

American Rescue Plan Act legislation proposes over \$1.16 billion for hardship assistance, infrastructure

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 10 December 2021 07:05



WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer recently met with Division Directors, to review Legislation No. 0257-21, which seeks the 24th Navajo Nation Council’s support to allocate over \$1.16 billion in Fiscal Recovery Funds authorized through the American Rescue Plan Act for hardship assistance, water/electricity/broadband infrastructure, housing, and bathroom additions.

This will be the first of several legislations that will be considered to allocate over \$2 billion that the Navajo Nation received to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Legislation No. 0257-21 proposes the following funding allocations:

-Water and Wastewater Projects \$301 million

-Broadband Infrastructure \$208 million

-Electricity for Homes \$200 million

-Housing \$100 million

-Bathroom Additions \$150 million

-Hardship Assistance \$207 million

President Nez and Division Directors previously met with the 24th Navajo Nation Council, Speaker Seth Damon, and Navajo Nation Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne, to strategize for the implementation of the Navajo Nation's Fiscal Recovery Funds. The Office of the President and Vice President worked closely with the Legislative Branch to develop the legislation to help provide immediate and long-term relief for the Navajo people.

"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to transform the Navajo Nation and to improve the quality of life for elders, disabled, veterans, youth, and families," Nez said. "Never before has the Navajo Nation received this level of funding in such a short time frame.

"If passed by the Council, this legislation will provide immediate financial relief for children and adults," he continued. "We've been informed that based on a review conducted by the Department of Justice, individuals who previously received Hardship Assistance will not have to re-apply for the next round of hardship funds."

In July, the 24th Navajo Nation Council approved Resolution CJY-41-21, which was signed into law by Nez and provides the framework for the implementation of the \$2 billion in funds and allowed the Executive Branch to establish the Navajo Nation Fiscal Recovery Fund Office led by interim Executive Director Tom Platero.

"The implementation of the Fiscal Recovery Funds will be life-changing for many of our elders, youth, and many others, but it will take collaboration and support from all leaders to be successful," Lizer said. "Jobs will be created and the influx of funds will help to provide a boost to our local economy.

"Last year, the Navajo Nation used approximately half of the \$714 million in CARES Act funds for hardship assistance that went directly to our Navajo people — over 700 families received electricity in their homes for the very first time, and many more received water resources,

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improved broadband service, and much more.”

The Nez-Lizer Administration continues to work with the Legislative Branch to develop more legislation to allocate funds for educational initiatives, wellness centers/detox centers/senior centers/transition housing, mental health services, social services, chapter projects, economic development, tourism, and enterprises.

Legislation No. 0257-21 is currently in the public comment period. The bill can be found on the Office of Legislative Services website: <http://dibb.nnols.org/publicreporting.aspx>.

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