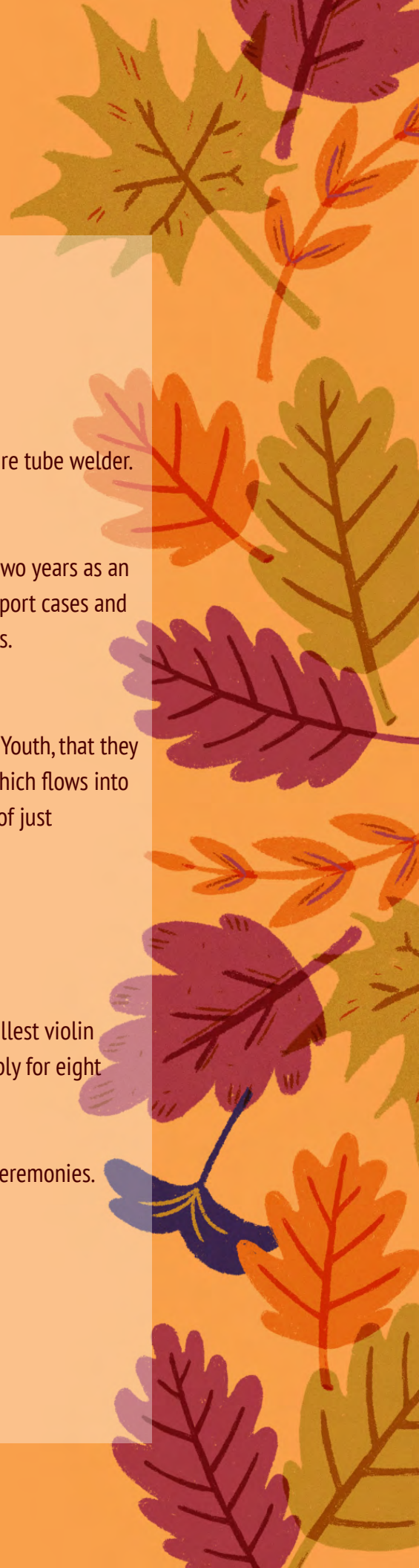
Helping my community and educating my community members, especially the Youth, that they have the power and capability to make positive changes in their community which flows into their personal lives. The laws can be changed to help the community instead of just hindering or being a road block to progress.

Any fun facts or hobbies you'd like to share

Am a Father and a husband.

Speak Dine' and grew up tending livestock, didn't know it was in poverty, ("smallest violin plays here"). Helped me in obtaining US Army Ranger Tab, and served Honorably for eight years in the military service.

Like learning new Dine' songs, and going to church and attending traditional ceremonies. Harmonizing two cultures as was taught in boarding school. I learned that I like working from home in past four years.





FROM THE ASC DEPARTMENT :
HAPPY HALLOWEEN!



Bulletin Board

Medicaid will cover traditional healing practices for Native Americans in 4 states

October 19, 2024 7:00 AM ET

From KQED By Lesley McClurg

A drumming circle at the Friendship House in San Francisco. Friendship House is a Native-led recovery treatment program that provides culturally relevant care.

Emery Tahy of San Francisco knows firsthand the struggles of addiction and recovery – a journey that, for him, is intertwined with his experience as a Native American.

In his twenties, Tahy landed on the streets of Phoenix battling severe depression and alcohol-induced seizures. About four years ago, Tahy said, he was on the brink of suicide when his siblings intervened and petitioned for court-ordered treatment.

While Tahy was detoxing in a psychiatric ward, he learned about the Friendship House, a Native-led recovery treatment program in San Francisco. As soon as he was released from the Arizona hospital, he headed to California.

"I knew immediately that I was in the right place," said Tahy, 43. "A traditional practitioner did prayers for me. They shared some songs with me. They put me in the sweat lodge and I could identify with those ceremonies. And from that day moving forward, I was able to reconnect to my spiritual and cultural upbringing."

Now, for the first time, Medicaid in California, Medi-Cal, as well as in Arizona, New Mexico and Oregon, is set to cover traditional health practices such as music therapy, sweat lodges, and dancing to help with physical and mental health.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services announced the move this week. It's a two-year pilot program that applies at Indian Health Service facilities, tribal facilities, and urban Indian organizations.

In California, two new categories of intervention will be covered by the Medi-Cal expansion. People suffering from a substance use disorder can seek therapy from traditional healers who offer ceremonial rituals, or, they can work with trusted figures within tribal communities such as elected officials or spiritual leaders who offer psychological support, trauma counseling and recovery guidance. California is home to the largest Native American population in the U.S., and Gov. Gavin Newsom said in a press release announcing the expansion that the state is "committed to healing the historical wounds inflicted on tribes, including the health disparities Native communities face."

Seeking healing from addiction

Tahy's battle with alcoholism began when he was a small child. He said he took his first sip of beer when he was 4, surrounded by parents, uncles, aunts, and grandparents who all drank heavily on the Navajo Nation.

"I'm a full-blooded American Indian," said Tahy, recounting the difficulties he faced in his youth. "Growing up I was subjected to a lot of prejudice, racism and segregation. I didn't have any pride in who I was. I feel like drugs and alcohol were a way to cope with that shame. Alcohol helped me socialize and gave me courage."

During his teenage years, Tahy drank and began dabbling in marijuana, cocaine and crystal meth. All the while, he said, his family instilled a meaningful relationship to his culture.

"I was always encouraged by my grandparents, on my mom's side, to learn and be connected to traditional Navajo ways of life," Tahy said. "There was a deep connection to family, land and ceremonial activities connected to seasonal changes."

Tahy's story is not unique. Native American communities suffer from some of the highest rates of addiction and overdose deaths in the country, and health experts have long argued that Western medicine alone cannot adequately treat substance use disorders in Native American populations.

The crisis is compounded by centuries of historical trauma.

Roselyn Tso, who directs the federal Indian Health Service, or IHS, has championed Medicaid's coverage of traditional healing. She said in the announcement from CMS that "these practices have sustained our people's health for generations and continue to serve as a vital link between culture, science, and wellness in many of our communities."



A drumming circle at the Friendship House in San Francisco. Friendship House is a Native-led recovery treatment program that provides culturally relevant care. San Francisco Chronicle/Hearst Newspapers/Getty Images

Until now some Native Americans have accessed traditional health care practices through IHS appropriations, Tribal resources, various pilot programs, and grants. This is the first time Medicaid will cover these services.

Bridging tradition and modern medicine

While clinical approaches like detox, medication-assisted treatment and behavioral therapy are essential to treating substance use disorders, they often fail to address the cultural and spiritual needs of Native patients.

"Traditional practices are, by nature, holistic," said Damian Chase-Begay, a researcher focused on American Indian health at the University of Montana. "They are treating the person physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally. They benefit the whole being, not just the physical symptoms."

Studies have shown that integrating cultural practices into addiction treatment can lead to higher engagement and more positive recovery outcomes, though most of the current research is qualitative, not quantitative.

For years, health care practitioners dedicated to Indigenous communities struggled with the limitations of what insurance would cover. Medi-Cal, the state's Medicaid program for low-income residents, reimburses for medical prescriptions or talk therapy, but traditional healing methods were often excluded from coverage, leaving many Native American patients without access to treatments that aligned with their cultural values.

"What California is now covering under Medi-Cal is exactly what our Native communities have been asking to be covered for years," Chase-Begay said. "This kind of support, had it been in place, could have helped stop some intergenerational trauma and substance use years ago. I'm so thrilled that it's in place now, but it's long overdue."

The new Medi-Cal policy is set to take effect next year, with Indian Health Service providers in qualifying counties able to request reimbursement for these services starting in January 2025. It will expire at the end of 2026 unless extended.

"It is vital that we honor our traditional ways of healing," said Kiana Maillet, a licensed therapist in San Diego and a member of the Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Tribe. "Traditional healing is deeply ingrained in our cultures. Without it, we are missing a piece of who we are."

As for Tahy, he hasn't touched a drop of alcohol since starting therapy at Friendship House. He now holds a full time job as an evaluator for the Native American Health Center in San Francisco. Soon he will complete a master's degree in American Indian studies. And, a few months ago, he completed the San Francisco marathon.

Read More: <https://n.pr/40tKORE>

Bulletin Board

On Navajo Nation, a push to electrify more homes on the vast reservation

HALCHITA, Utah (AP) – After a five-year wait, Lorraine Black and Ricky Gillis heard the rumblings of an electrical crew reach their home on the sprawling Navajo Nation.

In five days' time, their home would be connected to the power grid, replacing their reliance on a few solar panels and propane lanterns. No longer would the CPAP machine Gillis uses for sleep apnea or his home heart monitor transmitting information to doctors 400 miles away face interruptions due to intermittent power. It also means Black and Gillis can now use more than a few appliances – such as a fridge, a TV, and an evaporative cooling unit – at the same time.

"We're one of the luckiest people who get to get electric," Gillis said.

Many Navajo families still live without running water and electricity, a product of historic neglect and the struggle to get services to far-flung homes on the 27,000-square-mile (70,000-square-kilometer) Native American reservation that lies in parts of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. Some rely on solar panels or generators, which can be patchy, and others have no electricity whatsoever.

Gillis and Black filed an application to connect their home back in 2019. But when the coronavirus pandemic started ravaging the tribe and everything besides essential services was shut down on the reservation, it further stalled the process.

Their wait highlights the persistent challenges in electrifying every Navajo home, even with recent injections of federal money for tribal infrastructure and services and as extreme heat in the Southwest intensified by climate change adds to the urgency.



Robert Atene, left, with the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, supervises as a volunteer crew lifts a power line pole, Tuesday, Oct. 8, 2024, on the Navajo Nation in Halchita, Utah. (AP Photo/Joshua A. Bickel)

"We are a part of America that a lot of the time feels kind of left out," said Vircynthia Charley, district manager at the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, a non-for-profit utility that provides electric, water, wastewater, natural gas and solar energy services.

For years, the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority has worked to get more Navajo homes connected to the grid faster. Under a program called Light Up Navajo, which uses a mix of private and public funding, outside utilities from across the U.S. send electric crews to help connect homes and extend power lines.

But installing power on the reservation roughly the size of

West Virginia is time-consuming and expensive due to its rugged geography and the vast distances between homes. Drilling for power poles there can take several hours because of underground rock deposits while some homes near Monument Valley must have power lines installed underground to meet strict regulations around development in the area.

About 32% of Navajo homes still have no electricity. Connecting the remaining 10,400 homes on the reservation would cost \$416 million, said Deenise Becenti, government and public affairs manager at the utility.

READ MORE: <https://bit.ly/3Uwa7Pe>

Seven uranium mines east of Gallup will be cleaned up

October 10, 2024 • By Hannah Grover

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has committed to cleaning up seven uranium mining sites east of Gallup.

The agency says that the cleanup projects will address more than a million cubic yards of contaminated soil. Additionally, the efforts are expected to restore about 260 acres of land on Navajo Nation, benefiting communities in the Smith Lake and Mariano Lake chapters.

The mines included are Mariano Lake, Mac 1 & 2, Black Jack 1 & 2, and Ruby 1 & 3 mine sites. The Mariano Lake Mine was also known as the Old Gulf Mine. It is located about 25 miles east of Gallup. The EPA is working with Chevron U.S.A., Inc. to clean up the site. This is because the mine was formerly operated from 1977 to 1982 by Gulf Mineral Resources, which later merged with Chevron. The site includes two distinct sites totalling more than 30 acres. One of these sites is the location of a more than 500-foot deep shaft and the other is the former location of an evaporation pond. According to the EPA, there are about 250,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil at the Mariano Lake Mine with levels of uranium and radium that could pose health risks.

The four Mac and Black Jack mines were operated from 1959 to 1971 by United Nuclear-Homestake Partners and its predecessors. Homestake Mining Company is now the

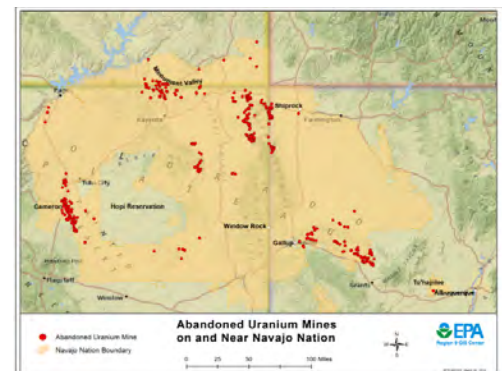
sole owner of the mines. These mines are in the Smith Lake and Mariano Lake chapters and produced about 1.8 million tons of uranium ore, most of which came from the Black Jack 1 mine. The U.S. EPA and the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency are working with Homestake Mining Company to clean up those sites. There are more than 700,000 cubic feet of contaminated soil at the Mac and Black Jack mine sites.

Western Nuclear Inc. operated the four Ruby mines from 1975 to 1985. Three of those mines are included in the list of sites that will be cleaned up. These mines are located in the Smith Lake Chapter. Ruby Mine 1 is only a quarter mile from three houses and Ruby Mine 3 is about a mile from several homes.

These mines are part of a legacy that has left hundreds of contaminated mine sites across the Navajo Nation and has caused elevated radiation levels in houses and water sources. People living near these sites have higher risks of lung cancer, bone cancer and impaired kidney function.

The EPA and the Navajo Nation EPA have prioritized 46 sites as priority mines to clean up due to the risks they pose to nearby communities.

The EPA has already taken critical removal actions to address 200,000 cubic yards of mine waste and eliminate



immediate hazards at more than 30 different uranium mine sites on the Navajo Nation. Some of those actions have included removing contaminated soil from residential areas, covering contaminated areas with clean soil, installing fences and posting signs to prevent unintentional exposure to radioactive material.

"These cleanup decisions have been made in close coordination with the Navajo Nation government, with the ultimate goal of restoring land for unrestricted use by Navajo communities," EPA Pacific Southwest Regional Administrator Martha Guzman said in a press release.

Read more at: <https://bit.ly/4fsrHeV>

Bulletin Board

This Diné leader is using horses to bring ‘the greatest Native turnout ever’ to the polls

The Guardian | By Melissa Hellmann

In Diné, or Navajo, culture, the horse symbolizes strength and resilience, as well as a connection to the earth. Cowboy culture is so relevant to Native communities, that horseback trail rides are used to draw awareness to issues within the community including suicide prevention, and alcohol and drug use, said Allie Young, a 34-year-old Diné grassroots organizer. This fall, Young has harnessed the trail ride to engage Diné voters for the presidential election: her group's voter-registration events will culminate with 100 Indigenous voters riding on horseback to a polling station in Arizona on election day.

“When one mounts a horse and is in rhythm with the horse, that reconnection happens,” Young, founder of the Indigenous-led civic engagement program Protect the Sacred, told the Guardian. “So when we're connected with the horse, we're then reconnected to Mother Earth and reminded of our cultural values and what we're fighting for, what we're protecting.”

Native American turnout is especially critical in the upcoming election, when tribal sovereignty could be threatened by the conservative blueprint Project 2025, which states that fossil fuel drilling should be facilitated on tribal lands. Political representation that brings needed resources into Native communities is particularly important on tribal lands, where 75% of roads remain unpaved. In part due to Young's advocacy, Native American voters are credited with flipping the historically red state of Arizona to Democrat during the 2020 election. That year, up to 90% of the roughly 67,000 eligible voters in the Navajo Nation voted for Joe Biden, according to data.

Young said she hopes that the success of the Ride to the Polls campaign in 2020 and 2022 will encourage “the greatest Native turnout ever” in the upcoming election. This year, the campaign has extended its reach with events such as skateboarding and bull-riding competitions, heavy metal and country music concerts.

“We're trying to communicate to our community that we need to protect our tribal sovereignty,” said Young, “and with that, protect our sacred sites, protect our lands, our cultures, our languages, our traditions.”

Young launched the Ride to the Polls campaign in 2020 in response to the rapid spread of Covid-19 infections in the Navajo Nation, where some counties saw the highest death rates per capita in the



Allie Young, a Diné grassroots organizer, started the Ride to the Polls campaign in 2020 to engage young Diné voters. Photograph: Sharon Chischilly

nation. She wanted to ensure that her community filled out the US census to receive the funding they deserved and to elect politicians who prioritize the concerns of Native communities.

“Our nation and many tribal nations across the country were devastated by the onset of Covid-19 because our system is being chronically underfunded,” said Young, “which revealed to the rest of the world what we already know: that the government is not honoring our treaty, which says that we are to receive good healthcare and education.” She began creating culturally relevant initiatives so that young Diné citizens who felt disenfranchised would see voting as a tool to “rebuild our power as a community”.

The campaign's goal in 2024 is to register 1,500 new voters during their in-person initiatives and more than 5,000 voters through online efforts. So far, they have registered 200 new voters and checked or updated the registrations of about 400 people.

On 12 October, the actor Mark Ruffalo will join Ride to the Polls to help mobilize Native voters and to mark the 100th anniversary of Native Americans being granted the right to vote. Ruffalo and Indigenous voters wearing traditional clothing will walk three miles to vote early at a community ballot drop box in Fort Defiance, Arizona – the site where the forced removal called the Long Walk of the Navajo began in 1863.

“Indigenous people have only been able to fight for their future at the ballot box for 76 years,” Ruffalo said in a statement. “Now we're seeing a massive movement of

young Indigenous folk exercise their power at the polls ... I hope their resilience will inspire other young Indigenous folks from all communities to do the same.”

While US citizenship was granted to most Native Americans under the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, some state constitutions continued to block the voting rights of Native Americans who lived among their nations. In Arizona, pollsters required English literacy tests to cast a ballot. All Native Americans were finally granted the right to vote under the federal voting rights act of 1965.

Still, barriers have remained that make it difficult for Diné to register to vote and cast ballots, including a lack of residential addresses since many people on the Navajo Nation use post office boxes. It also can take up to an hour to drive to a polling location, said Young. And this summer, the US supreme court ruled that Arizona can enforce a state law requiring prospective voters to include proof of US citizenship in registration forms, which Young said was a “slap in the face to Native Americans, who are the first peoples of this land, to be asked to prove their citizenship”.

To help address some of those hurdles, Protect the Sacred is partnering with the Indigenous-led voter-engagement non-profit Arizona Native Vote. Indigenous organizers register voters and help residents find their addresses by locating their houses on Google Maps.

Read more at: <https://bit.ly/4f87D1H>

PERSONNEL NEWS -- DCD OPEN POSITIONS

POSITION TITLE	LOCATION	PAY RATE	CLOSING DATE
Administrative Service Centers			
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Indian Wells, AZ	\$31,257.36	11/15/2024
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Oljato, UT	\$31,257.36	11/15/2024
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Torreon, NM	\$31,257.36	11/14/2024
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Tsaile, AZ	\$31,257.36	11/08/2024
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Red Valley, AZ	\$31,257.36	11/15/2024
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Coalmine Canyon, AZ	\$31,257.36	11/14/2024
Sen Programs & Projects Specialist (S)	Kayenta, AZ	\$66,198.60	11/06/2024
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Gadai Ahi, NM	\$31,257.36	11/13/2024
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Thoreau, NM	\$31,257.36	11/01/2024
Capital Projects Management Department			
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Window Rock, AZ	\$31,257.36	11/01/2024
Community Housing and Infrastructure Department			
Carpenter (S)	Window Rock, AZ	\$37,062.00	11/08/2024
Laborer (S)	Window Rock, AZ	\$24,137.28	11/08/2024

(OUF) Open Until Filled

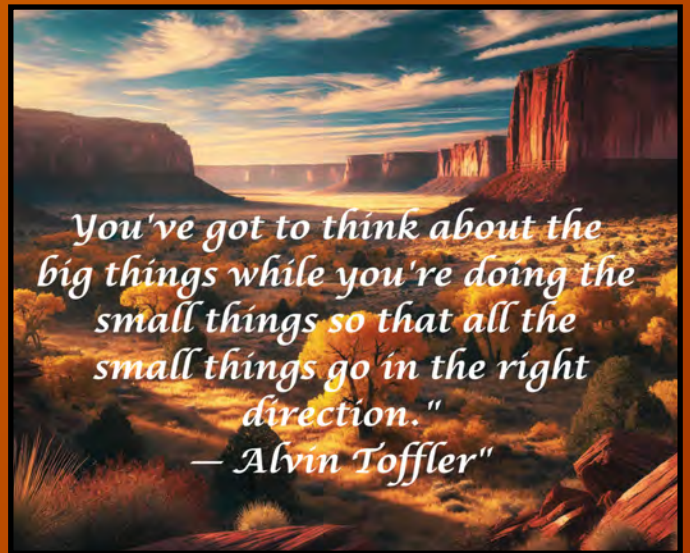
(S) Sensitive Position (subject to background check) Closing Dates may change

For the most up-to-date personnel info, please visit DPM's website at
<https://apply.navajo-nsn.gov/>

Comic of the Month



Quote of the Month



Navajo Nation Census Information Center News

National Native American Heritage Month:

November 2024



Image credit: Long Walk Home – Gallup Downtown Murals – by Richard K Yazzir, 2005

October 25, 2024

Press Release Number: CB24-FF.10

The first American Indian Day was celebrated in May 1916 in New York. The event culminated an effort by Red Fox James, a member of the Blackfeet Nation, who rode across the United States on horseback seeking approval from 24 state governments to designate a day to honor American Indians. In 1990, more than seven decades later, then-President George H.W. Bush signed a joint congressional resolution designating the month of November National American Indian Heritage Month. Similar proclamations have been issued every year since 1994 to recognize what is now called National Native American Heritage Month. This Facts for Features presents statistics about the American Indian and Alaska Native population, one of the six major race categories defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The following facts are possible thanks to responses to the U.S. Census Bureau's surveys. We appreciate the public's cooperation as we continuously measure America's people, places and economy.

Did You Know?

7.4 million

The nation's American Indian and Alaska Native population alone or in combination with other race groups in 2023.

Source: Vintage 2023 Population Estimates

9.0 million

The projected American Indian and Alaska Native population alone or in combination with other race groups on July 1, 2060. They would constitute 2.5% of the total population.

Source: 2023 National Population Projections

9.7 million

The nation's American Indian and Alaska Native population alone or in combination in 2020.

Source: 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics

325

The number of distinct, federally recognized American Indian reservations in 2024, including federal reservations and off-reservation trust lands.

Source: American Indian Reservations, Trust Lands, and Native Hawaiian Home Lands

221

The number of Alaska Native village statistical areas.

Source: American Indian Reservations, Statistical Areas, and Alaska Native Village Statistical Areas

574

The number of federally recognized Indian tribes in 2024.

Source: Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

120,476

The number of single-race American Indian and Alaska Native veterans of the U.S. armed forces in 2023.

Source: 2023 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates

READ MORE AT: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2024/aian-month.html>

HOME IMPROVEMENTS

Well Over One-Half of Homeowners Made Improvements

86.9 million homeowners



51.6 million homeowners made improvements (59%)

Over 1 in 4 of Those Made Energy Efficiency Improvements



14.7 million homeowners made energy efficiency improvements (28%)

Homeowners Spent \$827 Billion 2021-2023

Owners spent a median of \$6,500 on improvements to their homes.¹ Below are the **median** expenditures for selected projects, rounded to the nearest \$100.

Security system
\$400



Bathroom remodels
\$5,000



Flooring/paneling/
ceiling tiles
\$3,000

Doors/windows
\$2,800



Kitchen remodels
\$8,000



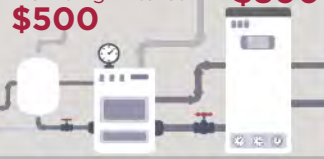
HVAC
\$5,500



Electrical wiring/
fuse boxes
\$1,000



Water heater/dishwasher/
garbage disposal
\$800



Plumbing fixtures
\$500



Attached garage/carport
\$4,600



Driveways/walkways **\$2,900**

Disaster Repairs

Number of occupied housing units

Tornado/hurricane  663,000

Fire  129,000

Top Improvements Made to Units of the 51.6 million homeowners who made improvements

Water heater/
dishwasher/
garbage disposal

32%

HVAC

25%

Flooring/
paneling/
ceiling tiles

21%

Porch/deck/patio/terrace
\$4,800



Many Projects Are Done by Homeowners

50 million of 140 million projects

Do-it-yourselfers

Professionals



36%

64%

Spending Varied Widely by Improvement Type

	Total expenditures	Number of projects
Roofing	\$93.5B	8.3M
Kitchen remodels	\$83.1B	5.0M
HVAC	\$82.4B	12.8M
Bathroom remodels	\$68.9B	7.5M
Flooring/paneling/ceiling tiles	\$51.0B	10.9M
Doors/windows	\$45.2B	7.9M
Porch/deck/patio/terrace	\$32.8B	3.9M
Landscaping/sprinkler system	\$26.6B	7.0M
Driveways/walkways	\$20.9B	4.6M

B = billions
M = millions

¹ From the 2023 American Housing Survey (AHS) Internal Use File.

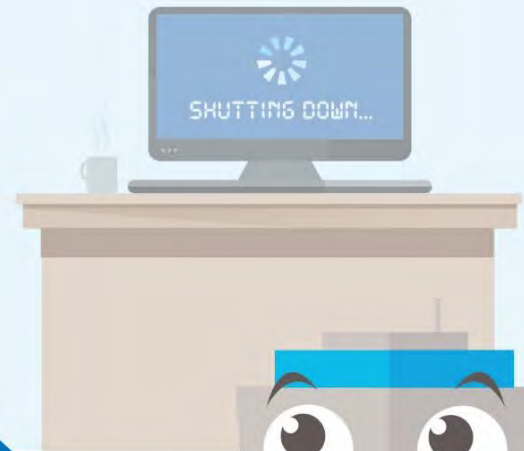
Note: Data come from the AHS Table Creator, except as indicated, and medians are rounded to four significant digits. Information on confidentiality protection, methodology, sampling and nonsampling error, and definitions is available at <www.census.gov/ahs>. The U.S. Census Bureau has reviewed this data product to ensure appropriate access, use, and disclosure avoidance protection of the confidential source data used to produce this product (Data Management System [DMS] number: P-7533599, Disclosure Review Board [DRB] approval number: CBDRB-FY24-POP001-0012).

SHUT IT DOWN


**ENERGY
EXERCISE
OF THE WEEK**

*A JOG AFTER WORK
CAN BE HEALTHY AND FUN —*

*BUT YOUR DESKTOP COMPUTER
DOESN'T NEED TO RUN!*



Actions you can take:

- ✓ Shut down your computer at the end of the day and work week.
- ✓ Activate sleep settings instead of a "screensaver."
- ✓ Plug electronics into a smart power strip.

Did you know?

- ✓ A computer left running 24/7 is wasting energy about 70 percent of the time!
- ✓ A computer with a "screensaver" uses significantly more energy than an idle computer!



LEARN MORE: www.energystar.gov/buildings



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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