



## The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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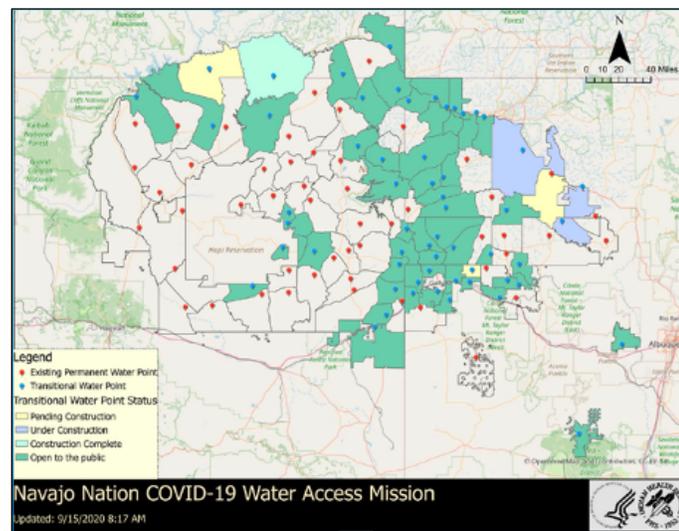
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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — In July 2020, 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/IHS COVID-19 Water Access Mission.



**PHOTO:** Map showing watering points in communities across the Navajo Nation.

On Tuesday, Navajo Area IHS reported that 52 transitional water points have been open to the public, increasing access to approximately 12,117 people living in homes with no piped water on the Navajo Nation. There are an additional seven transitional water points remaining that will serve an estimated 3,737 people. When all 59 transitional water points are open, the average travel distance for residents in these communities will be 17 miles round trip. This is a decrease of 35 miles per round trip, with an average drive time savings of 38 minutes.

“Getting water resources to our Navajo people is one of our top priorities, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this partnership between the Nation, Indian Health Service, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, and Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority, thousands of Navajo families now have access to more water sources closer to home. The CARES Act funds are being used and we are seeing the benefits,” said President Nez.

Additionally, Navajo Engineering Construction Authority is working with chapters to deliver an estimated 37,000, 5-gallon water storage containers for distribution by chapter at sites with existing permanent water points and newly installed transitional water points. Once delivered, IHS will provide training to chapter officials on the distribution of the water storage containers. Additional training will be provided as needed for distribution of water disinfection tablets.

“The tremendous efforts being put forth each day contributes to more Navajo homes having access to clean water, which is a great need during this COVID-19 pandemic. We are hopeful that with increased access to water, families are not only able to increase domestic usage but also keep their families safer and healthy. We appreciate the hard work of all of the partners and we look forward to seeing more progress,” stated Vice President Lizer.

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 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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**PHOTO: Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority workers construct a new watering point.**