



The Navajo Nation  
Office of the President and Vice President

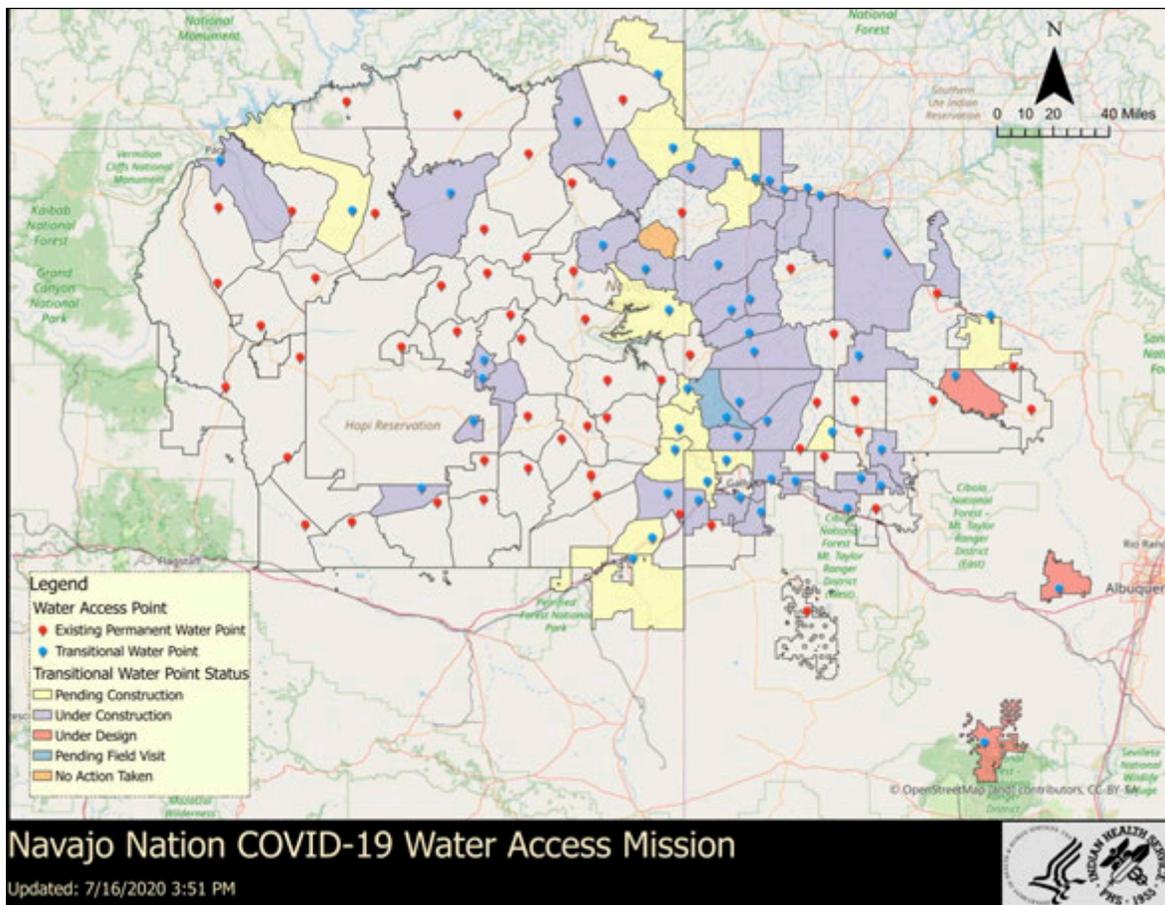
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## Navajo Nation and Indian Health Service move forward with water points and safe water storage projects using CARES Act funds



**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — On July 14, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and officials with the Indian Health Service finalized a Memorandum of Agreement to allocate over \$5 million from the IHS appropriated Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding to support the installation of up to 54 transitional water points, assistance with water fees, supply of up to 37,000 water storage containers, and up to 3.5 million doses of water disinfection tablets for residents living in homes with no piped water access for the duration of the Navajo Nation COVID-19 public health emergency. This large-scale effort is known as the Navajo Nation COVID-19 Water Access Mission.

“We know the Navajo people want and need water projects to move forward and get completed and with the signing of this MOA, many more Navajo families will get much-needed water resources. Through the partnership and hard work of the Navajo Nation, Indian Health Service, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, and Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority, we are moving forward with these important projects. We are aware of the need for more windmill and earthen dam repairs in many communities and the Department of Water Resources is working hard to resolve those issues as well,” said President Nez.

The partnership of these entities developed into a group called the Navajo Nation COVID-19 Water Access Coordination Group, co-led by IHS and the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development, comprised of 21 partners from the Navajo Nation, federal, state partners, public health universities, and non-profit organizations that have been meeting on a regular basis to collaborate on emergency water access response actions and to develop long-term solutions to address the lack of home water access.

“The Navajo Nation COVID-19 Water Access Coordination Group is a great example of multiple federal and state agencies, and Navajo Nation divisions and programs coming together to address an important water need for our Navajo people. President Nez and I extend our appreciation to everyone involved,” stated Vice President Lizer.

Indian Health Service continues to work with the Navajo Nation, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, and the Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority on construction and start-up activities for 54 transitional water points, water point operations training for chapter staff, conducting an Interest survey of 110 Chapters to provide resources to support safe water storage, and the development of culturally appropriate public outreach and health educational materials on the importance of safe water storage.

“Partnerships and coordination of federal resources together is important, especially for improving water access on the Navajo Nation. I believe the Navajo Nation COVID-19 Water Access Coordination Group bridges the needed resources and collaboration, and we appreciate the opportunity to co-lead the effort,” said Executive Director of the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development Dr. Pearl Yellowman.

“The Water Access Coordination Group work is a major undertaking to assess water wells and water stations at each Navajo Chapter community. This effort will better serve Navajo families with water needs for handwashing and quality drinking water. Through this partnership, we hope to help alleviate or reduce the community spread of COVID-19,” stated Capital Projects Management Department Manager James Adakai.

The Nez-Lizer Administration remains committed to working together with the Indian Health Service to complete these projects to provide water access for our Navajo people.

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