



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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Navajo Nation Business and Artisans Economic Relief Grant Program provides hardship relief for over 4,000 Navajo businesses and artisans

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer are pleased to announce that the Navajo Nation Business and Artisans Economic Relief Grant Program awarded financial relief from the CARES Act funds for over 4,000 qualifying Navajo businesses, entrepreneurs, and Navajo artisans facing financial hardship and/or business interruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds are separate from the Hardship Program application, which is being administered by the Office of the Controller.

On Nov. 20, the Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development closed-out the grant program. The program provided approximately \$29 million in relief funds to 4,372 applicants. 1,117 Navajo businesses were awarded \$13.1 million, and 3,255 Navajo artisans were awarded \$15.9 million. The \$29 million used for the program was part of the \$475 million CARES Act funding package approved through Resolution CJY-67-20, which was passed by the 24th Navajo Nation Council on Aug. 6 and signed into law on Aug. 16 by President Nez and Vice President Lizer.

“Since March, many Navajo-owned businesses and artisans have dealt with the economic downturn due to the pandemic. Many of these businesses face threats of lost opportunities, revenues, temporary shutdowns, and loss of jobs. Under the leadership of Division of Economic Development Executive Director JT Willie, his team put together the \$60 million proposal and helped many artisans and small business owners receive economic relief. We appreciate Navajo entrepreneurs participating in the program, and we pray that you have great success,” said President Nez.

Navajo artisans who meet the eligibility requirements received up to \$5,000 for “dire financial emergencies,” defined as the lack of imminent endangerment of essentials such as housing, medicine, childcare, and food. Eligible businesses received as much as \$10,000 to \$60,000, depending on the demonstrated need.

“Many artisans depend on other businesses to showcase and sell their artwork, and we know that many businesses had to close for periods of time due to the ongoing pandemic. With these funds,

we want businesses to keep their employees on the payroll, cover some operating expenses, and hopefully create some long-term stability. As a business owner, I understand the impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on operations while we try to maintain our employees as well,” said Vice President Lizer.

Through the application process, NNDED was able to identify a variety of businesses on-and-off the Navajo Nation. The division will further input the new businesses into a catalog of Navajo owned businesses and artisans.

“This process was new and rewarding for us and our Navajo businesses and artisans. While working together, we also gathered data on how many businesses are active on the Nation. I am looking forward to how many of these businesses will grow in the future. As a team, we will also continue to provide technical assistance and resources for these businesses, and we wish them great success. We will get through this together, and our positive impact will be even greater,” said NNDED Director JT Willie.

The Navajo Nation continues to accept applications for the Hardship Assistance Program. The application and award process is not first come, first serve. Every application will be provided equal consideration of receiving up to \$1,500 per adult and up to \$500 per minor. The application period closes Nov. 30 and payments will begin to be distributed in December.

The online portal can be accessed on the Navajo Nation Office of the Controller’s website, www.nnooc.org, and on the Navajo Nation’s website, www.navajo-nsn.gov.

For specific questions relative to the Hardship Assistance Program, applicants may call the support center at [1-833-282-7248](tel:1-833-282-7248). The support center is open from Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and the support center is closed on Thanksgiving Day. If members are experiencing issues with the call-in number, they can send an email to NNCaresHelp@nnooc.org with their name, issue and a call back phone number.

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