



The Navajo Nation Office of the Controller

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More than 290,000 Navajo Nation members apply for Hardship Assistance Program, follow-ups will be conducted to fix some applications

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The Navajo Nation Office of the Controller is currently processing applications for the Navajo CARES Act Hardship Assistance Program which closed Nov. 30. They are now working through the initial processing of more than 290,000 individual applications.

Of the thousands of applications, many have issues that need to be resolved before they can be processed.

Pearline Kirk, Navajo Nation Controller, explained follow-ups will be conducted in the next several weeks and this may require staff from the Office of the Controller's Call Center to call or email applicants to confirm, verify or correct information on an individual's submitted application.

"It will take a significant amount of time to complete the initial processing of each application," said Kirk. "More than 120,000-plus applications have some sort of error associated with them that needs to be resolved. Specifically, more than 30,000 applicants are not in the vital records database due to the database being incomplete. The errors could range from a mismatch between names, date of birth, CIB or hardship declarations. These exceptions must be cleared before payment can be made."

"Our team has hundreds of resources dedicated to ensuring as many eligible Navajo Nation members as possible receive funds," added Kirk. "We are focusing our initial efforts on processing those who are not in the vital records database and it requires applicants to verify their enrollment by submitting an eligible document, such as a copy of their CIB."

When calling applicants, Call Center staff will always identify themselves and they will never ask for your full Social Security number. The call will come from the phone number (833) 282-7248. If you do receive a phone call from an unknown number, do not provide any information to them because there has been reports of fraudulent calls. Hang up immediately and call (833) 282-7248 to confirm the legitimacy of the call. If additional information is requested, Call Center staff will direct applicants to highly publicized channels to submit their information.

"If the Call Center calls you, please answer your phone," said Kirk. "If you aren't comfortable, an applicant can call the support center/call center directly."

As another form of communication, the Controller's Office will also launch an automated outreach system via text messaging and phone calls in the upcoming weeks. This system is currently not being utilized but will be used soon to convey important information to applicants. Information regarding this system will be published in advance of its use.

Hardship payments are expected to take place in January 2021 rather than December as previously reported. This is due to both the number of application errors that need to be corrected to ensure the maximum number of Navajo Nation members qualify and the need to determine the final amount of money that will be reverted to the Hardship Assistance Program pot before the end of the year.

For further questions about the CARES Act Hardship Assistance Program, email NNCaresHelp@nnooc.org.

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