

## Finance Committee approves the Navajo Nation FY24 comprehensive budget

Written by gallupsun

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The 25th Navajo Nation Council Budget and Finance Committee approved the Navajo Nation Comprehensive Budget for Fiscal Year 2024 on Aug. 31, through Legislation 0214-23, which funds direct services for elders, provides aid to veterans, supports public safety, supplements local government relief, and sets aside funding for future housing developments.

“Legislation 0214-23 is a product of the Budget and Finance Committee’s work with members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council through the standing committee oversight hearings. The committee took three weeks to listen to standing committee recommendations and to division directors and department heads,” legislation sponsor and BFC Chairwoman Shaandiin Parrish (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) said. “We worked diligently to consider all the unmet needs of our Navajo programs and departments, including Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety, Division of Community Development, Division of Aging and Long-Term Care Support, and others.”

The budget allocates roughly \$2.1 billion in general funds for costs related to the operating budgets of the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches.

Legislation 0214-23, allocates \$35.2 million from the 2022 Personnel Lapse Savings Account to fund a one-time allocation to all 110 chapters for utility payments, \$1.72 million for scholarship and job pipeline opportunities, \$215,000 to Veterans Assistance, over \$908,000 to victim advocate services, \$1.25 million to Head Start facilities maintenance, almost \$542,000 to animal control and resource enforcement, \$1.4 million for employee step increases and bonuses, and a 4% general wage adjustment for all Navajo Nation employees in FY2024.

The proposed Navajo Nation FY2024 Comprehensive Budget also allocated \$21.5 million from the Navajo Nation Permanent Fund interest to fund 100% of the Division of Public Safety’s unmet need recommendations from the Law and Order Committee, and the Division of Aging and Long-Term Care Support’s unmet need recommendations from the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee.

The legislation also allocates \$3.4 million to the Division of Community Development to the Capital Projects Management Department to support the construction of idling projects on the Navajo Nation, \$550,000 to all 110 Chapters for veteran awards and events, \$1.5 million to all

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110 Chapters for scholarships, and \$5 million to develop a Housing Trust Fund.

“In 2023, we are fortunate to use American Rescue Plan Act dollars for some housing across the Nation. However, earlier this year when the Budget and Finance Committee legislated our priorities, we were thinking ahead to when the ARPA deadline passes,” Parrish said. “We set aside \$5 million and over time this amount will grow. When we set aside these dollars, we were thinking of all the Navajo people who want to move home to the Nation.”

Regarding the Housing Trust Fund, Parrish said the Committee highlighted the need to be proactive in housing and community development.

“The FY2024 proposed budget reflects the services our government provides to our Navajo citizens, it sets aside money for the future, and it supplements governmental services,” Parrish said. “This budget is planning ahead and putting our people first.”

Legislation 0214-23 was approved with a vote of four in favor and zero opposed. The legislation moves forward to the Naa’bik’íyáti’ Committee and the Navajo Nation Council serves as the final authority.

