



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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**President Nez and Vice President Lizer approve
funding for vehicles to transport individuals with disabilities**



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and Council Delegate Pernell Halona with Tohatchi Area of Opportunity and Services, Inc. officials during the signing of Resolution CO-54-21 in Window Rock, Ariz. on Nov. 3, 2021.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Wednesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer signed Resolution CO-54-21 into law, which approves \$258,512 in supplemental funding for the Tohatchi Area of Opportunity and Services, Inc., to provide essential transportation services for Navajo people with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Council Delegate Pernell Halona, who sponsored the legislation that received unanimous support from the 24th Navajo Nation Council, was also in attendance to offer his support for his community members and the Tohatchi Area of Opportunity and Services officials and clients, who were also present for the signing.

“Everyone’s life matters and we have to do our best to help those with disabilities, so they can reach their full potential and be a valuable part of our communities. Tohatchi Area of Opportunity and Services is a great program and I thank President Nez and Vice President Lizer, as well as my colleagues on the 24th Navajo Nation Council for their support,” stated Delegate Halona.

The Tohatchi Area of Opportunity and Services is a private and nonprofit organization that provides diversified programs in health, education, employment, and personal well-being, to Native American individuals, including Navajo citizens, with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Their vision is to advocate for their clients, provide support, encourage cultural values, and empower their clients to succeed.

“Individuals often look to family and friends to assist with transportation, but this may not always be possible on the Navajo Nation especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Community transportation can help many Navajo people with disabilities stay connected to essential services, community activities, medical appointments and treatments, and recreational activities. Access to reliable transportation is a key to maintaining our health and quality of life,” said President Nez, who also thanked the 24th Navajo Nation Council for their unanimous support of the legislation.

The organization currently serves approximately 50 Navajo clients, including adults and children, and operates two homes in Tohatchi, N.M., and nine houses and three apartments in Gallup, N.M. The program maintains an aging fleet of vehicles with high mileage and ongoing maintenance problems. The approved funding will allow the organization to purchase eight new vehicles to transport clients.

“On behalf of the Nez-Lizer Administration, we express our appreciation to the Tohatchi Area of Opportunity and Services for providing essential and life-enhancing services and assistance to Navajo families. This funding opportunity will allow the clients to actively engage in society and stay socially connected. Transportation and mobility are key factors in the struggle for equal opportunity, and reliable transportation can increase access to education, employment, healthcare, housing, and community involvement,” said Vice President Lizer.

Navajo Nation Division of Social Services Executive Director Deannah Neswood Gishey, Division of Public Safety Executive Director Jesse Delmar, and Division of Natural Resources Executive Director Dr. Rudy Shebala were also in attendance to offer their support.

Supporting resolutions from Mexican Springs, Tohajiilee, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Naschitii, Bahast’ah, Pinedale, Manuelito, Tohatchi, Coyote Canyon, and Tsayatoh Chapters were also included in the funding proposal. The 24th Navajo Nation Council approved the resolution by a vote of 23-0 on Oct. 19. The funding will come from the Navajo Nation’s Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance.

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